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Option: Linguistics

**The Integration of ICTs in Education: Impressions about the Use of Internet, Word Processor, and E-mail to Develop Academic Written Achievements**

The case study of first year master degree students at the University 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English Letters and Language in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master degree in Anglophone Language, Literatures,  
and Civilizations..

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# **I**

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grand mother

**BOUKHAROUBA Tounes**

May Allah grant her with mercy.

**BOUMAZA Bisma**

## **II**

I dedicate this work to my dear family; my beloved mother, father, sister, and brothers

and to my small sweet family; my dear husband and my little angel

**Hanin**

BAHDAOUI Ismahen

### **III**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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**Pr. TOULGI Ladi and Dr. BOUDECHICHE Hamid**

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); particularly the internet, word processor, and e-mail, on the quality of academic written achievements. We hypothesized that students' use of the previously mentioned technologies would increase their writing achievements. Therefore, we opted for the descriptive quantitative method, as we distributed a questionnaire on 80 randomly selected Master One students of English, and 10 teachers of written expression at the University of Guelma. The final results displayed that the usage and manipulation of such software would enable them to produce correct and high quality compositions. In other words, the numerous online sources available facilitate the collection of information about the writing topics. Moreover, the application of spell check provided by the word processor helps in indicating and automatically correcting errors committed by students as they type their writing tasks. In addition, the e-mail is considered as a communication channel between teachers and their students, in order to send and receive feedback about the written productions. All in all, the findings proved that these technologies together ameliorate students' final written product, which confirms our hypothesis.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology

**M1:** Master One

**vs.:** Versus

**i.e.:** That is to say

**Q:** Question

**MA:** Magister

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## **Appendix I**

### **Students' Questionnaire**

Dear Participants

We are carrying out an investigation about the impact of ICTs, particularly: Internet, Word Process, and E-mail on learners' academic written achievements. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Your collaboration is very important for the validity of the research, and we reassure you that your responses will be kept anonymous and used only for research purposes.

Please, indicate your response to the following questions by ticking (✓) the corresponding box (es), and express your ideas, comments when necessary.

**We thank you, in advance, for your consideration.**

**SECTION ONE: General Information.**

1. Gender:

a- Male.

b- Female.

2. Age: ..... Years old.

3. Choice to study English:

a- Optional.

b- Imposed.

In both cases, please explain.....

.....

**SECTION TWO: Academic Writing.**

4. What does writing mean to you?

a- An important skill that needs to be developed.

b- A tool of communication.

c- An activity that you do just for grades.

5. How do you find the courses of writing expression?

a- Very interesting.

b- Interesting.

c- Not really special.

d- Not interesting.

6. How do you evaluate your level in writing?

a- Excellent.  b- Good.  c- Average.  d- Low.

7. According to you, what are the most important elements of academic writing?

- a- Organization of ideas.
- b- Clarity of meaning.
- c- Coherence of sentences.
- d- Correct choice of words.

8. How often do you revise your assignment before the submission?

- a- Always.
- b- Sometimes
- c- Rarely
- d- Never

9. Does the revision help you improve the written assignment?

- a- Yes.
- b- No.

In both cases, please explain.....

.....

10. Do you face any difficulties when you write your academic assignments?

- a- Yes.
- b- No.

11. If your answer is yes, which ones of the following areas you face difficulties with?

- a- Vocabulary.
- b- Spelling.
- c- Grammar.

d- Punctuation.

12. What do you think about the expression “Better readers, better writers”.

a- Strongly agree.

b- Agree.

c- Disagree.

d- Strongly disagree.

### SECTION THREE: The Impact of ICT on Developing Academic Writing

13. According to your personal experience, which ones of the following ICTs you used to write your last year’s training report/dissertation?

a- Internet as a source of information.

b- Word Processor as an application for writing.

c- E-mail as a mediator between teacher and learner.

d- All together.

14. Do you have access to internet at home?

a- Yes.

b- No.

15. How often do you use the internet to learn more about the topic you are supposed to write about?

a- Always.

b- Sometimes.

a- Never.

16. Which one is your preferable tool to write?

a- Pen on paper.

b- The computer.

17. Does the application 'word processor' helps you/ facilitates the writing task?

a- Yes.

b- No.

In both cases, please explain

.....

.....

.....

.....

18. Does the word processor indicate your errors on the level of grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

a- Yes.

b- No.

19. How do you react when the word processor indicates errors in your writing?

a- Learn about the nature of the mistake then correct it.

b- Correct it automatically by the word processor.

c- Ignore the mistake.

20. Do you send your written assignment/ draft to your teacher/supervisor via E-mail?

a- Yes.

b- No.

21. Which one is your preferable feedback?

a- Late feedback in the classroom.

b- Immediate feedback via E-mail.

22. Do you receive e-mails from your teacher/ supervisors in return?

a- Yes.

b- No.

**Thank you so much for you collaboration.**

## **Appendix III**

### **Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear teachers

We are carrying out an investigation about the impact of ICTs, particularly: Internet, Word Process, and E-mail on learners' academic written achievements. You are kindly requested to voluntarily fill in this questionnaire. Your collaboration and anticipation is very important for the validity of the research, and we reassure you that your responses will be kept anonymous and used only for research purposes.

Please, indicate your response to the following questions by ticking (√) the corresponding box (es), and express your ideas, comments when necessary.

We thank you, in advance, for your consideration.



**SECTION ONE: General Information.**

1. What is your qualification?

.....

2. For how long have you been teaching English at the university?

..... Years.

3. For how long have you been teaching writing expression course at the university?

..... Years.

**SECTION TWO: Academic Writing.**

4. What is/are the most important element(s) of academic writing?

a- Organization of ideas.

b- Clarity of meaning.

c- Coherence of sentences.

d- Successful choice of words.

e- All together.

5. How do you evaluate your students' level in writing?

a-

b- Very good.

c- Good.

d- Average.

e- Low

6. Which approach do you use in teaching writing?

a- The product approach.

b- The process approach.

c- The genre approach.

d- The content approach.

e- A mixtures between all approaches

7. Do you think that the time allocated to written expression courses is sufficient to cover the aspects required to develop the writing skill?

a- Yes.

b- No.

8. Do your students face any difficulties in writing inside the classroom?

a- Yes.

b- No.

9. If your answer is 'yes', which one(s) of the followings is/are the most difficult area for them?

a- Grammar.

b- Spelling.

c- Vocabulary.

d- Punctuation.

e- All together.

10. How often do students commit errors related to the previous areas of difficulties?

a- Always

b- Often

c- Rarely

**SECTION THREE: The Impact of ICT on Developing Academic Writing**

**11.** Do you support the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning languages?

a- Yes.

b- No.

In both cases, please state why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

**12.** How would you rate the availability of technological support at your university?

c- Good.

d- Mediocre.

a- Poor.

**13.** Do you encourage your students' use of internet as a source of information about their writing topics?

a- Yes.

b- No.

**14.** Do you think that the word processor helps students develop their academic writings?

a- Yes

b- No

15. Do you notice any changes between students' hand written assignments and those written by the word processor?

a- Yes.

b- No.

16. What do you think about the influence of the auto correction provided by the word processor?

a- Positive.

b- Negative.

In both cases, please explain.....  
.....

17. Do you correct your students' written productions/drafts via e-mail?

a- Yes.

b- No.

