

Investigating Writing Self-Efficacy Perceptions of Learners of English as a Foreign Language: The Case of First Year Pupils at Fatma Nsoumer Secondary School, Amizour, Algeria

Enquête sur les perceptions de l'auto-efficacité en écriture des apprenants de l'Anglais comme Langue Étrangère: le cas des élèves de première année du Lycée Fatma Nsoumer, Amizour, Algérie

Dalila Bensalem*

Nadia Idri

Faculty of Arts and Languages, LESMS LAB
The University of Bejaia, (Algeria)

Date of receipt: 12/09/2022

Date of acceptance: 15/12/2022

Date of publication: 30/12/2022

Abstract

Writing is considered as a central skill as it plays an essential role in different settings such as social, cultural, professional and academic settings as well. However, Algerian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) do not manage to master its aspects as they find it cognitively demanding and complex. Thus, they feel that they are unable to write and find it difficult to maintain their interest in this skill. Nevertheless, nurturing learners' positive beliefs in writing can foster their motivation to write. Positive self-efficacy contributes to increasing learners' interest and motivation as they feel a strong sense of confidence in themselves. Accordingly, the current study aims at investigating EFL learners' attitudes towards, and self-efficacy perceptions of, in writing from a multidimensional perspective: ideation and organization, writing conventions and self-regulation. To achieve this

purpose, and following the quantitative research approach, a descriptive design was adopted. In order to collect data, a five-point Likert scale type questionnaire was addressed to a sample of 289 learners at Fatma Nsoumer Secondary School, Amizour, Bejaia (Algeria). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program (SPSS 20) was used. The findings revealed that learners' level of confidence in their writing ability ranges from low to moderate, and the lowest degree was attributed to the self-regulation dimension. In addition to their negative attitudes and lack of motivation and frustration when writing. Thus, creating a positive emotional environment and using appropriate pedagogical approaches are significantly important so as to improve their cognitive, meta-cognitive and motivational engagement in writing.

Keywords: EFL Learners; Ideation; Self-efficacy Perceptions; Self-regulation; Writing Conventions.

Resumé

L'écriture est considérée comme une compétence centrale car elle joue un rôle essentiel dans différents contextes ; tels que les contextes sociaux, culturels, professionnels et académiques. Cependant, les apprenants algériens de l'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL) ne parviennent pas à maîtriser ses aspects car ils trouvent cela cognitivement exigeant et complexe. Ainsi, ils se sentent incapables d'écrire et ont du mal à maintenir leur intérêt pour cette compétence. Néanmoins, nourrir les croyances positives des apprenants en écriture peut favoriser leur motivation à écrire. L'auto-efficacité positive contribue à accroître l'intérêt et la motivation des apprenants car ils ressentent un fort sentiment de confiance en eux-mêmes. Par conséquent, l'étude actuelle vise à enquêter sur les attitudes et les perceptions de l'auto-efficacité en écriture des apprenants en EFL dans une perspective multidimensionnelle : idéation et organisation, conventions d'écriture

et autorégulation. Pour atteindre cet objectif, et suivant l'approche de recherche quantitative, une conception descriptive a été adoptée. Afin de collecter les données, Un questionnaire du type échelle de Likert en cinq points a été adressé à un échantillon de 289 élèves du lycée Fatma Nsoumer, Amizour, Béjaïa (Algérie). Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de statistiques descriptives. Le progiciel statistique pour le programme informatique des sciences sociales (SPSS 20) a été utilisé. Les résultats ont révélé que le niveau de confiance des apprenants dans leur capacité d'écriture varie de faible à modéré, et le degré le plus bas a été attribué à la dimension d'autorégulation. En plus de leurs attitudes négatives et de leur manque de motivation et de frustration lorsqu'ils écrivaient. Ainsi, la création d'un environnement émotionnel positif et l'utilisation d'approches pédagogiques appropriées sont très importantes pour améliorer leur engagement cognitif, métacognitif et motivationnel dans l'écriture.

Mots clés : Apprenants EFL; Autorégulation ; Conventions d'écriture ; Idéation; Perceptions de l'auto-efficacité.

* Corresponding author :

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is viewed as a highly complex and demanding task as it involves coordination and integration of a number of processes (Jalaluddin et al., 2015). It has been argued that the writing skill is quite difficult and complex to master in one's native language (L1), and it is even tougher when it comes to writing in a foreign language (FL) (Gil, 2002).

In fact, Algerian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) find that writing is a complex and tedious process. They find difficulties in managing to master its aspects and in producing acceptable and satisfactory pieces of writing. Writing

correctly and accurately requires considerable effort and a lot of practice. Therefore, a positive self-efficacy can enhance learners' writing ability (Pajares, 2003; Schunk & Pajares, 2010). They argued that self-efficacy as an undeniably key affective factor contributes to increasing learners' interest and motivation as they feel a strong sense of confidence in themselves. Hence, they become more resilient and persistent when dealing with challenging tasks. Self-efficacy theory has been introduced by Bandura for more than four decades. And since then, this construct has received support from diverse fields and more importantly attention from educational researchers as it is central to promoting students' cognitive, behavioural and motivational engagement and learning (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). These are key components for the development of the writing competence.

