

Teachers' Perceptions of the Linguistic Competence in Third Year Students' Writings at Setif 2 University

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Abstract:

The current study scrutinized teachers' perceptions of the linguistic competence in third year English language students' writings at Setif 2 University. The population of the study consists of third year written expression teachers. The used research tool is a questionnaire addressed to eight written expression teachers; the collected data from teachers' questionnaire was analysed using (SPSS) and Excel programs, while the results were interpreted qualitatively. After analysing the obtained data from the questionnaire that was answered by eight teachers, it was concluded that teachers agree that students are linguistically incompetent. Therefore, students appear to have problems in grammar and orthography; in addition, their vocabulary repertoire is poor. On the basis of the findings, pedagogical recommendations are suggested for both teachers and students to be linguistically competent.

Keywords: Linguistic Competence; Writing; incompetent; Orthography; Vocabulary.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is considered as one of the most important and difficult skills to master because it needs different approaches and strategies to be considered. Thus, to be linguistically competent in writing, students must have the knowledge and capacity to use the appropriate language in a written speech. Therefore, the recurrent question of whether English language students, at Setif 2 University, are linguistically competent or not raised the researchers' attention to investigate teachers' perceptions of the linguistic competence in third year students' writings. Clearly, according to an informal discussion conducted with some written expression teachers, third year English language students seem to have poor writing skills. Consequently, the researcher aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of linguistic competence in third year English language students' writing at Setif 2 University.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part is divided into two sections, it provides information about previous research studies that have been done regarding both teachers' perceptions and linguistic competence, which represent the variables of the present study. The first section discusses perception definition and teachers' perception definition. Furthermore, the second section involves research done concerning linguistic competence, its definition, and its components. This part shows how linguistic competence is a crucial element to the effectiveness of writing good understandable texts, for linguistic competence helps writers to construct well-formed accurate sentences without spelling errors or grammar mistakes.

2.1 Teachers' Perceptions

To understand well what teachers' perception means, it is pertinent to refer to perception definition.

There are functional and personal, structural, and cultural factors that influence perception. Requirements, personal experience, motivation, ambition, attention, emotions, and circumstances are some of the functional and personal elements that influence perception. In addition, stimulus strength, stimulus amount, and stimulus contradiction are some of the structural elements that affect perception. Furthermore, the cultural factor that affects perception is a factor in which a person lives (Dininah, 2013).

Sobur (2009) as cited in (Dininah, 2013) claims "perception is an element of the total process that creates the response once the stimulus is applied to humans". Thus, perception is considered as the ability of the entire process of inputs to produce reactions which makes people become aware of something after seeing and understanding it. Similarly, perception, according to Devito (1997), as cited in (Rosyida, 2016), is the process through which people become aware of a large number of stimuli that affect their senses.

Moreover, perception, according to Kotler (2000) as cited in (Rosyida, 2016), is the process through which a person chooses, organises, and

analyses information inputs in order to develop a meaningful overall notion. Individuals employ perception as a cognitive process to interpret, analyse and understand the environment around them; individuals' perception is the process of giving meaning to their surroundings. As a result, even on the identical item, each individual has a different meaning to the stimulus, and people's perceptions of a situation are more important than the situation itself (Rosyida, 2016).

Teacher perceptions can affect the teacher-child relationships as well as students' educational development although teachers "perceive themselves to be both knowledgeable and effective" (Muijs & Reynolds, 2002, p. 8). Teachers' perceptions are identical to teachers' beliefs that are subjective views about the subject they teach, their roles, their students, the curriculum, and their classrooms. These perceptions and beliefs are generated from factors such as experience and personality to help teachers in their profession (Donaghue, 2003).

Nevertheless, taking the consideration of the personal communication between teachers and students, teacher perceptions of student behaviour and everyday feelings and experiences should be taken into account (Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). In addition, teachers' perceptions about their teaching abilities and their students' behaviour have an impact on their performance, and these perceptions can be attributed to student accomplishment (Spilt et al., 2011).

Moreover, teacher perception refers to how a teacher considers a student based on a variety of factors including academic achievement and behaviour. Because of their prior experiences, teachers are inclined to specific attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices (Hines, 2019).

2.2 Linguistics Competence

It is worth noting that experts disagree regarding the relationship between "linguistic competence" and "communicative competence." Chomsky distinguished between linguistic competence and linguistic performance in 1965; linguistic competence, according to him, is the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language, whilst linguistic performance is the actual use of language in real - world situations. As a result, in addition to linguistic competence, a speaker should prove her/his abilities to communicate in order to prove her/his success in communicative competence (Shostak, Khalyapina, & Khodunov, 2019).

Therefore, linguistic competence is a necessary component of communicative competence. The latter is the ability to communicate in a studied language through a variety of techniques during various sorts of speech activities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening in accordance with the communication goals that have been established (Girfanova, Anufryienka, & Kavaliova, 2020).

Linguistic competence refers to a speaker's implicit grammatical knowledge that enables them to use and comprehend a language. Linguistic

competence, as defined by Noam Chomsky and other linguists, refers to a person's natural linguistic ability to match sounds and meanings. In his "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax" (1965), Chomsky suggests that "We thus create a basic distinction between competence (Speaker-knowledge hearer's of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in particular settings)" (Nordquist, 2020).

According to this view, linguistic competence only works "correctly" under idealised settings, which remove any memory, distraction, emotion, and other factors that could cause even a fluent native speaker to commit or miss grammatical errors (Nordquist, 2020).