18. How often do your students respond to your comments via e-mail?

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

d- Never

19. Do you have any further suggestions or comments concerning the topic?

.....  
.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## Appendix IV

### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التحقيق في تأثير تكنولوجيا المعلومات و الاتصال خاصة الإنترنت معالج النصوص ،و البريد الالكتروني على نوعية الانجازات الاكاديمية المكتوبة، و قد افترضنا ان استخدام الطلبة للتقنيات التي سبق ذكرها من شأنه ان يحسن مستوى اداءهم الكتابي. وعليه فقد اخترنا المنهج الوصفي الكمي، مع توزيع استبيانين عشوائيا على كل من 80 طالب سنة اولى ماستر، و 10 اساتذة الاختصاص في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قلمة. اظهرت نتائج البحث النهائية ان استخدام الطلبة لهذه التكنولوجيات يمكنهم من انتاج مؤلفات صحيحة، فالكم الهائل من المصادر المتوفرة على شبكة الانترنت تسهل جمع المعلومات حول المواضيع الكتابية. كما ان خاصية التدقيق الاملائي المتاحة على معالج النصوص تساعد على تحديد اخطاء الطلبة و تصحيحها اليا. بالإضافة الى البريد الإلكتروني و الذي يعتبر قناة اتصال بين الاساتذة و الطلبة لإرسال و تلقي تقويم و ملاحظات حول اداءهم الكتابي؛ و بالتالي فان الجمع بين هذه الاليات يساعد الطلبة على تحسين الاداء الكتابي الاكاديمي و هو ما يؤكد الفرضية المقترحة سابقا.

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Writing is an integrative, constructive, complex, and an essential skill in foreign language learning. It plays a major role for students to be successful in their educational career. At university, writing expression classes focus on the production of paragraphs, essays and research papers in order to reach a particular academic achievement. Students go through different steps and structures to create the final piece of writing which indicates that the act of writing is an ongoing activity that requires an ongoing process.

Academic writing is thought to be the most complicated skill in both the learning and teaching processes, through which a writer is supposed to break down ideas with a deductive reasoning and a formal voicing; this type of writing involves a great attention in foreign language classes because it requires a particular tone, a choice of words and structure; and adheres to traditional conventions punctuation, grammar, and spelling. In order to formulate affective academic writing productions, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners receive rules and knowledge about how to arrange information to get correct written compositions, in addition to a continuous practice and feedback.

Foreign language students tend to use different ways to enhance their academic writing. One of these ways is the use of Information and Communication Technology tools (ICT) which have long been involved in education and learning. It is proved that ICTs play a remarkable role in students writing proficiency. For this sake, students are recommended to use a range of ICTs mainly: internet, word processor, and email. These tools will help check, correct and produce effective written compositions. Thus, the present research tackles the three previously mentioned tools in relation to academic writing.

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

Academic writing has been given a high and special attention in foreign language classes; however; students still encounter some difficulties in achieving good academic written productions. Students may fail in ordering words, making a worthy content or choosing the appropriate vocabulary that the reader expects or needs. Furthermore, a well organized structure is also one of the major difficulties that students encounter while writing academically. They are then advised to use ICTs in order to develop their academic writing, especially the internet to get access to information and sources they need, word processor to indicate and automatically correct their mistakes ( grammar, spelling...), and email to send the final work and receive a quick feedback from their instructors. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of such ICTs on developing students' academic written performance.

## **2. Aim of the Study**

Writing is considered as one of the most complex skills to master. with the emergence of new technologies, students tend to adopt them as part of their learning process to develop their language skills. Therefore, the research aims at investigating the impact of using writing related ICTs such as; the internet, word processor, and email on improving master one student's academic writing outcomes at English department, University of Guelma.

## **3. Research Questions**

The research to be conducted attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are students' poor academic written achievements related to their lack of knowledge and affective use to ICT tools (internet, word processor, email)?



- 2- Does the use of ICT tools (internet, word processor, email) help students produce grammatically correct and well structured written achievements?

#### **4. Research hypothesis**

On the basis of the above research questions, it is hypothesized that:

- 1- Thanks to appropriate use of the internet, word processor, and email, the writing achievements of the students would increase.
- 2- If university students use writing related ICTs, they will be able to produce grammatically correct and well structured written achievements?

#### **5. Significance of the study**

Many previous work and research papers dealt with ICTs to investigate how they are starting to become increasingly integrated in EFL classrooms and the role it plays in developing the language learning skills. This study however is generally motivated by the desire to investigate the impact of those ICTs; mainly internet, word processor, and email; on developing one specific and essential skill, which is the academic writing. Also to know about students' attitudes towards such technologies and to what extent they are useful and effective when it comes to written achievements. Hence, the results of this study will serve as a basis stimulus for students as well as teachers to think beyond traditional notions of writing.

#### **6. Research Methodology**

In order to draw the link between the use of ICT tools and academic writing, it is opted for the use of the descriptive quantitative method, to collect, analyze data and identify the relationship existing between the two variables, by distributing a questionnaire on both teachers of written expression and Master One students at English department, University of

Guelma. The results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire would explain the connection between the tools (internet, word processor, email) and achieving better academic writing compositions.

## **7. Research Structure**

The research is basically divided into three main chapters; the first two chapters are devoted to the theoretical background, and some definitions and concepts which will help in understanding the relationships between the two variables. The third one concerns the field work, to gather data from the teachers and learners' questionnaires and to investigate the impact of computer assistance language learning tools on student's academic writing. Finally, we conclude by some pedagogical implications based on the data collected.

# **Chapter One:**

# **Academic Writing**

## **Chapter One: Academic Writing**

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## **Introduction**

Writing, as a way of communication, is proved to be the most complex and sophisticated language skill. It requires certain criteria and involves various elements simultaneously, through which learners enhance their proficiency. Hence, this chapter serves as a brief theoretical overview of the writing skill; including its nature and some definitions provided by scholars and linguists, features and characteristics of the academic type of writing, the most common difficulties that students may encounter during the process, in addition to the accurate approaches in teaching writing, as well as its significance and relationship with other skills, especially speaking and writing. Finally, it sheds light on the concept of plagiarism and different techniques to avoid it.

### **1.1. Nature of writing skill**

Writing is a productive skill that represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. According to Crystal (2006) “writing is a way of communicating, which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface, it is one kind of graphic expression” (p.257). It means that writing is realized through a chain of symbolic graphs combined together to form comprehensive text as a tool of communication. For many years, writing was about the arrangement of symbols according to certain linguistic conventions to record speech; and it was neglected when it is compared to other skills, especially speaking. Consequently, Byrne (1988) considers writing as a way to reproduce what has been read or heard.

Today, writing is considered as the most important and sophisticated skill through which one can express him/her self, and gives a visible image of what runs through the mind. In this sense, Weigle (2002) defines writing as “encoding internal representation (idea) into written text” (p. 36). This definition insures that the mental activity is also considered as one of the

most essential part in the writing process. Furthermore, Hedge (2000) illustrates that “it is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language learners” (p. 302). In the same context, Jozsef (2001) also states that “writing is among the most complex human activities; it involves the development of a design idea, the computer of mental representations of knowledge and of experience with subjects” (p. 05).

Lately, the interest in writing has improved. Harmer (2007) illustrates that “the writing skill is important as the other skills (speaking, listening, and reading). It is needed for students to know to reflect their knowledge, emotions, or ideas on a paper (how to write letters, how to reply to advertisements, how to summarize a text” (p. 03). Neman (1995) affirms the significance of this skill and defined it as “a craft, an artistic process with techniques and conventions that can be learned, employing skills that can be improved” (p. 04).