Based on prior research, Bruning et al., (2013) considered that the complex process of writing can be divided into three dimensions; writing ideation, writing conventions and writing self-regulation. They also claimed that people may have different efficacy beliefs for each of these dimensions. Teng et al., (2018) have also supported the view of the multidimensional structure of second language (L2) writing self-efficacy. Their study corroborated the multifaceted structure of writing self-efficacy which includes linguistic self-efficacy, self-regulatory efficacy, and performance self-efficacy. Linguistic self-efficacy in this view implies both self-efficacy for writing ideation and writing conventions as advocated by Bruning et al., (2013).

However, modest attention has been given to investigating writing self-efficacy in L2 settings. It has been intensively investigated in either first language (L1) or educational psychology (Teng et al., 2018). To fill this gap, the present study attempts to investigate secondary school EFL learners' self-efficacy perceptions of

their writing from a multidimensional perspective: ideation, conventions and self-regulation to shed light on their reluctance and disengagement in writing tasks and understand the obstacles that prevent them to overcome the pitfalls they encounter when writing. In line with the purpose of the study, we formulated the following main research question: “what is the actual level of Algerian secondary school EFL Learners’ writing self-efficacy perceptions?” Accordingly, the following sub-questions are addressed:

- a) What do learners believe about their abilities to generate useful ideas and order them to communicate their objectives?
- b) What do learners believe about their abilities to have command of writing conventions?
- c) What do learners believe about their abilities to set goals, monitor and evaluate their writing performance?
- d) What are learners’ attitudes towards writing?

2. Review of Literature

“Learners’ academic accomplishments can often be better predicted by their self-efficacy beliefs than by their previous attainments, knowledge, or skills” (Pajares & Valiante, 2006). Bandura (1986) claimed that Knowledge, skills, and prior attainments are often poor predictors of individuals’ subsequent achievements because their behaviour is rather influenced by the beliefs they hold about their own abilities and about the outcome of their efforts than by the knowledge and skills they possess. He explained that, self-efficacy is the most influential affective construct that can predict behavior and achievement (Bandura, 1997). The role of self-efficacy has been extensively investigated in different fields.

It has been considerably supported with findings of research on the correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance. However, the writing skill is the area that obtained less attention (Jalaluddin et al., 2015) even if it has been recognized as being a more complex skill that is highly influenced by belief systems about writing (Mitchell et al., (2019).

2.1 The Concept of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy has its roots in the social cognitive theory of learning. It refers to “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995). The extent to which people believe they can be effective determines the extent to which they can be motivated and performant. Their motivation and willingness to engage in some tasks can be affected as they miscalculate and misperceive what they can do about some skills and domains (Bandura, 2011). Accordingly, misperceptions and misbeliefs may interfere to get desirable behaviour and outcome in many situations.

2.2 Self-efficacy and EFL Writing

Difficulties concerning cognitive, linguistic and meta-cognitive aspects that learners encounter in EFL writing contexts are related to their inability to deal effectively with affective factors, such as low self-efficacy, which affect them negatively during the complex process of writing (Tsao, 2021). It is argued that a low self-efficacy influences learners’ engagement as it decreases their self-confidence in their ability to write. And, hence, affects negatively their writing performance (Woodrow, 2011). Writing successfully requires not only cognitive knowledge but positive self-efficacy in employing that knowledge as well (Teng et al., 2018). From this perspective, some empirical studies corroborated the positive relationship between self-efficacy and learners’ engagement and performance in

writing either in L1 or L2 contexts (Tsao, 2021). Accordingly, based on previous models of writing (Bruning et al., 2013; Teng et al., 2018) developed and validated scales to measure learners' beliefs in writing skills in L1 and L2 respectively to examine learners' self-efficacy for writing about self-regulation skills and linguistic skills which involve both writing ideation and writing conventions.

2.3 Writing Self-Efficacy Dimensions

The writing process requires attention at multiple levels throughout its different stages. That's why learners feel devastated when they engage in writing tasks. It is then necessary to consider self-efficacy from its multi-faceted and multi-dimensional perspectives with regard to the writing skill to help EFL learners cope with their writing difficulties (Jalaluddin et al., 2015).

2.3.1 Writing Self-Efficacy: Ideation

Idea generation is a cognitive process which consists of searching strategically and deliberately for ideas and putting them down on paper. It involves both lower-level processes such as "linguistic and text production processes, such as transcription and vocabulary retrieval" (Crossley et al., 2016), and "higher-level processes such as coordinating ideas, planning, evaluation, and considering rhetorical elements such as genre, audience, and goals" (Kellogg, 1996; 2001, as cited in Crossley et al., 2016). Accordingly, less skilled writers find that idea generation is a difficult process as they devote their working memory resources to lower-level processes to the detriment of higher-level processes. Idea generation extends to other aspects that value originality, appropriateness, and the breadth of ideas that are generated by writers (Crossley et al., 2016). Nevertheless, Learners feel devastated when they engage in writing tasks. Then, they may question their

ability to go through with the ongoing process in the working memory which influences all other parts of writing and to generate useful ideas to communicate their objectives. This is referred to as writing ideation self-efficacy which focuses on "writers' judgments of the availability, quality, and ordering of their ideas" (Bruning et al., 2013).