Linguistic competence is a broad and multifaceted notion that encompasses a variety of language skills, knowledge, and abilities that, when learned, allow a person to use a foreign language according to established rules (Girfanova et al., 2020).

Syntax: The word syntax comes from Greek and it means "putting together" or "arrangement". Therefore, the study of word arrangements into phrases, clauses, and sentences, or syntactical constructs, is known as syntax. Words are the smallest units of syntax (Mu'in, 2019). (See the following examples):

Word order:

- I want these books.
- "want these I books".

Agreement – subject and verb, determiner and noun often must agree:

- He wants this book.
- "He wants this book".
- I want these books.
- "I want this book".

How many complements which prepositions and forms (cases):

- I give Mary a book.
- *I see Mary a book.
- I see her. *I see she.

Hierarchical structure – what modifies what?

- We need more (intelligent leaders) (more of intelligent leaders)
 - We need (more intelligent) leaders (leaders that are more intelligent)
- (Jirka, 2011). From the above examples, it can be seen that it is not about meaning when it comes to syntax. Sentences can be grammatically correct even though they make no sense.

Morphology: Morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies the interior structure of words, simple, complex, they carry grammatical information or are simply lexical. Therefore, morphology is the study of forms which are technically known as morphemes. Word forms in English may consist of a number of elements or morphemes; for example, talking, talks, talked, talker consist the same word that is 'talk' thus 'ing, s, ed, er' are called morphemes (Hickey, 2016).

Morphemes can be minimal units of meaning or they can be

grammatical functions; the following table explains the difference between the two;

Table 1. Morphemes

Minimal unit of meaning	Grammatical function
Re- (again); New (recently made)	-Ed (past tense)
Tour (travel); -Ist (person who)	-S (plural)

Source: (Yule, 2016, p. 76)

From the above table, it can be seen that there are two types of morphemes, free morphemes which have meaning and can stand alone such as new and tour; on the other hand, there are bound morphemes which do not have meaning and cannot stand alone such as “ist”, “s”, “re”, “ed”...etc. When free morphemes are attached to bound morphemes, the basic word form is known as ‘stem’. (See the following examples) (Yule, 2020, p. 78)

Undressed			Carelessness		
Un-	Dress	-ed	Care	-less	-ness
Prefix	Stem	Suffix	Stem	Suffix	Suffix
(bound)	(free)	(bound)	(free)	(bound)	(bound)

The free morphemes can be identified as verbs (call, write, speak), nouns (boy, woman, lady), adverbs (quickly, often, never), and adjectives (quick, happy, sad); these types of free morphemes that have meaning and can convey a message are called lexical morpheme. On the other hand, there are other types of free morphemes which are called functional morphemes such as articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (because, and), prepositions (near, on), pronouns (I, it) (Giordano, 2015).

Furthermore, bound morphemes can be divided into two types; first, derivational morphemes (they can be suffixes or prefixes) in which we take the bound morpheme to make a new word or words of a different grammatical class (E.g. a verb to a noun). The second type is inflectional morphemes that indicate the grammatical function of a word (they do not make new word(s)). Therefore, they are used to indicate whether the word is plural or singular, past tense or not, comparative or possessive form. (See the following examples)

Table 2. Derivational Morphemes vs. Inflectional Morphemes

	Derivational morphemes	Inflectional morphemes
Nouns	Criticism	Jim-'s / Sister-s
Verbs	Criticize	Like-s / Enjoy-ed / Be-en
Adjectives	Critical	Quit-er / Loud-est

Source: (Yule, 2016, p. 78)

Vocabulary: The core of strong communicative competence is vocabulary knowledge which has conclusive predictive ability over the skilful ability of learners in a foreign (FL) or second (L2) language. Students with large vocabulary repertoire are better language users than those with less vocabulary knowledge (Meara, 1996).

(Nation, 2001) describes the connection between vocabulary knowledge and language usage as complementary, for vocabulary knowledge facilitates language use and language use increases the vocabulary knowledge.

Moreover, Schmitt (2000), as cited in (Alqahtani, 2015, p. 22) believes “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language.” Therefore, vocabulary could be defined as “words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)” (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009), as cited in (Alqahtani, 2015, p. 24).

Phonology: (Yule, 2020) defines phonology as the study of a language's structures and patterns of speech sounds. Phonology is based on what every adult speaker of a language knows intuitively about that language's sound patterns. Phonology is concerned with the abstract or conceptual aspect of the sounds in language rather than the actual physical articulation of speech sounds because of its theoretical status.

Phonology is concerned with the fundamental design of each sound type, which varies depending on the physical environment. For example, the [t] sound in the words “tar”, “star”, “writer”, “butter”, and “eighth” are expressed the same in English phonology. Nevertheless, because they can be spoken in varied ways in relation to the other sounds around them, these [t] sounds can all be very distinct in actual speech (Yule, 2020).

The words in the first and second lines below can be spelled in a variety of ways, but the underlying phonetic representation in the third line remains constant.

Uans appona taim uas tri berres

Ones up on atam waz theree bars

/wans apan a taim wəz eri berz/ (Yule, 2020, p. 45)

Orthography: Because the English language is rich with words borrowed, frequently with their spelling, from other languages, English orthography (or spelling) is prone to a lot of variance. A single phoneme in the two lists is represented by more than one letter. For instance, two letters are used for a single sound in the Greek borrowings alphabet and orthography, as in “ph” for /f/ (Yule, 2020).