## **1.2. Definition of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is considered as a specific genre of writing used to accomplish certain assignments and requirements within an academic setting (universities and colleges), and as an act of recording facts and ideas follows special norms and features. According to Mennens and Wilkinson (2002), Learners at colleges and universities are expected to compose various forms of assignments such as: essays, reports, research papers, dissertations, etc. All those are referred to as academic writings; it has an educational purpose, addresses specific type of audience, and requires certain conventions, forms, and structures. Oshima and Hogue (1998) support the definition given to academic writing and stated that “academic writing as the name implies, is the kind of writing that you are required to do in college or university. It differs from other kinds of writing such as personal literacy, journalistic, or business writing. Its differences can be explained in part by its special audience, tone and purpose” (p. 05)

This task designed for college and university students differs greatly from non-academic ones. It is considered as a more complex and difficult activity, which demands a language that is according to Hartley (2008) “precise, impersonal, and objectives”. This implies that students should certainly involve a critical way of thinking, promote a good understanding of the topic, and follow some linguistic structures and language forms (p. 03). Westwoold (2008) demonstrates that “Written language is perhaps the most difficult of all skills to acquire because its development involves the effective coordination of many different cognitive, linguistic and psycho-motor processes” (p. 56).

Academic writings obviously require an academic style of writing, which includes specialized patterns for educational purposes. This style of language was defined by Yopp et.al (2008); they state that “academic language is the language used by teachers and students in order to acquire new knowledge and skills” (p.16). In addition to that, academic language is used to persuade, explain, and inform the reader of such writings. In fact, it addresses a specific type of readers. In the same context, Gillet et.al (2009) illustrate that “academic writing is different from other forms of writing in its relationship with its audience, that is to say the reader” (p. 02).

In short, all previous mentioned scholars agreed that academic writing is used to fulfill different assignments within an academic setting; it requires certain criteria and addresses a specific type of audience.

### **1.3. Characteristics of Academic Writing**

Academic writing demands certain features and characteristics that make it even more specific than any other genre of writing. The followings are the most important and common ones suggested by Starkey (2004), for learners to follow in order to succeed in their academic writing:

### 1.3.1. Organization

Well-formed and organized writings are easy to be read and understood. Learners should not put ideas and information randomly while writing their assignments, however; they should range them into a logical structure of introduction, body, and conclusion; as supported by Eggenschwiler and Biggs (2001) who state that “a paragraph should be organized” (p. 163). Within the same situation Starkey (2004, p. 02) claims that

By following an organized method of writing, you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your piece of writing work together and how they support your thesis.

A set of techniques is needed in order to organize a written material. According to Shannon (2011), there are two types of techniques: the first technique is related to the brainstorming and free writing; which help learners to shape and relate their thoughts before they start writing. The second one is related to the outline of ideas, ordered from general to detailed; which helps in structuring the work.

### 1.3.2. Clarity

Academic writing follows a more direct and focused style in writing in order to avoid ambiguities in meaning and satisfy readers' understanding. This feature is very essential in fulfilling academic assignments. According to Murray and Hughes (2008), clarity is important because it makes written materials readable and accessible. This can be realized through the use of short, relevant, and unambiguous sentences. Furthermore, Starkey (2004, p. 09-12) recommends the following ways to achieve academic writing:

*Eliminate ambiguity*; i.e. avoid words that may mislead the reader, especially those with multiple interpretations



*Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs*; the exact terminology to deliver the right and precise meaning

*Be concise*; go straight to the point and avoid unnecessary sentences.

### **1.3.3. Coherence**

Academic written productions demand a coherent structure. Sentences should be linked together to create connections between the ideas. This assumption was supported by Kane (2000), who affirms that coherence is an essential characteristic of effective writing; he claimed a link between coherence of ideas and readers' understanding of a text.

Along the same view, Shannon (2011) accounts that the coherent presentation of the content is consequently easy to be understood, this feature can be achieved through the logical organization of the text with all its elements, and the focus on main ideas as they flow in a chaining order from the first idea to the following one, without any incomprehensive shift that can mislead the reader, as explained in the following figure. ( see figure 1).

### **1.3.4. Word Choice**

Another significant feature of academic writing is the appropriate choice of words, the formal and academic vocabulary is highly essential to explain the information throughout the text. Shannon (2011) states that "Authors should always aim for the most precise language possible in writing. In academic and scholarly writing, that *principle* is even more important". (p. 18).

In order to successfully convey the meaning to the audience, it is important to use exact statements and expressions. According to Starkey (2004), effective word choice depends on one's awareness about two aspects: denotation and connotation. Denotation on one hand is the literal and exact meaning of the word; the one extracted from a dictionary. Connotation on the

other hand is what a word implies, since a word may have different interpretations due to cultural or religious assumptions.

#### **1.4. Major Difficulties in Academic Writing**

EFL learners encounter several difficulties when they write their academic assignments. Those difficulties are reflected in the mistakes that occur in their compositions, on the level of both stylistics (the unconventional grammar and poor vocabulary) and mechanics (appropriate use of punctuation and misspelled word). Through his *Guide to Effective Writing and Speaking*, Seely (1998) illustrates the most common problems in writing as follows.

##### **1.4.1. Grammar**

Grammar is one of the most difficult and confusing aspects in any language to be applied when writing. It is used to express ideas correctly and effectively; Thornburry (1999) defines grammar as “description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meaning that these forms convey” (p. 13), which implies that learners may harm the communication with readers when they produce ungrammatical structures. Seely (1998) claims that grammatical mistakes that appear in the construction of sentences may underrate learners’ writings, and emphasizes the importance of some devices for an accurate sentence; such as: the appropriate use and placement of verbs, object, adverbs, and coordinating conjunctions. All in all, learners who pay sufficient attention to grammatical accuracy would succeed in conveying the intended meaning.

##### **1.4.2. Spelling**

Proper spelling of words is an essential aspect of any written material. EFL learners may commit spelling mistakes due to the English language complicated spelling system, since it contains 26 letters, which represent 44 different sounds. Another reason for spelling mistakes

is when learners write words which are pronounced inappropriately. Connelly (2012, p. 553) states that

Many words are commonly misspelled. They may be foreign words, contain silent letters, or have unusual letter combination. When speaking, people often slur sounds and fail to pronounce every letter. Because you are accustomed to hearing words mispronounced, you may misspell them when you write.

Hence, spelling mistakes are unacceptable in academic writing, especially the confusion between homophonic words, because a writer may fail to convey certain ideas and leads the reader to question the proficiency of the writer and the quality of the written material.

### **1.4.3. Vocabulary**

Rich vocabulary is very important in academic writing. Wilkins (cited in Schmitt 2010, p.03) illustrates that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. However, learners may face troubles dealing with vocabulary in writing, since it is crucial to communicate idea using exact or synonymous words. It is challenging for learners to choose the appropriate vocabulary that goes with the selected purpose of an academic fulfillment. In this sense, Seely (1998) announces the problematic areas about vocabulary; the active vocabulary which is frequently used in writing, the passive vocabulary which is familiar for the learners from their reading but never used in writing, and the never heard or known vocabulary. These types however, can move from one area to another, i.e. Vocabulary that has never been heard or known can turn into a passive vocabulary and then into an active one, and vice versa.

### **1.4.4. Punctuation**

Following the standard convention of punctuation is very important in academic writing since it adds clarity and precision to the written material. The proper placement of punctuation marks makes the learners’ writings easy to be read and understood and prevents

readers' confusion. Seely (1998) claims that obeying the rules and restriction of punctuation when writing is considered as a challenge for learners and that the most common mistakes that occur in their writings is about the placement of the comma. He insists that "The person who has learned how to use commas has learned how to write" (p.229).