2.3. 2 Writing Self-Efficacy: Writing Conventions

Understanding and knowledge of a language's conventions are needed to give writing meaning, and being able to choose appropriate syntactic frames to satisfy a language's conventions would free writers for essential tasks such as idea generation and organization (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001, as cited in Fatemei & Vahidnia, 2013). Consequently, if they perceive themselves as being able to do so, they will undeniably write well. However, if they see themselves as being deficient, then they would not expend effort to overcome the challenges that can emerge during this phase. Therefore, Self-efficacy for executing writing conventions can vary widely (Bruning et al., 2013). Queries about whether writers can generate complete sentences and use a language's markers (e.g., capitalization) to clearly express what is meant, or whether they can sequence and combine ideas may arise. So, they may doubt their capabilities to face challenges and this will gradually affect their future success in performing them (Fatemi & Vahidnia, 2013).

2.3.3 Writing Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation

Possessing self-regulatory skills, which are crucial to learn how to write, is one thing and being able to apply them persistently to overcome emotional and motivational obstacles that make learners doubt their ability to write is another

thing (Zimmerman & Martinez, 1992). In fact, during the process of writing, learners need to generate ideas and put them into a written form by using language related tools. However, they need to manage, monitor and evaluate their writing tasks. But without self-efficacy for writing self-regulatory skills, learners might not be able to “brainstorm new ideas, use appropriate words/correct grammar or compose a coherent and well-structured essay/paragraph because of their inability to manage their anxieties and solve their difficulties” (Bruning et al., 2013). Self-efficacy for writing self-regulation is reflected in learners’ confidence in their ability to monitor and control knowledge and practices and guide themselves in pursuit of a goal through writing’s dimensions and subtasks when facing anxiety, distractions and emotional fluctuations (Bruning et al., 2013). To a large degree, it follows that both self-regulation and self-efficacy are essential for learners’ writing competence.

3. Methodology

The present section presents the major methodological aspects for this study. It comprises the research approach and design, instrument, participants and data analysis procedure.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

Descriptive research tries to explain the current status of an identified variable (Middleton, 2022). The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the actual level of Algerian secondary school EFL Learners’ writing self-efficacy perceptions. Therefore, a descriptive survey design associated with a quantitative approach was used. According to Schmitz (2012), survey method is a quantitative design which allows the researcher to enquire pre-planned set of questions to a

sample.

3.2 Instrument

The present study sought to shed light on Algerian EFL learners' self-efficacy perceptions in writing. Thus, a quantitative approach was adopted to gather data. In order to ensure the validity of the research instrument, the present questionnaire comprises questions that are carefully and precisely worded. It has been adapted from findings of previous studies (Bruning et al., (2013), Teng et al., (2018), Hasan Ibrahim et al., (2019). The questions cover the different aspects of the construct under investigation. A self-efficacy writing Likert scale type questionnaire adapted from (Hasan Ibrahim et al., 2019) was used to measure the level of learners' self-efficacy in writing by tapping into their perceptions. His questionnaire was itself adapted from Williams (2012) and (Bruning et al. (2013). However, it offers a more comprehensive view of aspects of writing self-efficacy dimensions in terms of the areas it tackles. In addition to a liking-writing scale which was used to assess learners' attitudes towards writing.

The questionnaire consists of (32) items split up into four sub-sections that represent the three dimensions of writing self-efficacy (writing ideation and organization (6 items), writing conventions (12 items), and writing self-regulation (12 items). And the Liking-writing section which consists of two (02) items which aim at determining learners' attitudes towards writing. The items are based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral / Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

In order to ensure the highest rate of return, we resorted to guiding the participants throughout the process of responding to the scales by explaining and translating statements they found difficult.

3.3 Participants

A total of 235 out of 289 first year secondary school EFL pupils at Fatma Nsoumer secondary school at Amizour, Bejaia, (Algeria) ranging from 15 to 18 years old, participated through convenience sampling in the data collection phase of the present study during the school year 2020/2021. Pupils were invited to rate statements in the self-efficacy writing scale based on their agreement or disagreement in order to indicate their attitudes and perceptions towards their ability to perform writing related tasks with regard to the aspects of writing dimensions referred to in the questionnaire.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data from the scales were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program (SPSS 20) was used.

4. Findings

The current section intends to report the findings of the present investigation. The following tables display the results collected from the pupils' responses to the questionnaire.