Spelling refers to the standards for accurately writing words in a language. Words in the English language are spelled using the Roman writing system, according to English orthography. The English language is distinct from other languages in that it incorporates a number of orthographic traditions from several languages, resulting in a wide range of representations for the same sounds, and the spelling of a word is not always predicted based on its sound (BASSAOUI, 2020).

Simon Botley and Doreen Dillah (2007), as cited in (Bassaoui, 2020, p. 291) define spelling errors as a “violation of certain conventions for representing phonemes by means of graphemes”, and is “an encoding error while writing”.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.1 Aims of the Study

The aims of the present research, is twofold; first to investigate teachers' perceptions of the linguistic competence in third year English language students' writings at Setif 2 University, and to investigate the current state of the linguistic competence among third year students. Thus, an exploratory research was adopted in order to achieve the aim of the study.

3.2 Research Questions

The present research investigates teachers' perceptions of linguistic competence in third year English language students' writing; it is specifically designed to provide answers to the following questions:

a. What are teachers' perceptions of the linguistic competence in third year English language students' writings?

b. Do third year English language students have a poor or a good linguistic competence?

3.3. Research Instrument and Data Collection

In order to answer the research questions, a questionnaire is distributed to eight written expression teachers, from the department of English Language and literature at Setif 2 University. They are asked to fill it out and are assured that the information provided would be kept confidential. The teachers' responses are gathered and used for achieving the study's aims.

The questionnaire was designed to arrive at answers to the research questions. Mixtures of questions are used, from the close-ended to Likert scale questions allowing the researcher to gain reliable data. This questionnaire contains 17 questions divided into two sections; each section contains several questions. The two sections are:

Background Information: This section includes five questions; all of them are about background information about the teachers. The first question was asked to know teachers' degree and the second question was asked to know teaches' specialism. In addition, the aim behind the third question is to know teachers' years of teaching English in the university and the aim behind the fourth question is to know teachers' years of teaching written expression. The last question aims to know whether teachers received any training in teaching writing or not.

Linguistic Competence: This section includes eleven questions; all of them are about linguistic competence. The aim behind the first question is to see if students can use a thorough and consistent command of a wide range of languages to express themselves clearly, give emphasis, differentiate, and reduce ambiguity. The aim behind the second question is to see if students have a large enough vocabulary that enable them give precise explanations, express perspectives, and create arguments without having to look for words or signs, and they can do so using some complex sentence structures. The aim behind the third question is to see if students have a strong command of

a large lexical repertoire, which includes idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, as well as an understanding of connotative meaning levels. The aim behind the fourth question is to see if students can grasp and use most of their field's specific vocabulary, but they struggle with terms outside of it. The aim behind the fifth question is to see if students have a basic vocabulary range of words and phrases that are connected to specific circumstances.

Moreover, the aim behind the sixth question is to see if students have excellent grammatical control; there are a few "errors" as well as small sentence structure problems, the aim behind the seventh question is to see if students demonstrate very limited control of few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. The aim behind the eighth question is to see if students can use very simple word/sign order concepts, and The aim behind the ninth question is to see if students have a strong command of basic language, but they make huge mistakes when expressing more complex concepts or dealing with unfamiliar themes and circumstances. The aim behind the tenth question is to see if students' writing is error-free orthographically or not. The aim behind the eleventh question is to see if style, paragraphing, and punctuation are all consistent and useful among students' writing. The aim behind the last question is to see if students can write short words from their oral repertoire with reasonable phonetic accuracy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The teachers' questionnaire is divided into two sections; the first section is entitled "Background Information" and the second section is entitled "Linguistic Competence". The aim behind this questionnaire is investigating teachers' perceptions of linguistic competence in third year students' writing in order to suggest possible pedagogical implications.

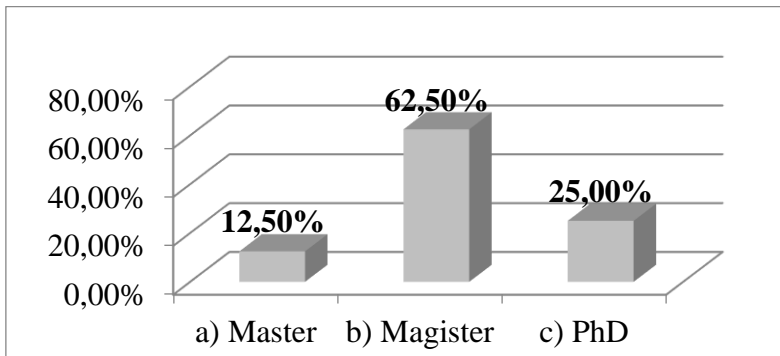
4.1. Data Analysis and interpretation

Section one: Background Information

This section consists of five questions and explores some useful personal information like the years of experience and teachers' qualification. The research used the frequencies and percentages to clarify teachers' responses for each item individually.