To sum up, lack of knowledge and awareness about the previously mentioned concepts may affect the academic production of EFL learners, thus harm their scores in assignments. This genre of mistakes may represent a careless and underestimated writer, in addition to an irrelevant and underrated piece of writing. Learners can undergo such difficulties and improve their written compositions through regular practice.

## **1.5. Approaches to Teach Writing**

In the essay "What is Academic Writing", Irvin (2010) emphasizes that "your success with academic writing depends upon how well you understand what you are doing as you write and then how you approach the writing task" (p. 01). Approaches of writing emerged to enhance practice in writing skill and develop learners' writing capacities. The application of one approach or another is highly dependent on the goals and objectives that learners want to achieve. The most important ones are: the product, the process, the genre, and the content approach.

### **1.5.1. The Product Approach**

The product approach is the most traditional model of teaching writing. It enables learners to practice writing through the imitation of model texts provided by the teacher. It is defined by Gabrielatos (2002) as "a traditional approach in which students encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage" (p. 05). Along the same view, Nunan (1991) considers "... a product oriented approach , as the title indicates focuses on the

end result of the learning process, what is expected from the learner is to do as fluent and competent user of the language” (p. 86).

Pincas (1982, cited in Badger and White, 2000, p. 153), claims that this approach works through four main stages:

*Familiarization*: learners study and analyze the elements of the model text, such as grammar, vocabulary, and organization.

*Controlled writing*: learners manipulate certain elements and patterns in isolation from the model text.

*Guide writing*: learners engage in imitating model texts, as they organize and range ideas.

*Free writing*: is the last stage where learners are expected to make use of the rules and structures that has been learned before, to develop their own writings.

The product oriented approach proved to be very beneficial for the mastery and awareness of learners about rules and conventions of language; however, it was criticized of the aspect of imitation since it helped in developing language forms and structures yet it neglected content and style, and excluded learners’ imagination and creativity. This last point is supported by Richards and Rodgers (2001) who describes language through this approach as “basically a process of mechanical habit formation” (p. 57).

### **1.5.2. The Process Approach**

The process approach emerged as an alternative to the product oriented one, as the focus shifted from the final piece of writing to the different stages that the learner goes through in order to fulfill his/her writings. Leki (1991) defines the process oriented approach as “the wondering path learners use to get the final product” (p. 10), i.e. a priority is given to the way

the product is produced rather than the product itself. In this sense; Zamel (1982) considers writing as “a process through which students can explore their thoughts” (p. 147). The process oriented approach deals with writing within a variety of classroom activities, where learners engage in collaborative writing and exchange drafts with each other; this would boost their motivation to write. This idea was supported by Nunan (1991), who expresses that “the approach also encourages collaborative group work between learners as a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitude towards writing” (p. 87).

This approach works through a sequence of stages which are related to one another as claimed by Clark (2003), who thinks that the success of one stage is related to the success of the previous one. The four stages of the process approach are: planning or pre-writing through which learners decide on a topic, determine a purpose, and generate ideas into an outline; drafting is the stage where learners write multiple drafts and establish ideas in introduction, body, and conclusion; revising is the stage where learners shift ideas, add, remove, or modify information, and revise both the content and the structure; and the last stage which is editing, where learners are expected to read, check grammar, vocabulary and mechanics, and produce a text that is correct and mistakes-free. Moreover, the interrelationship between the recursive stages of the process approach is best represented through Krashen’s model (1984). (See figure 2).

The process approach is very affective in emphasizing student interaction and experiences. According to Tribble (1996), it helps students to develop competence in writing using their creativity and inspiration, instead of imitating a model text”. However, it was criticized for the fact that it functions through individual psychology and neglects Socio-cultural context. This is supported by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) claiming that the approach does not rise up to the expectation and norms of formal academic writing, because several drafting, removing, adding are not sufficient to fulfill certain assignments within a limited period timing. Another

reason for which this process was criticized is the fact that it enhances learners' writings through internal motivation, whereas some learners are motivated well when they are motivated externally, for example when their writings are rewarded or marked.

Nemouchi (2009, p. 81) in the table below, points at the main differences between the product and process approaches:

The Product Approach	The Process Approach
<p>This is a traditional approach, in which students focus on the study of model texts. Accuracy is given priority and conversations are taken from the model. The following stages have been identified :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model texts are read, and then features of the genre are highlighted ... students focus on where and how the writer employs these techniques.</li> <li>• this consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation</li> <li>• Organization of ideas. This stage is very important. Those who favor this approach believe that the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the control of language.</li> <li>• The end result of the learning process. Students choose from a choice of comparable writing tasks. Individually , they use the skills structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the product ; to show what they can do as competent users of the language</li> </ul>	<p>This is the new trend teaching writing, in which priority is given to fluency. It is mainly based on the identification of the steps a writer goes through in his act of writing. He should be made aware of them so that he can gain control on them. These steps are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating ideas by brainstorming and discussion. Students could be discussing qualities needed to do certain job, or giving reasons as to why people take drugs or gambling. The teacher remains in the background during this phase; only providing language support if required, so as not inhibiting students in the production of ideas.</li> <li>• Students extend ideas into note form, and judge quality and usefulness of ideas.</li> <li>• Students organize ideas into concepts map. This stage helps to make the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas more immediately obvious, which helps the students with their texts.</li> <li>• Students write the first draft. This is done in class and frequently in pairs or groups.</li> <li>• Drafts are exchanged, so that students become the readers of each other's work. By responding as readers, students develop an awareness of the fact that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else, and thus can improve their own drafts.</li> <li>• Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback.</li> <li>• A final draft is written.</li> <li>• Students once again, exchange and read each others' work and perhaps even write a response or reply.</li> </ul>

**Table.1:** Difference between the Product and the Process Approach. (Nemouchi 2009, p. 81)



### 1.5.3. The Genre Approach

The genre based approach to the teaching of writing came as an extension of the product approach, as regarded by White and Badgar (2000). It engages learners in writing activities to produce a final composition that involves linguistic conventions of language use in addition to social and cultural contexts. It is defined by Hyland (2004) as “a turn for grouping texts together representing how writers typically use language to respond to reoccurring situation” (p. 04). Another definition given to genre oriented approach is by Swales (1990, p. 320, cited in Hedge 2000) who claims that:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constraint choice of content and style.

This approach; like the product one, involves a model text but in terms of purpose, that is to say, learners are not expected to study and analyze only the linguistic features of a text, but also to study a text within a particular genre to reflect a specific purpose and communicate with a specific audience. This idea is supported by Swales (1990, p. 58, cited in White and Badgar, 2000, p. 155), as he states that “a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the numbers of which share some sets of communicative purposes”.

To fulfill any academic piece of writing through this approach, learners do not pay attention to language forms, vocabulary, and lexis patterns only; however, they need to gain and employ language about the different genres of writing and the objectives behind and within a text, as affirmed by Richards (2003) who says that “the central belief here is that we do not just write, we write to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done” (p. 18).