Table 1. Learners' perceptions of ideation and organization skills

Items related to writing ideation	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	M.	SD
1. I can think of many ideas for my writing.	12	16.2	26.8	36.6	7.7	3.10	1.15
2. I can think of unusual and unexpected ideas but appropriate to my topic.	21.7	31.1	21.3	19.6	6.4	2.57	1.20
3. I can sequence and organize my ideas appropriately.	11.9	16.2	27.2	28.9	15.3	3.20	1.24
4. I can provide examples to support my ideas.	11.9	19.6	25.5	32.3	10.6	3.10	1.19
5. I can think of the words to use to express my ideas in a	17	27.7	26.4	22.6	6.4	2.73	1.17

well-organized composition.							
6. I can introduce my paragraph with a topic sentence.	10.6	17.9	22.1	34.5	14.9	3.25	1.21

Source : Hasan Ibrahim et al., 2019, p. 47

As shown in table (1), the participants rated the degree of their agreement and disagreement towards their beliefs about their ability to perform some writing-related aspects that are related to the ideation and organization dimension. The results illustrate that pupils have an inclination for agreement with respect to items (1, 3, 4 and 6); and an inclination for disagreement with respect to items (2 and 5).

In fact, as far as the inclination for agreement is concerned, if we count the sum of “agree” and “totally agree” responses rates for items (1, 3, 4 and 6), we will find that the degree of agreement is estimated at (44.3%, 44.2%, 42.9% and 49.4%) respectively. This suggests a moderate degree for only those perceiving themselves as having confidence in their ability, as it does not represent the majority. And if we count the sum of “totally disagree” and “disagree” responses rates for the same items, we will find that it is estimated at (28.2%, 28.1%, 31.5% and 28.5%) respectively. Though the degree of disagreement for these items is quite lower, this category cannot be overlooked because these participants perceive themselves as not having confidence in their ability. Nevertheless, the mean scores for these items, in the order given, which are (3.10), (3.20), (3.10), and (3.25), in the order given, suggest a moderate confidence in the participants’ ability as a whole for these items.

Conversely, as far as the inclination for disagreement is concerned, the results suggest a fairly moderate degree of disagreement too. If we count the sum of “totally disagree” and “disagree” responses rates for items (2 and 5), we will find that (52.8% and 44.7%) respectively of participants perceive themselves as having a fairly low confidence in their ability for these items. As opposed to (26% and 29%) the sum of “agree” and “totally agree” responses rates for the same items respectively that contends that this proportion of agreement for these items cannot also be overlooked as it represents a category which attributes confidence

to themselves with regard to their ability concerning these items. However, the lowest mean scores, which are attributed for items (2 and 5) which are (2.57), and (2.73) respectively, suggest a lowest confidence in the participants' ability with respect to these items as a whole.

We can thus discriminate two categories with regard to the degrees of agreement and disagreement towards the items described in this dimension: Those who consider having confidence in their ability to perform some of this dimension's aspects and those who attribute a lower level of confidence in their ability to themselves with respect to the same aspects. In spite of what was said above, it is worth mentioning that these results present the participants' self-assessment of their self-efficacy proficiency. Accordingly, be it moderate or low, it is necessary to sort out the gap for these aspects.

Table 2. Learners' perceptions towards writing conventions skills.

Items related to writing conventions	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	M.	SD
7. I can write with correct spelling.	23	31.1	25.1	17	3.8	2.47	1.13
8. I can punctuate my sentences correctly.	9.8	15.3	19.1	35.3	20.4	3.41	1.24
9. I can use authentic sentences semantically and syntactically correct.	16.6	28.9	26.8	21.3	6.4	2.71	1.16
10. I can use the grammar rules that I learned in class easily and correctly.	11.5	15.7	29.4	28.1	15.3	3.20	1.21
11. I can produce different types of sentences using correct word order.	9.4	18.7	21.3	34.5	16.2	3.29	1.21
12. I can write verbs in different tenses correctly.	12.8	22.1	31.1	25.1	8.9	2.95	1.15
13. I can use all parts of speech correctly.	15.3	25.5	33.2	18.7	7.2	2.77	1.13
14. I can write compound and complex sentences with a correct grammatical structure.	23.4	28.5	32.8	11.1	4.3	2.44	1.09
15. I can use transition words appropriately.	14.5	22.6	38.3	17.4	7.2	2.80	1.11

16. I can use conjunctions correctly.	8.9	10.2	34.5	30.2	15.7	3.45	1.11
17. I can use referencing pronouns correctly.	8.9	18.3	20.9	35.3	16.2	3.40	1.80
18. I can use demonstratives and determiners correctly.	10.6	17.4	26.8	30.2	14.9	3.21	1.20

Source: Hasan Ibrahim et al., 2019, pp. 47-48

The above table displays the results regarding learners' beliefs of their confidence in their ability to master writing conventions skills. The results suggest that there are inclinations for agreement and inclinations for disagreement, as well, for the items as demonstrated previously. As a matter of fact, learners' inclinations for agreement are indicated in their rate responses for items (8, 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18) which is estimated at (55.7%, 43.4%, 50.7%, 45.9%, 51.9% and 44.9%) respectively; as opposed to (25.1%, 27.2%, 28.1%, 19.2%, 27.2% and 28%) the sums of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses rates for the same items respectively. Obviously, learners can be divided into those who rated themselves as being confident, though they do not represent the greatest majority, in their ability to cope with the aspects of writing conventions that are described in these items; and those who perceive themselves as unable, though they do not represent the lowest minority, to cope with these aspects. Nevertheless, the mean scores for these items (3.41, 3.20, 3.29, 3.45, 3.40, and 3.21) respectively, suggest a moderate confidence in learners' beliefs towards their ability to master the aspects of writing conventions described in these items. The mean score representing their confidence in their ability, though moderate, increases gradually in an ascending way from being able to use the grammar rules easily and correctly (3.20), use demonstratives and determiners correctly (3.21), use correct word order to produce different types of sentences (3.29), use referencing pronouns correctly (3.40), punctuate sentences correctly (3.41) and to use conjunctions correctly

(3.45).