Q1. What degree do you hold? a) Master b) Magister c) PhD

Fig.1. Teachers' Degree

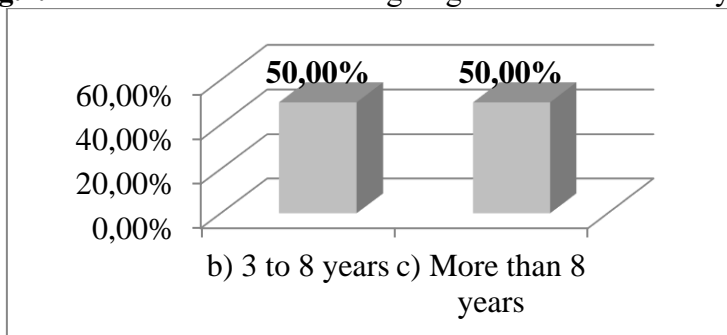


Teachers were asked about their educational degree; thus, figure 1 shows that (62,50%) of them hold a magister degree, (25%) of them hold a PhD degree, and (12,50%) of them hold a master degree. The higher degree teachers got may affect positively the way teacher recognize students' linguistic competence level.

Q2. For how many years have you been teaching English in the university?

- a) Less than 3 years b) 3 to 8 years c) More than 8 years

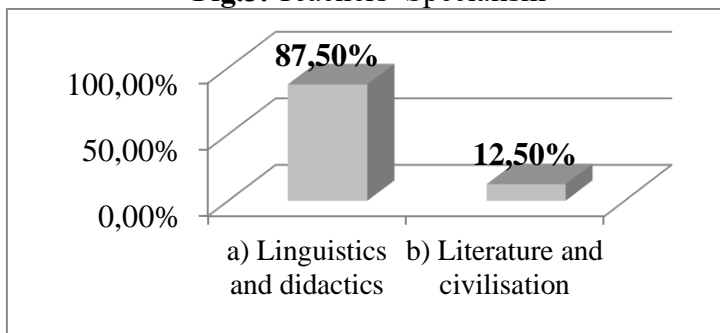
Fig.2. Teachers Years in Teaching English in the University



The years of experience are very important element to help the current research by providing some recommendations and solutions for the proposed research questions. Therefore, according to figure 2, half of the participants have three to eight years' experience of teaching and the other half of the participants have more than eight years' experience of teaching.

Q3. Specialism a) Linguistics and didactics b) Literature and civilization

Fig.3. Teachers' Specialism



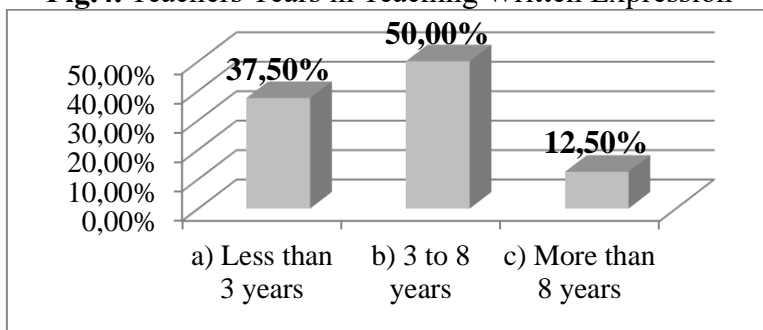
According to figure 3, Most of the participants (87,50%) were

specialised in linguistics and didactics while (12,50%) of them were specialised in literature and civilisation. Knowing teachers specialism helps in deciding whether teachers are qualified to teach written expression or not.

Q4. For how many years have you been teaching written expression?

- a) Less than 3 years b) 3 to 8 years c) More than 8 years

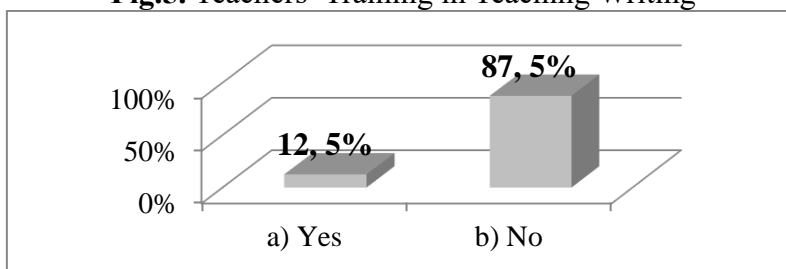
Fig.4. Teachers Years in Teaching Written Expression



The obtained data from figure 4 show that half of the participants have a three to eight years' experience of teaching written expression, (37,50%) of them have less than years' experience of teaching written expression, and (12,50%) of them have more than eight years' experience of teaching written expression. The years of experience in teaching written expression are also very important element to decide about the capacity of teachers to recognise students' linguistic competence and to help them solving their problem when it comes to writing.

Q5. Did you receive any training in teaching writing? a) Yes b) No

Fig.5. Teachers' Training in Teaching Writing



Training in teaching writing is important for teachers to be able to teach writing effectively. Therefore, teachers were asked about whether they had a training in teaching writing or not; thus, according to figure 5, the majority of them (87,5%) did not have any training in teaching writing; whereas, (12,50%) of them have a training in teaching writing.

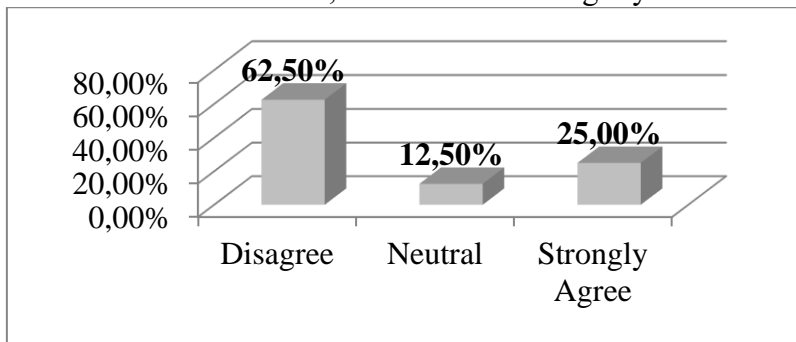
Section Two: Linguistic Competence

This section consists of twelve statements that seek to gather information about students' linguistic competence level.