In the other hand, Nemouchi (2009, p. 95) made a distinction between the genre approach and the one that preceded it; process approach, in the following table:

Process Approach	Genre Approach
<p>Writing is thinking process concerns with the act of writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on creative writer.</li> <li>• Skills in using language.</li> <li>• How to produce and link ideas.</li> <li>• Makes processes of writing transparent.</li> <li>• Provides basis for teaching.</li> <li>• Assumes L1 and L2 writing similar.</li> <li>• Overlooks L2 language difficulties.</li> <li>• Insufficient attention to product.</li> <li>• Assumes all writing uses the same processes.</li> </ul>	<p>Writing is a social activity concerned with the final product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on reader expectations and product.</li> <li>• Knowledge about language.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the context in which writing happens.</li> <li>• How to express social purposes effectively.</li> <li>• Makes textual conversations transparent.</li> <li>• Contextualizes writing for audience and purposes.</li> <li>• Requires rhetorical understanding of texts.</li> <li>• Can lead to over attention to written skills needed to texts.</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Difference between the Process and Genre Approaches. (Nemouchi, 2009, p. 95)

#### 1.5.4. The Content Approach

Content-based approach is a recently emerged approach to teach writing skill. It gives higher attention and greater importance to the content of the written productions, and language forms and functions. Hyland (2003) illustrates that “a *content orientation* can also form the basis of courses that focus more on language structures and functions that help students to generate, develop, and organize their ideas on a given topic” (p. 16). According to

him, this approach helps the learners to enhance their abilities and skills to read a material effectively, which gives them basis on which they will be able to produce their own writings.

According to Krashen (1982), the focus is not how to write, but rather on what is written. The learning skills are integrated in the content oriented approach, learners tend to read, listen, and discuss a certain topic before they engage in writing about it. Krashen (1993, as cited in Hyland 2003, p. 17) again considers both extensive reading and regular practice as essential parts and major supports in achieving a successful writing in the second language, through the content-based approach. Shih (1986) believes that the content based approach is distinct from the other approaches to teach writing, because they focus on writing and interpretation of information from different sources such as books, lectures, etc. While content approach gives priority to writing about personal observations of whatever surrounds the learners.

### **1.6. The Relationship between Writing and Reading**

The writing skill is closely related to the other skills of language learning, especially the reading skill. Despite the difference between the two skills, reading as a receptive skill and writing as a productive one; they are closely related. Both reading and writing involve cognitive abilities which make them equally significant as tools of communication and construction of meaning and knowledge. It is claimed that good writers are often good readers and vice versa, and that learners are exposed to the written structures and the system of language when reading a text. The quality and effectiveness of learners' written tasks depend on the amount of their reading; this is supported by Thomas (1976, cited in Flippo and Caverly 2000, p. 15) who illustrates that "A significant relationship existed between writing achievements and the amount and variety of reading experiences".

Reading enriches the necessary elements for learners to be able to write. According to Sabiakto and Nababan (1983), learners' productions on paper are highly influenced by information they comprehend from reading, consequently they develop vocabulary, language mechanism, and get familiarized with the rules of grammar. However, the impact of reading is beyond the standardized system of language because it helps learners to improve their style, imagination, and creativity, in addition to the new information and ideas they are exposed to. Within this context Hyland (2003) states that "writing together with reading, is a central aspect of literacy" (p. 53).

### **1.7. The importance of academic writing**

Hyland (2003:69) accounts for the importance of the writing skill in creating social links and connections between individuals as a system of communication by insisting on the fact that "Writing is one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others". One of the objectives behind learning a certain language is to be able to write affectively; at universities, academic writing is a substantial necessity and an essential tool to evaluate students' proficiency level because it evolves the use of proper language structures and style. Nevertheless its significance is beyond the good grades in examinations but also when it comes to employment and expertise after graduation. Another significance of academic writing is that students learn how to be confident, objective, rational, and logical in explaining thoughts that belongs to others. According to Brown and Hood (1989), learners build self-confidence to write independently, which will reflect the way they write and learn the language.

### **1.8. Plagiarism and the techniques to avoid it**

In an attempt to fulfill any academic requirement, learners tend to copy information from outside sources without attributing any credit to its original owner; in this case they are

accused of committing plagiarism. This act is unacceptable in writing even if information was reformulated into one's own it is still necessary to mention the original source from which it was taken; otherwise claiming an idea to be yours is a theft of intellectual property. In this sense, Gibaldi (1998) reports that "using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source constitutes plagiarism. Derived from the Latin *plagiarius* ('Kidnapper'), plagiarism refers to a form of an intellectual theft" (p. 151).

Moreover, Gardner (1999) demonstrates that "in academic writing you must show that you have read and understood the recommended books and any other relevant reading, but not by copying what they say. The ideas are owned by the writer. Copying in any way that makes the ideas appear to be your own is *plagiarism* ».

Fishman (2009) makes a distinction of plagiarism from three other concepts which are: theft, fraud, and copyright infringement, in an attempt to specify its definition. Plagiarism is often defined as theft, which somehow true in the sense that it is about taking ideas that belongs to someone else, yet differ in the consequences of the action; since plagiarism will not cause any harm to the original owner of the work as in theft. Another conceptualization of plagiarism is fraud, when the source from which the information is taken is omitted; however, plagiarism does not mean that the real owner will no longer own the work after it is been plagiarized as in the case of fraud. It is considered also as copyright infringement since they both share some features. Yet, someone who plagiarized does not deprive the original owner of his/her benefits coined by the laws of copyright.

To achieve any writing assignment, learners should pay serious attention to the academic integrity, giving credit to the owner by citing the information used in the work. Gillet et.al (2009) suggest certain techniques to do so; stating that "There are two ways in which you can

refer to, or cite, another person's work: (1) by direct quotation or (2) by reporting (through summary or paraphrase)" (p. 181).

### **1.8.1. Quoting**

Quoting is a recording of an idea as it is found in the original source, using quotation marks. It is usually preceded by an introductory statement and followed by a comment or a clarification, so that the reader can relate to the situation and purpose for which a text is composed. According to Gillet et.al (2009, p. 181), a quote is used as a support or evidence for a particular idea, it is better to put exact words than to paraphrase them when they are more precised, memorable, and interesting.

### **1.8.2. Summarizing**

It is a brief overview of the original source, as explained by Fulwiler (2002) "When you condense an author's idea, you are summarizing it" (p. 41). Thus summarizing is selecting the most essential points and excluding additional statements and extra information, and then link the sections of the source using new simplified words. It is necessary to indicate the name both the source and owner.

### **1.8.3. Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is to re-state or reformulate an idea using new words. Unlike summarizing, paraphrasing includes both the main points and the supporting details; still remain truthful and honest to meaning which the original writer wants to convey. It is preferable to paraphrase than to use the previous techniques because it provides more detailed and specific information that fits the new written production; in this sense, Gillet et.al (2009) state that "You may wish to maintain a closer link with the original but you do not want to quote word for word, paraphrasing is one solution" (p. 190).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter gives insights about the concept of writing by exploring its nature, approaches, processes, and the different elements that contributes to its improvement. At the end we come to the conclusion that the writing skill is not an easy task to be fulfilled; knowledge about features, conventions, in addition to the awareness about the target audience are very essential, and must be taken into consideration by learners in order to enhance and reinforce their writing competency.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Using IST to Develop**  
**Academic Writing**



## **Chapter Two: Using ICT to Develop Academic Writing**

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## **Introduction**

The Twenty First Century has witnessed a rapid growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This innovation has changed all the aspects of life such as, business, marketing, trade, science, education and other fields. Today, ICT is currently used in education and offers a range of devices that helps in developing the process of teaching and learning English language skills; more precisely, the writing skill. In this respect, the present chapter discusses an overview on ICTs, through some definitions and its integration in the field of education; especially in the EFL teaching and learning. This chapter also highlights the advantages and disadvantage of using such technologies. Finally, the contribution of ICTs in developing the writing skill, dealing with the precised components: internet; as source for information, word processor; as an application for writing, and e-mail; as a medium between Teacher and learner.