However, it remains that pupils still have a lack as far as writing conventions are concerned. This can be reflected in their reflections towards items (7, 9, 13, 14 and 15) for which they develop a negative inclination as they reported their disagreement about their confidence in their ability to perform aspects of writing conventions described in these items with a rate response of (54.1%, 45.5%, 40.8%, 51.9% and 37.1%) in the order given. These respondents evaluated their confidence in their ability as being low. However, (20.8%, 27.7%, 25.9%, 15.4% and 24.6%) of the respondents had agreed upon having confidence in their ability towards the same aspects described in the same items respectively.

Be it writing with correct spelling, using authentic sentences semantically and syntactically, use all parts of speech correctly, writing compound and complex sentences with a correct grammatical structure or using transition words appropriately, pupils seem to have a lower degree of confidence in performing these aspects as compared to the aspects described in the earlier items. The mean scores for these items range around (2.47, 2.71, 2.77, 2.44 and 2.80) in the order given. They suggest a lower level of confidence in pupils' ability than for the items discussed earlier.

As far as their perceptions about their confidence towards their ability to use correct tenses appropriately, it seems that pupils have the same level of agreement and disagreement with respect to this item (34%, 34.9% respectively) with a mean score of (2.95). Accordingly, the results show that pupils have an average and moderate level of confidence in their ability as for the aspects of writing conventions described in this section; it remains that this level may be higher for

some aspects and lower for some other aspects. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to enhance their faculty in all aspects so as to achieve a smooth running of the composing process.

Table 3. Learners' perceptions towards writing self-regulation skills.

Items related to self-regulation	1	2	3	4	5	M.	SD
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
19. I can think of my writing goals before I write.	9.8	15.3	28.9	29.4	16.2	3.30	1.29
20. I can use appropriate conventions and styles for specific genres.	17.4	20.4	40.9	18.7	2.6	2.68	1.04
21. I can start writing on a given topic easily without difficulty.	17.4	23.8	29.4	20.4	8.9	2.79	1.20
22. I can manage my time efficiently to meet a deadline on a piece of writing.	13.6	28.1	33.6	17	7.7	2.77	1.12
23. I can edit my compositions in relation to mistakes in mechanics and grammar.	13.6	23.4	28.5	23.8	10.6	2.94	1.20
24. I can select and use suitable sources of information for different topics.	13.2	24.3	31.9	20.9	9.8	2.89	1.16
25. I can cover all the information that should be dealt with within a given topic.	15.7	21.7	38.3	19.6	4.7	2.75	1.08
26. I can express and support my point of view.	11.5	20.4	28.9	26.4	12.8	3.08	1.19
27. I can write a brief and informative overview of a given topic.	13.6	22.1	39.1	17.9	7.2	2.82	1.10
28. I can write good compositions although I make mistakes.	15.3	18.7	30.6	21.7	13.6	2.99	1.25
29. I can use synonyms to avoid the repetition of words.	15.7	23	31.9	19.1	10.2	2.85	1.20
30. I can use suitable words which explain what I want.	14.9	16.2	37.9	20.4	10.2	3.07	2.22

Source: Hasan Ibrahim et al., (2019, pp.49-50)

The above table offers insight into pupils' perceptions regarding mastering self-regulation skills. In this section, we can notice that pupils' inclination for disagreement surpassed that for agreement in terms of the number of items for

which they expressed their inclination for disagreement. Only (45.6%) demonstrated their positive inclination for item (19) and (39.2%) rated their confidence in their ability for item (26) as being acceptable. However, the neutral rate responses for this item (28.9%) is close to the disagreement one (31.9%). In addition to the items (23, 28 and 30) for which their agreement and disagreement rate responses are mainly close as they are estimated at (34.4%, 35.3%, and 30.6%) and (37%, 34% and 31.1%) respectively. So, as far as these items are concerned, we may say that some of the pupils perceive themselves as being confident in their ability to set goals before they begin to write, express and support their opinion, edit their compositions by correcting their mistakes in mechanics and grammar in addition to being confident in their ability to write good compositions although they make mistakes. However, we cannot overlook the others, who feel unable to do so when referring to the same aspects of writing self-regulation. Therefore, some may feel highly self-efficacious, whereas others underestimated their confidence in their ability. Nevertheless, the mean scores for these items (19, 23, 26, 28 and 30) suggest learners' moderate level, though higher for some aspects and lower for some others, as they are as follow (3.3, 2.94, 3.08, 2.99 and 3.07) respectively.