1. *My students can use a thorough and consistent command of a wide*

range of languages to express themselves clearly, give emphasis, differentiate, and reduce ambiguity.

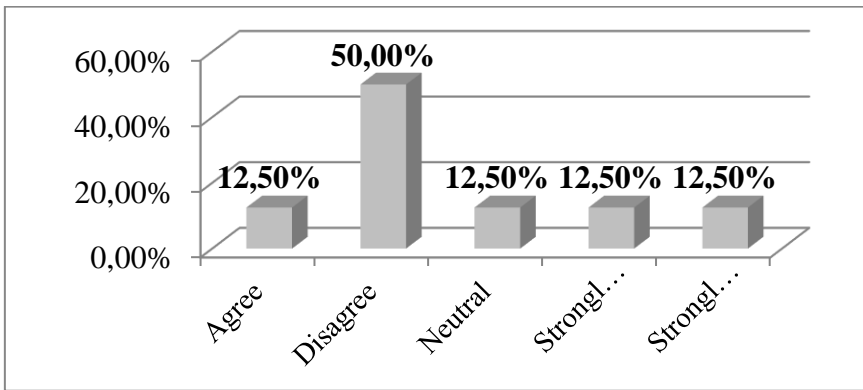
Fig.6. Students use of a Thorough and Consistent Command of a wide Range of Languages to Express Themselves Clearly, Give Emphasis, Differentiate, and Reduce Ambiguity



Teachers were asked about whether their students can use a thorough and consistent command of a wide range of languages to express themselves clearly, give emphasis, differentiate, and reduce ambiguity or not. Thus, according to table 6, most of the participants (62,50%) of them disagree, (12,50) of them were neutral, and (25%) of them strongly agree. Although the key evidence for second language acquisition is the development of new forms rather than mastery, according to teachers' opinions, it is clear that students' general linguistic range is weak.

2. My students have a large enough vocabulary that enable them give precise explanations, express perspectives, and create arguments without having to look for words or signs, and they can do so using some complex sentence structures.

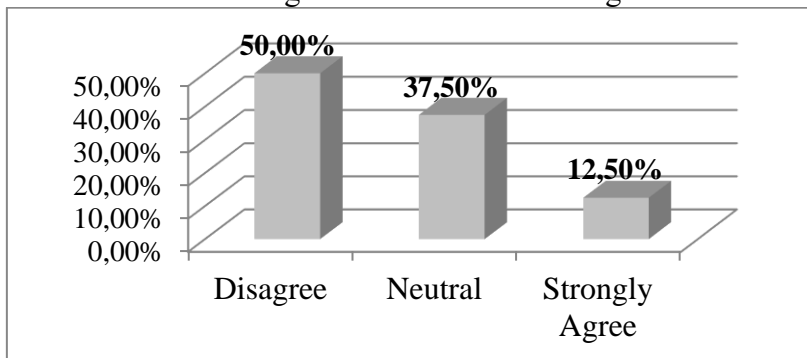
Fig.7. Students Vocabulary Repertoire that Enable them Give Precise Explanations, Express Perspectives, and Create Arguments without having to look for words or Signs, and they can do so using some Complex Sentence Structures.



The participants were asked about whether their students have a large enough vocabulary that enable them give precise explanations, express perspectives, and create arguments without having to look for words or signs, and they can do so using some complex sentence structures. Thus, according to table 3, half of the population disagree, (12,50%) of them agree, (12,50%) of them strongly agree, (12,50%) of them strongly disagree, and (12,50%) of them were neutral. Vocabulary is very important to determine the linguistic competence of students; Schmitt (2000), as cited in (Alqahtani, 2015, p. 22) believes “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of an L2”

3. *My students have a strong command of a large lexical repertoire, which includes idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, as well as an understanding of connotative meaning levels.*

Fig.8. Students Have a Strong Command of a Large Lexical Repertoire, which includes Idiomatic Expressions and Colloquialisms, as well as an Understanding of Connotative Meaning Levels

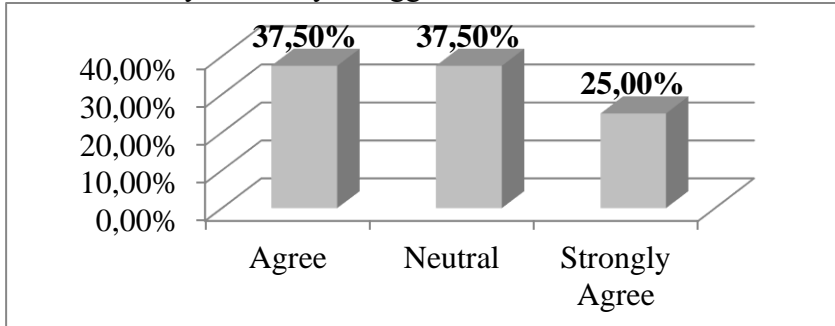


Teachers were asked about whether their students have a strong command of a large lexical repertoire, which includes idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, as well as an understanding of connotative meaning levels or not. Therefore, the obtained data from table 8 show that half of the population disagree, (37,50%) of them were neutral, and (12,50%) of them strongly agree. Students with large vocabulary repertoire are better language users than those with less vocabulary knowledge (Meara, 1996).