### **2.1. Definition of ICT**

ICT is an acronym that stands for “information and communication technology/technologies”, where the computer and the internet play a major role for the change and reform of many domains, mainly education, UNISCO. It was also defined by Sheridan (2002) as a “diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information” (p. 81). So ICT is concerned with the manipulation, storage, and the processing of digital data, it enables people to communicate in real time using technological devices and applications such as the computer and social networking.

ICTs encompass any electronic communication tools and information systems, such as computer, internet, cellular phones, wireless and broadcasting technologies. According to Deeson (2005, p. 04), information and communication technology include computers and its

different tools and sensors which are referred to as information systems to process information. These technologies are being partially integrated and used in many fields and domains such as industry, health-care, business, and education. This idea is supported by Loveless and Ellis (2003), who claim that “the words information and communication technology describe a set of technologies with particular applications which vary enormously in purpose and scope within and between subject contexts” (p. 23).

In short, ICT refers to the several technologies used in the current days all over the world; to inform and transmit data. More importantly, ICTs are the combination of a diversity of materials and tools with other electronic programs and networks in order to create, store, interpret, and transmit information. It is worth mentioning that the integration of ICTs is becoming increasingly important not only in the telecommunication areas but rather in different fields and domains, more specifically education.

## **2.2. ICTs in Education and EFL**

The past few decades have witnessed the enormous widespread of ICT and its influential importance in the educational framework generally, and the EFL field particularly. This innovation came as an alternative to the traditional methods and ways of education, as it is today considered as a major driving force for educational change and reform. Accordingly, in introducing the concept of Grid for Learning, Blair (1991) stated that “Technology has revolutionized the way we work as it is now set to transform education. Children cannot be effective in tomorrow’s world if they are trained in yesterday’s skill”.

Weert and Tatnall (2005) point out that ICT has enhanced the standards of education, and that it enables the learner to comprehend certain phenomenon by creating real situations inside the classroom and relating both theory and practice. Thus, ICT has extended and empowered the ways teachers and learners explore the language in the information age. This trend has

become a significant instrument and an integral part of academic development with different objectives. In this respect, Plomp et al (1996, as cited in Al-Zaidiyeen, 2010, p. 212) set three objectives for ICT use in education as: objects of study, aspects of discipline at all levels and professions, and teaching/learning medium.

Castro and Aleman (2011) claim that this innovation has changed the teaching atmosphere into a more learner-centered one. Actually, learners today are able to discover new learning topics and projects, explore new ideas, solve problems and find solutions related to real life situations, as well as discuss and exchange information in real time. This is supported by Wallet (2014), who illustrates that “ICT in education has a multiplier effect throughout the educational system, by enhancing learning and providing students with new sets of skills”. In the same vein, Padurean and Megan (2009) state that “The application of ICT gives more opportunities for communication between peer learners: they can exchange information in real time, they can participate in blog discussions, work in teams on different projects, exchange e-mails, search for information, etc” (p. 98). However, it is not only about learners’ opportunities, teachers also benefit from the integration of these digital technologies, since it allows them to prepare and display more information and activities, as well as increasing learners’ motivation and involvement in the learning process which its self becomes more interesting and productive.

In brief, ICT integration in education has become a dynamic and driving force which offers a set of opportunities for the sake of enhancing and revolutionizing the educational systems and facilitates the learning and teaching processes, as well as providing students and teachers with unlimited number of options to achieve exceptional potentials inside and outside the classroom.

## **2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of ICTs**

Many scholars and studies assert the positive impact and advantages when it comes to the implementation of ICT to develop the field of teaching and learning English, and education in general. However, it is important to highlight and draw attention to some risks and disadvantages ICT can result.

### **2.3.1. Advantages of ICTs**

In the recent years, the integration of ICT in the field of education has afforded positive advantages in ameliorating insights and competences of learners, and methods and strategies of teachers. Plump et.al (2009) claim that governments and education systems all over the world consider the use of ICTs as a crucial innovation; for empowering both learning and teaching (cited in Bhasin, 2012, p. 131). Thus, the integration of ICTs improves and facilitates the teaching and learning processes through its enormous advantages provided for both teachers and learners.

In the field of EFL teaching and learning, Paas and Creech (2008, p. 4) consider ICTs as tools applied to extend the learner's capacity to receive, comprehend and exchange information, which is best noticed through the expanded use of online learning programs and materials in the classroom to support the learning process. In the same context, Majumdar (2006, p. 7) claims that the application of ICTs in learning and teaching EFL has provided several benefits particularly for learners, he states them as the following:

- Explore and represent information dynamically and in many forms.
- Become socially aware and more confident.
- Increase motivation.
- Communicate effectively about complex processes.
- Develop better understanding and broader view of processes and systems.

- Greater problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

On his turn, Newhouse (2002, p.51) illustrates some positive gains of using ICTs in EFL teaching and learning as the following:

- The level of learners' motivation can be stimulated when their compositions and performances are consulted immediately.
- The writing task is proved to be facilitated through some computerized application, which makes learners more ready to involve and engage in the redrafting and amelioration of the written productions.
- Students self-esteem and pride is more likely increased and developed as a result of the high quality of presentation made using ICTs.
- ICTs often improves level of achievement for learners and makes the learning more enjoyable due to the collaborative work, the exchange of ideas, and the open discussions possible when using particular ICTs such as e-mail, digital cameras...etc.

The personal approach is one essential advantage in EFL learning; learners are independent and able to develop their proficiency even outside the academic settings due to the wider access to online resources. According to Khvilon and Berenfeld (2005, p.182), more learning will occur outside the classrooms in the future, as learners; especially those who are home-bound or out of school for some reasons, will search and find their needs and preferences online, and also maintain communication with their peers and classmates, as well as teachers.

For teachers, the use of ICT enables them to plan and prepare the learning sources and to create a flexible learning environment with a system of information delivery that is developmental, interactive and digital based, in order to improve students' attendance and

concentration. This implies that ICT allows teachers to facilitate the learning process and create comfortable atmosphere through which the transformation of data moves smoothly in collaborative and communicative way without any boundaries and difficulties from the learners' side. In addition to that, ICT allows teachers to bring the whole world into classroom activities. This means that through ICT devices and programs, teachers are able to assimilate real life situations inside the classroom to meet the needs and preferences of their learners, and to create communication channels with them.

### **2.3.2. Disadvantages of ICTs**

The potential disadvantage of ICT in EFL learning and in education in general may appear from the side of teacher, learner, and ICT equipment itself. When it comes to learners, Scrimshaw (2004, p. 09) believes that they often vary between users and non users of technologies, which may create some kind of no equivalence of levels and skills among them. Furthermore, Richards (2001, p. 94) explains that ICT materials inevitably distracts learners from the real learning objectives and purposes into the ICT requirements and skills.

In the same context, Hargreaves et.al (2010, p. 190) declare that the use of various communication tools has changed the nature of relationship between teachers and learners. Moreover, poor technical supports, bad quality of internet access, technical issues and problems, in addition to risk of the loss or damage of information and systems are major factors in disturbing the rate and quality of learning. They also highlight the ethical issue of plagiarism, since technology enables learners to download and copy information without attributing credit to the original source, which is unacceptable in academic settings.