With regard to their inclination for disagreement, we find that it surpassed that for agreement as pupils report their negative perceptions within this dimension towards more aspects and with higher rate responses. In fact, (37.8%, 41.2%, 41.7%, 37.5%, 37.4%, 35.7% and 38.7%) for disagreement vs. (21.3%, 29.3%, 24.7%, 30.7%, 24.3%, 25.1% and 29.3%) for agreement as far as items (20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 29), respectively, are concerned. In addition to the neutral position

of pupils which seems to be higher for this dimension than for the two first ones. It is demonstrated then those pupils have less confidence in their ability to master the aspects described in these items. The mean scores (2.68, 2.79, 2.77, 2.89, 2.75, 2.82 and 2.85), for items (20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 29), suggest pupils' lower level. As a matter of fact, their lack of confidence in their ability to master the following aspects: use appropriate conventions and styles for specific genres, start writing on a given topic easily without difficulty, manage their time efficiently to meet a deadline on a piece of writing, select and use suitable sources of information for different topics, cover all the information that should be dealt with within a given topic, write a brief and informative overview of a given topic and use synonyms to avoid the repetition of words, will probably prevent them from focusing their attention on the other aspects within the same dimension and even within the ideation and conventions dimensions. They will not be able to coordinate all the processes that are involved in the writing process. Thus, it seems urgent to cope with such difficulty.

Table 4. Learners' attitudes towards writing.

Items related to liking writing	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
31. I like writing.	28.9	39.6	26.4	3.8	1.3
32. I feel bad, frustrated and demotivated when I write.	35.7	35.3	13.2	7.7	8.1

As shown in the table, there is a clear inclination for disagreement with respect to both items. The rate responses for disagreement is estimated at (68.5%) with respect to item 31, and (71%) with respect to item (32). with a neutral rate response of (26.4% and 13.2%) for both items respectively. Their lack of motivation, not feeling comfortable and their frustration may explain their

negative attitudes towards writing and the lack of confidence in their ability to cope adequately with aspects of writing mentioned previously. Accordingly, it seems important to refer to the sources that may engender a high level of self-efficacy so as to increase learners' interest and motivation and lower their anxiety and overcome writing related difficulties.

5. Discussion

The aforementioned results illustrate the pupils' perceptions towards their confidence in their ability with respect to different aspects of writing processes in relation to writing self-efficacy dimensions. As a whole, the participants in the present study self-reported a low to moderate level of writing self-efficacy with regard to the three dimensions, their negative attitudes towards writing, besides demotivation and frustration when writing. However, their confidence varies from an aspect to another; and there seems to be obviously a variation in pupils' responses with regard to their perceptions towards their confidence in their ability to tackle the writing aspects suggested in the writing self-efficacy dimensions as it is illustrated by SD values for the items. Their inclinations for agreement or disagreement regarding some aspects may explain the fact that there is a tendency to be moderately confident for some aspects and less confident for other ones.

Cer (2019) stated that when learners feel confident in their ability to cope with the pre-requisites of the different stages of writing, this will likely contribute to a positive self-efficacy for each stage and accordingly for the whole process. Participants in the present study self-reported that even if they have confidence in their ability for some aspects with regard to the ideation dimension, their confidence lowers with respect to other aspects that are closely related. In fact,

pupils demonstrated a lack of confidence, specifically, for their ability to think of words to express their ideas in a well-organized paragraph and to think of unusual and unexpected ideas that suit their topic. It is argued that the inability to think of appropriate words suggests that the participants do not have an extensive vocabulary or they are unable to engage in the retrieving process and hence they cannot bring vocabulary to their minds. As for the ability to generate original and appropriate ideas, it is associated with their ability to adopt regulating strategies that allow them to activate their mental abilities and to initiate thoughts (Teng et al., 2022). Thus, having less efficacy for these aspects can compromise the whole process of the planning stage. Pupils self-reported that they can moderately think of ideas that may serve as an introduction to their compositions, or as examples to support their views. However, if they lack an extensive repertoire of words or cannot recall the existing vocabulary, then this is likely to interfere with their aptitude for concentrating on the overall process and the completion of the defined objective (Cer, 2019). Thus, not being able to cope with all the pre-requisites of this stage may contribute to developing a negative self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the employment of self-regulation skills is required to improve the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes involved in the writing process and to improve self-efficacy beliefs as well (Cer, 2019). This may explain then the variation in the levels of confidence reported by the participants.

Likewise, as shown in the results for writing conventions dimension, participants revealed that they are more likely able to deal with lower-level transcription skills such as punctuation, and apply some referencing and demonstrative words. However, they are unlikely able to use grammatical rules and spell lexical items correctly to form compound and complex sentences that are grammatically and