4. *My students can grasp and use most of their field's specific vocabulary,*

but they struggle with terms outside of it.

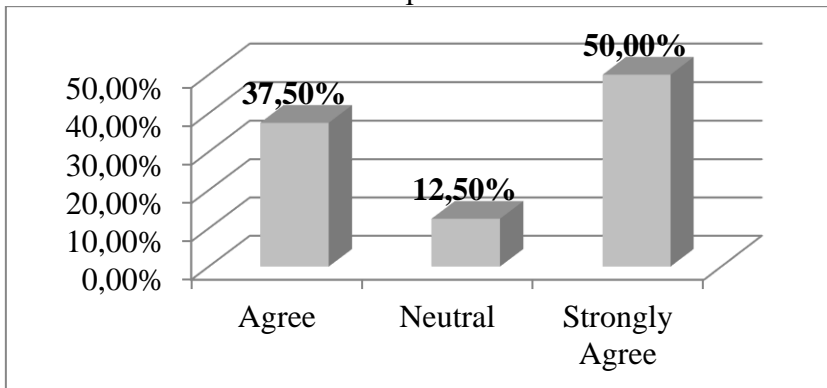
Fig.9. Students Can Grasp and Use Most of Their Field's Specific Vocabulary, but They Struggle with Terms Outside of it.



The obtained data from table 9 show that (37,50%) of the participants agree their students can grasp and use most of their field's specific vocabulary, but they struggle with terms outside of it. (25%) of them strongly agree, and (37,50%) of them were neutral. Teachers' answers show that most of the students are weak in linguistic competence in terms of vocabulary repertoire.

5. *My students have a basic vocabulary range of words and phrases that are connected to specific circumstances.*

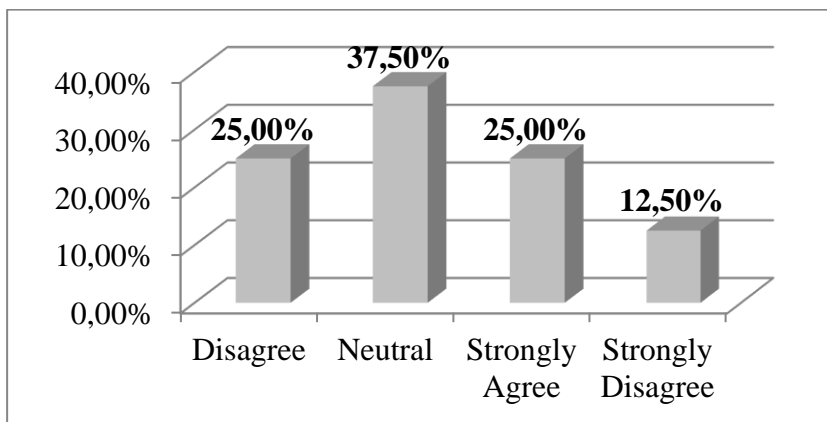
Fig.10. Students Have a Basic Vocabulary Range of Words and Phrases That Are Connected to Specific Circumstances



Having a quick look at figure 10 shows that half of the population strongly agree their students have a basic vocabulary range of words and phrases that are connected to specific circumstances. While (37,50%) agree about that, and (12,50%) are neutral. The results of this statement confirm the results of the previous statement that imply that students have poor linguistic competence in terms of vocabulary.

6. *My students have excellent grammatical control; there are a few "errors" as well as small sentence structure problems.*

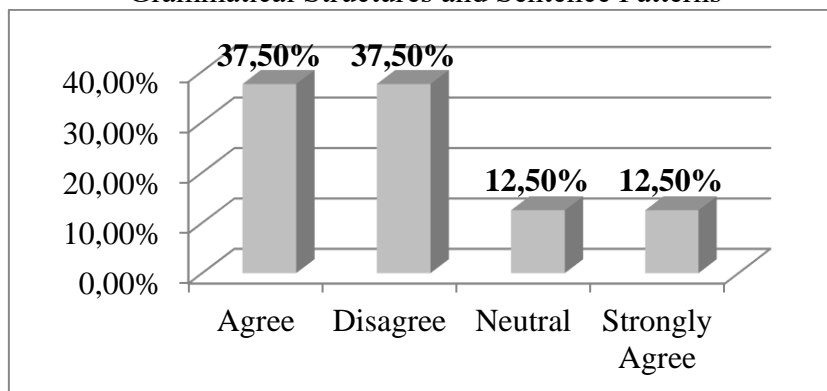
Fig.11. Students Have Excellent Grammatical Control; There Are a Few "Errors" as well as Small Sentence Structure Problems.



The majority of the participants were neutral when asked about whether their students have excellent grammatical control; there are a few "errors" as well as small sentence structure problems or not. Yet, (25%) of them strongly agree, (25%) of them disagree, and (12,50%) of them strongly disagree. Grammar is a key component in deciding whether students are linguistically competent or not.