One negative side of integrating ICTs in EFL teaching and learning is that young aged students may know how to manipulate them more than their teachers do. For this particular reason, teachers may have some concerns about using technologies in teaching due to their

lack of training, confidence, and fear of failure. Again, Scrimshaw (2004) affirms that “many teachers who do not consider themselves to be well skilled in using ICT feel anxious about using it in front of a class of children who perhaps know more than they do” (p. 7)

As a conclusion, despite all the previously mentioned disadvantages, no one can deny that this innovation has contributed a lot in developing the field of EFL. It has changed the roles of teachers and learners, and the ownership of information into a more learner-oriented one. That is to say, learners have become the center of learning and teachers are no more the dominant source of information, yet still instructors and guiders of the learning process inside the classroom. In this case, learners are more autonomous and motivated to collect, produce and present information and knowledge using ICTs.

#### **2.4. Developing Academic Writing through ICT Components**

Enhancing writing through the use of technological devices is the concern of all the educational and the academic field. Different set of ICT applications are developed and applied to improve all the language skills, particularly writing, due to the various functions they imply. The most common software used for this sake is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

In fact, CALL created a wave of educational software by the 1980s. According to Macalister and Nation (2012, p.93), the integration of ICT in the field of language teaching and learning is embodied in two main areas which are: Computer Assisted Language learning (CALL) and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Yet CMC is regarded as a sub-category covered under the umbrella of CALL. It is defined by Levy (1997) who claims that it is “The search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (p. 1). In the same context, Eastment (1999) defines it as “soft-ware which presents



activities designed to help language learners” (p.22). This indicates that CALL represents computers as tremendous support for language teaching and learning.

CALL has earned a pedagogical value because of its contributions in making computers a sophisticated and flexible tools and aids for writing, and improving learners’ attitudes towards writing. In this respect, Paschalis (2001) declares that “via computers, written texts are merged with audio sequence and graphics. Thus, effective extensive techniques and different strategies are available in constructing new ways of representing knowledge” (p.22). In the same vein, Felix (2008) states that there exists “enough data in CALL to suggest positive effect on spelling, reading, and writing”. This implies that CALL applications and components has changed the ways learners plan, draft, and present their written compositions and realizations.

Components and soft-wares included in CALL, in which we are interested embarrasses Internet as a source of information, word processor as an application for writing, and e-mail as a mediator between teacher and learner.

#### **2.4.1. Internet**

Nowadays, information and communication technologies, especially the internet, play a major role in the field of teaching and learning English. In fact, this application proved to be the most effective tool to increase learners’ knowledge and skills. It can be defined as “an international computer net-wok made up of thousands of networks linked together. All those computers communicate with one another, share data, resources and transfer information” Chisholm (2001, p .13). It is also considered as “a global linking of computers that allows information transfer” (Wanajak, 2011, p.1). In other words, the internet is one of computer programs or systems that connect a variety of computers with each other through networking lines.

These days, everyone can have access to the internet, not only via computers, but also via mobiles and other smart devices. In fact, it is a facilitator tool that is highly used in education especially in learning second or foreign languages due to the variety of materials and online sources. According to Deore (2012) “the internet is a collection of various services and resources” (p. 111), which means that the internet offers a lot of information and it is considered as helpful software in communicating and searching all different subjects.

Internet has a big deal in the field of teaching and learning foreign languages. In this respect, Yand and Chen (cited in Aydin 2007, p. 18) illustrates that “Internet enables English learners to access useful language resources and communicate directly with native English speakers..... Students can learn listening, speaking, reading, and writing English interactively via real-world situations”. This means that internet has partially substituted the old and traditional sources of information like books and libraries in the digital age. Actually, Duggleby (2001, p. 19) defines internet in this context as the following

The biggest library that has ever existed and also one that you can pop into with a few mouse clicks or keyboard strokes. It is a library that you can reach from your workplace, from your home, from the place where you study and possibly from your local library.

Furthermore, Kellogg (1994) views that “during the writing process, learners are involved in certain cognitive operations which are characterized by collecting information and planning ideas” (p.16). However, learners do not rely only on their own ideas and information but rather on others’ claims and findings; this is easily managed through the use of the internet which is considered as a modernized source of information, through which learners can extract information to support their writings and researches. This is why internet is seen as the main technological software that affords a variety of resources. Accordingly, Mills (2006) states that “one of the greatest features of the internet is that it offers students relatively inexpensive access to a wealth of information across a vast range of fields” (p. 91). That is to

say, the internet is the new alternative that enables students to search and find all the relevant and needed information for their research and dissertation.

Despite the great contribution of internet in the field of EFL teaching and learning; particularly in developing the academic written compositions, it has some negative circumstance. According to Sandhyarani (2011), learner may fall in the trap of laziness and over-dependency; in the way they fully rely on the fast and easy access to internet web-sites for the sake of extracting information, without even trying to start from their basic and background knowledge. In addition to that, learners may be accused of committing an unacceptable ethical issue which is plagiarism.

In short, the internet is a supportive and beneficial tool that enables learners to achieve their writing in effective and efficient ways, because it offers a variety of online resources through which they search and learn more about the topics they are supposed to write about. The internet then will form basis for their assignments and help researching supporting statements.

#### **2.4.2. Word processor**

Abuseileek (2006, p.4) defines the word processor as one of the computer program used for editing texts, checking and correcting grammar, style, punctuation and spelling errors. He describes this application also as “the most enabling and beneficial of all computer software”. Moreover, there exist seven major applications for word processor in writing: formatting, cutting and pasting, insertion and deletion, search, editing up, editing down and editing across. These functions enable learners to practice different tasks when editing texts. (cited in Abuseileek, 2006, p.2). In terms of spell checking, Warschauer (1998) indicates that word processor is a useful application in decreasing students’ fear of making spelling mistakes, thus composing essays with fewer errors. (cited in Li and Culling, 2001, p.129).

According to Alharbi (2008) “using technology has a positive impact on using the internet for ESL students’ reading and writing skills with word processor, students build upon natural connections between reading, writing and thinking” (p. 29, cited in Alduwaiery, 2014, p. 9). Furthermore, Akyol supports the use of word processor and he considers it as “a way to enable students to enhance their reading and writing skills”. He notes that “word processors, including some that are bilingual, are an excellent way to further writing development and motivate students to write” (cited in Alduwaiery, 2014, p.10).

Many scholars and researchers have indicated the significant role of word processor applications, especially the spell-check, through which learners are easily and automatically able to correct their grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. This idea is supported by Abushaar and Abuseileek (2013), who show that “word processor is very helpful in checking errors, suggesting correct forms and providing feedback about them” (p. 61). In other words, the use of this application facilitates the writing process. Furthermore, learners are more engaged in the work when they have opportunity to use such technology in revising their drafts by checking and correcting errors occurred. This idea is best supported by Daiute (1986), who reports preliminary evidence that “students revised more when writing with word processor” (cited in MacArthur, 2009, p. 94). Therefore, the application of correction in the word processor is explained through examples provided by VanHuss et.al (2011, p.107). (see figure 3 & 4).

Cunningham (2000) reveals that word processor contributes in improving students’ writing abilities since it increases their focus on writing and revising, in the same time share their ideas with others. In other words, this software motivates learners to be more engaged in writing through focusing their attention on certain features such as, grammar rules, organization and word choice (cited in Abuseileek, 2006, p. 6). Furthermore, MacArthur (2009) states that “one of the potential benefits of word processing is that the ease of editing

might encourage more and better revision”. That is to say, word processor motivates and gives learners the opportunity to make various changes on their writings, which may improve its quality; proving that word processing is “a promising tool to enhance revising” (MacArthur, 2009, p. 94).