semantically correct. In fact, these are mainly anomalies that can be identified in EFL writing contexts where learners fail to apply language conventions to produce a semantically coherent piece of writing that combines both grammatical and lexical knowledge (Hoadjli & Lahlouhi, 2018). However, having knowledge and mastery of language conventions, does not guarantee the ability to cope with all aspects of writing that are involved in the whole process (Cer, 2019). This only implies a low level of writing ability. Writing effectively requires the overall process to be self-regulated by using self-regulatory skills to regulate the processes involved in each stage and to regulate their self-efficacy levels accordingly. And only individuals with a high level of writing ability can manage to combine these aspects (Cer, 2019). The findings of the present study showed that learners seem much more to possess a low level of ability. They appraised themselves as having a moderate confidence in their ability for executing some aspects and a lower confidence for executing others. The variation in the levels of confidence reported by the participants suggests a lack of self-regulatory skills that can help them negotiate the rules and mechanics of writing in the composing stage of writing. Learners must be aware of how to plan, monitor, and regulate their writing processes (Tsao, 2021). And learners' confidence in their ability to do so contributes to fostering self-regulatory capability. This confidence in their capability to execute metacognitive control in the learning-to-write process is referred to as self-regulatory efficacy (Teng et al., 2018). However, with regard to self-efficacy for writing self-regulation, the participants in the present study reported a low level of confidence as they estimated that they were relatively unlikely to perform many aspects described in this dimension. This suggests that

they lack meta-cognitive awareness that can help them regulate their cognition in order to set goals, use strategies to monitor and evaluate their performance (Teng et al., 2018). Again; Clark, (2019) declared that students with high self-regulation are also students with a high self-efficacy.

To sum up, it is agreed that there are interconnections between the pre-, during-, and post- processes of writing and they all require the employment of self-regulation skills to improve cognitive and meta-cognitive processes involved in the writing process and to improve their self-efficacy beliefs as well (Cer, 2019). As a matter of fact, since participants reported the lowest level of confidence with respect to self-regulatory capability, we can understand their level of confidence, which ranges from low to moderate for writing ideation and writing conventions and this can potentially affect their overall writing efficacy and lead them to develop negative feelings towards writing. Affective states are among the sources that affect self-efficacy beliefs which are considered as one of the core components of human motivation (Troia et al., 2013). Mellit & Idri (2019) argued that the strength of motivation and the level of learners' attitudes are highly correlated. According to Idri (2011), Motivation may be interpreted in terms of the emotions that prevail on individuals' learning experiences. So, positive feelings and emotions are likely to generate high motivation whereas negative feelings are more likely to engender a lack of motivation. As a matter of fact, participants in the present study revealed having a negative attitude towards writing. This is due then to their negative feelings and emotions which are likely to affect negatively their motivation; a fact that can explain their demotivation to write.

Teng et al., (2022) affirm that it is crucial for EFL learners to have a control over their emotions as it increases their motivational regulation and allows them to

avoid distractions in writing. Participants revealed also degrees of frustration when writing. Thus, they need to regulate their negative feelings to overcome the anxieties and worries that stand as barriers and prevent them to face the challenging writing process. However, they must be encouraged to develop positive emotions which foster their commitment to writing.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The present study investigated EFL learners' attitudes and self-efficacy perceptions in writing with regard to three dimensions: writing ideation and organization, writing conventions and writing self-regulation. The findings revealed learners' level of confidence in their ability to tackle aspects of writing that pertain to each dimension. The results showed that learners' level of writing self-efficacy is estimated to be moderately low. Learners' perceived level of confidence in their ability to accomplish some of the aspects related to writing ideation seems to be the highest in comparison to that of writing conventions and writing self-regulation which was estimated to be the dimension for which learners have a much lower level of perceived ability. Learners' appraisal of themselves as not being able to cope with different aspects was justified by their deficiencies to deal with the cognitive aspect of idea generation, their poor mastery of language conventions and with their unawareness of meta-cognitive aspects that regulate their cognition. The results revealed also learners' negative feelings towards writing which impacted negatively their motivation to write and lead to frustration and anxiety to emerge when writing.

As argued by many researchers, (Bruning et al., 2013; Daniels et al., 2019; Pajares & Valiante, 1999; Teng et al., 2018; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zumbunn et al., 2019; Caraway et al., 2003; Lindsey, 2017; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Price et al., 2011; Quweneel et al., 2013; Putarek & Pavlin-Bernardic, 2020) as cited in (Tsao, 2021), self-efficacy is undeniably a strong predictor of performance and outcomes. Beliefs about the ability to do tasks are likely to affect the ability to perform them positively or negatively. Accordingly, participants' responses shed light on some important aspects that must be taken into account with regard to their perceived efficacy. Learners need to gain more understanding of the writing process to face the challenges they encounter when writing. Results illustrated that learners need to learn how to write. They must learn necessary skills and strategies that can help them reach a meta-cognitive awareness, which is important for the execution of the cognitive aspects of writing. They must be motivated to get rid of the negative emotions that overwhelm them when writing. Thus, teachers need to employ pedagogical practices that increase their awareness and use of learning strategy in order to develop their writing ability and enhance their motivation. It is also important to be aware and identify the main sources that foster self-efficacy. Learners' answers on their perceptions of their ability to write can help teachers identify maladaptive behaviors within their learners and find appropriate pedagogical practices to remedy them. They need to create a safe and positive emotional environment that offers learners the best conditions to enhance their motivation to reach better writing outcomes.

Nevertheless, we suggest that further quantitative and qualitative research should be done to gain a deeper insight into learners' perceptions with regard to

the writing context and the nature of the task. In addition to taking into account other variables such as age, gender, and the course in which they are enrolled.