7. *In a learned repertoire, my students demonstrate very limited control of few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns.*

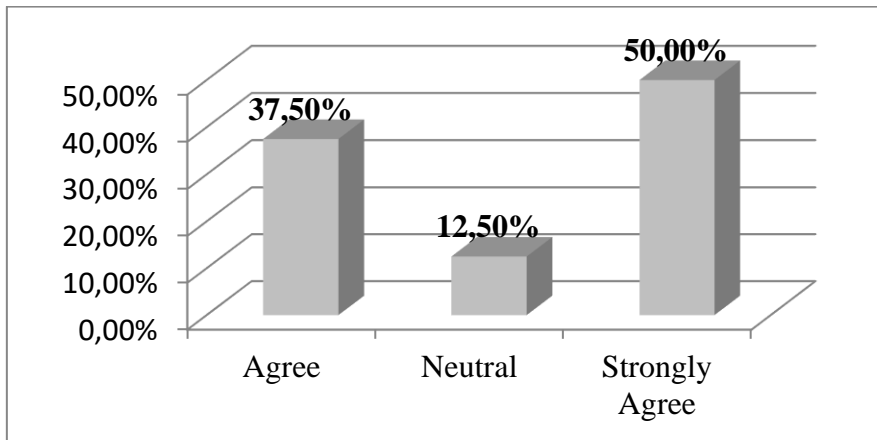
Fig.12. Students Demonstrate Very Limited Control of Few Simple Grammatical Structures and Sentence Patterns



Grammar is very important in writing, for it conveys precise meaning from the writer to the audience, and it provides the rules for the use of the spoken and written speech; therefore, writers should master grammar rules in order to produce an effective, clear, and correct piece of writing. Figure 12 show that (37,50%) of the participants agree that in a learned repertoire, my students demonstrate very limited control of few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. (37,50%) of them disagree, (12,50%) of them were neutral, and (12,50%) strongly agree.

8. *In simple paragraphs, my students can use very simple word/sign order concepts.*

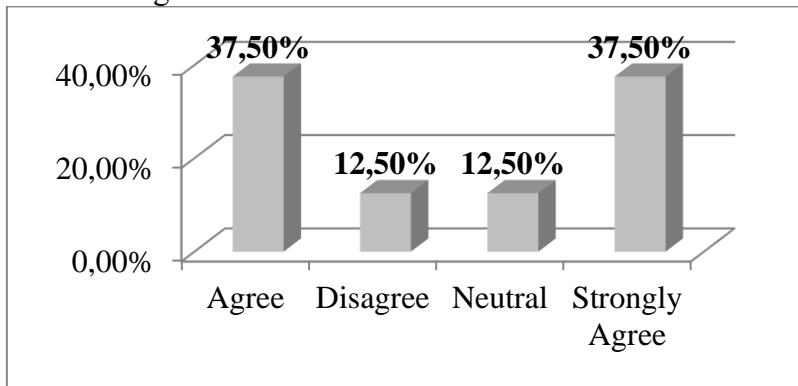
Fig.13. Students Can Use Very Simple Word/Sign Order Concepts



In simple paragraphs, half of the participants strongly agree that students can use very simple word/sign order concepts according to teachers' answers in figure 13. In addition (37,50%) of the teachers agree, yet (12,50%) of them are neutral. The use of simple sentence show that students are not competent enough to produce different types of sentences such compound, complex, and complex compound sentences.

9. My students have a strong command of basic language, but they make huge mistakes when expressing more complex concepts or dealing with unfamiliar themes and circumstances.

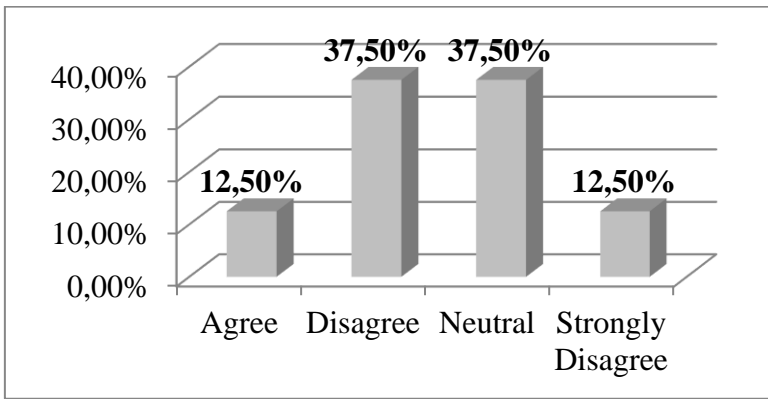
Fig.14. Students Have a Strong Command of Basic Language, but They Make Huge Mistakes when Expressing More Complex Concepts or Dealing with Unfamiliar Themes and Circumstances.



The data from figure 14 show that (37, 50%) of the respondents agree their students have a strong command of basic language, but they make huge mistakes when expressing more complex concepts or dealing with unfamiliar themes and circumstances. In addition, (37, 50%) of them strongly agree, (12, 50%) of them disagree, and (12, 50%) of them were neutral. Having basic language implies that students' vocabulary in different fields is weak.