7. Bibliography List:

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall
- Bandura, A. (1995). Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. *Self-efficacy in changing societies*, 15. 1-45.
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy and health behaviour. In A. Baum, S. Newman, J, Wienman, R. West, & c. McManus (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of psychology, health and medicine*, 160-162. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Bandura, A. (2011). The social and policy impact of social cognitive theory. In M. M. Mark, S. I. Donaldson, & B. Campbell (Eds.), *Social psychology and evaluation*, (pp. 31–71). The Guilford Press.
- Bruning, R., Dempsey, M., Kauffman, D. F., McKim, C., & Zumbunn, S. (2013). Examining dimensions of self-efficacy for writing. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105, 25-38 .
- Cer, E. (2019). The instruction of writing strategies: The effect of the metacognitive strategy on the writing skills of pupils in secondary education. *SAGE Open*, 9(2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019842681> (consulted on May 20th, 2022).
- Clark, R. (2019). Writing Self-Efficacy and Student Ownership: Exploring Middle School Writing Perceptions through Increased Ownership in the Classroom. Master of Education Program Theses. 133. https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/med_theses/1333 (consulted on May 5th, 2022).
- Crossley, S. A., Muldner, K., & McNamara, D. S. (2016). Idea generation in student writing: Computational assessments and links to successful writing. *Written Communication*, 33(3), 328-354.
- Fatemi, A. H., & Vahidnia, F. (2013). An Investigation into Iranian EFL Learners' Level of Writing Self-efficacy. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 3(9), 1698-1704.
- Gil, M. C. (2002). Spanish students in British universities: Developing a support resource to improve their academic writing skills. In *Presentation. Paper presented at the Setting*

the Agenda: Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies in Higher Education Conference.
Manchester.

- Hasan Ibrahim, M., Abdel Massieh Awad, M., & Fathy Mohammed Ramadan, H. (2019). The Impact of a Program Based on the Web2 Applications on Developing EFL Secondary School Students' Self-efficacy in Writing. 51-1, (119 يوليو ج 1), 30. مجلة كلية التربية. بنها.
- Hoadjli, A. C., & Lahlouhi, S. (2018). Developing Learners' Writing Performance through an Integrative Grammar Teaching Model. *Traduction et Langues*, 17(02), 90-110.
- Idri, N. (2011, June). Foreign Language Learning, Classroom Interaction and Lack of Motivation: the Case of First Year Students of English at the University of Bejaia; LMD System Group. In FORUM DE L'ENSEIGNANT (منتدى الأستاذ Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 205-221). ASJP.
- Jalaluddin, I., Paramasivam, S., Husain, S., & Bakar, R. A. (2015). The consistency between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(3), 545.
- Linnenbrink, E. A., & Pintrich, P. R. (2003). The role of self-efficacy beliefs in student engagement and learning in the classroom. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19, 119-137.
- Mellit, D., & N. Idri. (2019). The Impact of EFL Algerian University Students' Attitudes on Literary Texts Reading Motivation: The Case of Second Year English Students at Setif 2 University. *Traduction et Langues*, 18(01), 139-160.
- Middleton, F. (2022). *Reliability vs. Validity in Research | Difference, Types and Examples*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/reliability-vs-validity/> (consulted on November 18th, 2022).
- Mitchell, K. M., McMillan, D. E., & Rabbani, R. (2019). An exploration of writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulatory behaviours in undergraduate writing. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2).
- Pajares, F. (2003). Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: A review of the literature. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19(2), 139-158 .
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (2006). Self-efficacy beliefs and motivation in writing development. In Macarthur, C.A, Graham, S., Fitzgerald, J. (ed.). *Handbook of writing research*, pp158-170. New York: Guilford Press.
- Schmitz, M. (2012). *Survey Research: A Quantitative Technique*. <https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/sociological-inquiry-principles-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/s11-survey-research-a-quantitative.html>. (Consulted on November 19th 2022).

- Schunk, D. H., & Pajares, F. (2010). Self-efficacy beliefs. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 668–672). Oxford, England: Elsevier.
- Teng, L. S., Sun, P. P., & Xu, L. (2018). Conceptualizing writing self - efficacy in English as a foreign language context: Scale validation through structural equation modeling. *Tesol Quarterly*, *52*(4), 911-942.
- Teng, M. F., Wang, C., & Zhang, L. J. (2022). Assessing self-regulatory writing strategies and their predictive effects on young EFL learners' writing performance. *Assessing Writing*, *51*, 100573, 1-16.
- Troia, G. A., Harbaugh, A. G., Shankland, R. K., Wolbers, K. A., & Lawrence, A. M. (2013). Relationships between writing motivation, writing activity, and writing performance: Effects of grade, sex, and ability. *Reading and Writing*, *26*(1), 17-44.
- Tsao, J. J. (2021). Effects of EFL learners' L2 writing self-efficacy on engagement with written corrective feedback. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *30*(6), 575-584.
- Woodrow, L. (2011). College English writing affect: Self-efficacy and anxiety. *System*, *39*(4), 510-522.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Martinez-Pons, M. A. N. G. E. L. (1992). Perceptions of efficacy and strategy use in the self-regulation of learning. *Student perceptions in the classroom*, 185-207.