10. My students' writing is error-free orthographically.

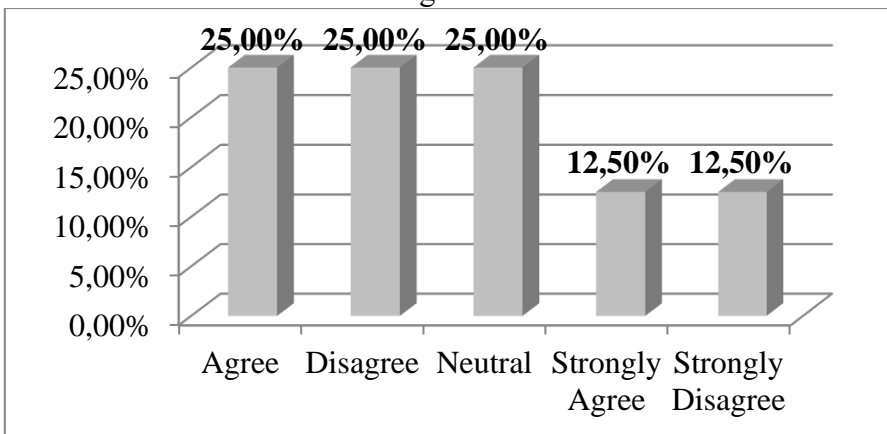
Fig.15. Students' Writing is Error-Free Orthographically



Only competent students can produce pieces of writing free from spelling mistake. Yet according to figure 15, (37,50%) of the participants disagree that their students' writing is error-free orthographically, and (12,50%) of them strongly disagree. (12,50%) of them agree their students' writing is error-free orthographically, and (37,50%) of them were neutral.

11. Style, paragraphing, and punctuation are all consistent and useful among my students.

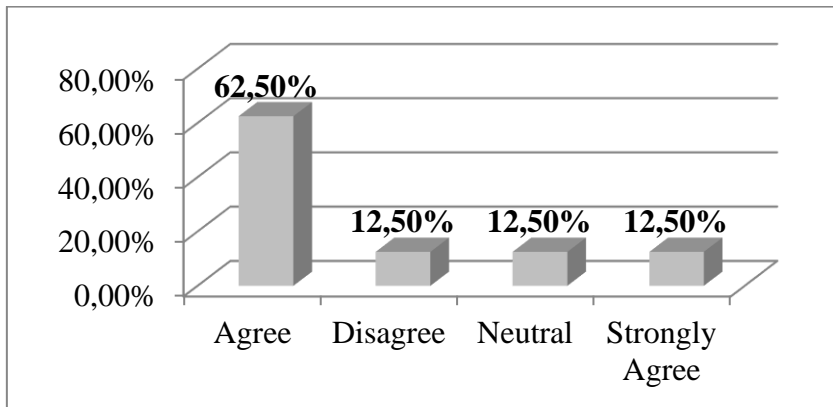
Fig.16. Style, Paragraphing, and Punctuation are all Consistent and Useful among Students



Fifth of the respondents agree that style, paragraphing, and punctuation are all consistent and useful among their students, yet fifth of them disagree. Moreover, (25%) of them are neutral, (12, 50%) of them strongly agree, and (12, 50%) of them strongly disagree.

12. My students can write short words from their oral repertoire with reasonable phonetic accuracy

Fig.17. Students Can Write Short Words from Their Oral Repertoire with Reasonable Phonetic Accuracy



The majority of the teachers (62,50%) agree that students can write short words from their oral repertoire with reasonable phonetic accuracy. (12,50%) of them disagree, (12,50%) of them strongly agree, and (12,50%) of them are neutral.

4.2. General Discussion of the Findings:

This study aimed at investigating the teachers' perceptions of the linguistic competence in third year students' writings in order to suggest possible pedagogical implications. A questionnaire was administered to eight written expression teachers at Setif 2 University. After the analysis of the data collected, the researcher arrived at some results.

As mentioned in the reviewed literature, to be linguistically competent, students need to be able to produce pieces of writing free from grammar errors and spelling errors. In addition, students' writing must have meaning and can convey a message, and they should have a large vocabulary repertoire that enables them to communicate effectively. Therefore, according to all the eight writing teachers, most of third year students are weak in terms of linguistic competence, for students cannot use a thorough and consistent command of a wide range of language items to express themselves clearly. Furthermore, they do not have a large vocabulary, and their writing is not error-free orthographically.

4.3 Implications

The implications of the current study are derived from the findings. Hence, third year students appear to be weak in terms of linguistic competence; thus, being linguistically incompetent hinders students to produce effective pieces of writing. Therefore, it is needed to consider students' poor linguistic competence. Also, it is essentially important to encourage teachers to support their students regarding grammar, orthography, and vocabulary. Furthermore, it is equally essential to reflect on the potential use of linguistic competence since it is a necessary component of communicative competence (Girfanova et al., 2020).

4.4. Recommendations

The discussed results proved that third year students are linguistically incompetent; thus, these findings give a number of pedagogical

recommendations:

- Written expression teachers should encourage students to write and emphasise the importance of writing.
- Teachers should encourage students to read in order to reinforce and expand their knowledge of grammar rules.
- Students should be exposed to language input formed by native speakers in order to compare their language to that of native speakers.
- Students should read more in order to expand their vocabulary repertoire and get more knowledge of Standard English usage.
- Syllabus designers should create materials taking into consideration linguistic competence.
- The analysis of the students' errors by teachers can help identify learners' linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning.

4.5. Limitations

The present study encountered a number of limitations, namely:

- Due to the time constraints and a short treatment period, a longitudinal study is suggested for more accurate and trustworthy results.
- An experimental design is proposed as it provides a random selection and assignment of students which enables the generalization of the findings to larger population.
- Working on each component of linguistic competence individually is also suggested to make the research more precise.
- This study is concerned with linguistic competence in students' writing; hence, future researchers might deal other types of communicative competence such as grammatical competence in students' writing.
- Only eight expression teachers were the sample of the study, yet future studies on a larger example in a longer period of time at different areas are recommended to be more reliable.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article. The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article. The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article. The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article. The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article. The conclusion of a research paper needs to summarize the content and purpose of the article.

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