All in all, word processor can be considered as one of the beneficial computer- program that may help students of all levels to produce higher quality compositions including, essays, research papers, dissertation, and other forms of academic writing. In fact, this writing device facilitates the writing process due to the several options it offers, which increase learners’ willingness and motivation to write. Since word processor is a program used during writing, it gives learners the opportunity to check and correct their errors so that it makes them more confident and autonomous in exploring and overcoming all the areas of difficulties they may face.

### **2.4.3. E-mail**

Through the past years, e-mail was used only in the field of business; however, it starts to be included and implemented in education in the recent years, due to its contributions in modernizing this sector. E-mail; referring to electronic mail, is best defined as “a method of transmitting data, text files, digital photos, or audio-visual files from one computer to another over the internet” (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2009). This implies that e-mail is one of the most common forms of electronic transmission of information, whenever access to internet is available” .Additionally, Collin (2004) considers email as “a system for sending letters and parcels from one place to another”.

E-mail is seen as the medium of interaction and “the application most used in the internet”. (Warschauer, 1995, cited in Hayati and Gooran, 2014 ).Therefore, Kolaly (2005,p .51) explains that in the case where computers are linked to internet, e-mail facilitates the process

of interacting and exchanging information, files, or any other kind of attachment, almost instantly. This means that students are able to interact and exchange information, documents, books or any other kind of knowledge, thus help them produce their different assignments and then share it with their teachers or classmates; especially that messages and documents can be sent to one or a group of user simultaneously.

Furthermore, e-mail is a useful device that offers learners the opportunity to practice language and enhance their writing style. This was supported by Belisle (1996), who sees that “whenever students are using email, they are able to write more, ask more questions, and use more language functions” (cited in Noraien, 2007, p. 1 ). Actually, e-mail also helps learners to avoid spelling and grammatical errors using the spell-check and the auto correction; just like the word processor, especially if learners are expected to write their homework and assignments via e-mail. Consequently, learners’ written productions would be more polished and academic. In this respect, Race and others (2005, p.127) affirm that:

Many email systems support spell-check facilities, which can allow you to type really fast and ignore most of the resulting errors, then correct them all just before sending your message. This also causes you to re-read each message, which can be very useful for encouraging you to add second thoughts that may have occurred to you as you went further in your assessment of the task.

Moreover, e-mail is becoming the most well-liked and preferred channel of communication between teachers and learners. As claimed by Cooper (2010, p. 222), e-mail is an excellent medium for teachers to share and exchange sources and materials with their learners. In fact, receiving feedback is one of the crucial issues in foreign language learning, because it is very beneficial for developing learners’ proficiency, yet students nowadays are receiving more feedback from their teachers about their fulfillment electronically submitted; especially the written ones almost instantly. In this context, Shawki (1999) illustrate that “feedback from the instructor can be received more quickly than messages sent by mail. Students can read messages at their convenience and easily store them from later reference”

(p. 53). Additionally, Li (2000) sees that students are receptive of feedback via email compared to the traditional corrective feedback method using pen and paper. (cited in Yoke and others, 2013, p. 176). So this rapidity, flexibility and influence of e-mail help teachers to check, correct, and assess their learners' compositions. Consequently, enhance learners' foreign language competency.

From the previously mentioned views, email is regarded as a new way that gives learners the opportunity to interact, transmit and receive all types of documents from their teachers or classmates, thus help developing their learning and more precisely their writing. Van Fossen (2001, p. 57) argues that email is a helpful application that enables students to develop their researches or assignments, and to use all technological tools more easily (cited in Hayati and Gooran, 2014, p. 2). That is to say, through the feedback sent by teachers or tutors, learners are able to recognize their mistakes and errors, then correct and modify them effectively, and finally producing more successful and acceptable writings.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter attempts to show how components of ICTs can affect learners' academic writing; including the internet; as a source of information, word processor; as an application for writing, and e-mail; as a mediator between teachers and learner. These technologies help improving the writing skill, because they offer numerous opportunities for learners, as they surf the internet to find the appropriate and necessary resources for their researches or assignments. Then, use the word processor to type all information required, allowing auto correction for grammatical and spelling mistakes. Finally, send and share their final written works with teachers or supervisors, so they receive electronic feedback in return. This chapter also highlights the disadvantages resulting from the inappropriate use those devices and technologies, that may hinder their learning.



**Chapter Three:**  
**Data Analysis and**  
**Interpretation**

## **Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

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## **Introduction**

The previous chapters dealt with the literature reviews and theoretical backgrounds of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and how the latter could be critical dimensions in developing academic written achievements. This chapter deals with the practical study of the research, to find out both teachers and learners' impressions about the use of ICTs in relation to writing; particularly: the internet as a source of information, word processor as an application to write, and e-mail as a mediator between teacher and learner. Hence, the present chapter starts with a brief description of the tools used and the sample upon which the research has been conducted, then a deep analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaires administered to both teachers of written expression and learners of English at 8 Mai 1954 university of Guelma. The results of this study which are presented in statistical forms, helps us reveal the difficulties and obstacles that learners face when writing academically, besides their attitudes and to what extent they use such technologies to overcome those difficulties.

### **3.1. Students' Questionnaire**

#### **3.1.1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

Students' questionnaire was designed in order to collect data about students' impressions concerning the task of writing, and gather information about their experiences in using ICTs in fulfilling their academic written productions.

#### **3.1.2. Sample and Administration of the Questionnaire**

In order to investigate the hypothesis of the research, we designed a questionnaire for students of master one (97 individuals) from the department of English at the university of Guelma. We handed out the questionnaires to 80 students randomly selected students and they were supposed to answer the questionnaire according to their previous experiences in writing their training reports or pieces of writing.

### 3.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire consists of 22 items between open/closed-ended and multiple choice questions that are answered by ticking the corresponding boxes expressing ideas or justifying when necessary. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: first section (Q1-Q3) is devoted to some general information about the participants such as their age and gender. The second section (Q4-Q12), is about the type of academic writing, learners' impressions and attitudes towards writing, and the difficulties that they may encounter in fulfilling this task. Finally, the third section (Q13-Q22), concerns the use of ICTs in terms of developing academic writing productions, to know how and to what extent master one students use these specific technologies to achieve acceptable academic writings.

### 3.1.4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

#### Section One: General Information

**Q1:** Learners' gender.

Table 3

*Students' distribution according to gender.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Male	5	6.25 %
Female	75	93.75 %
Total	80	100 %

The table above shows a noticeable difference between the number of males and females contributing in answering the questionnaire. The results recorded 75 females, representing (93.75%) of the whole population, whereas only 5 males were recorded; generating a percentage of (6.25%). This is not a matter of motivation and contribution; in fact there exist only 5 Master One male students. This variation is maybe due to female's interest in choosing the literal stream particularly studying and learning foreign languages.

**Q2:** Learners' age.

Table 4

*Students' distribution according to age.*

	Numbers	Percentages
21-25	76	95%
26-28	1	1.25%
More than 28	3	3.75%
Total	80	100%

This table above reveals that the majority of our participants are between the age of 21 and 25, representing the highest percentage of the whole population (95%), this maybe a crucial factor in facilitating learning. On the other hand 3 students (3.75%) are above the age of 28, and one only student is aged between 26 and 28 years old, generating (1.25%). We may speculate that they might have failed in joining master classes right after their license graduation or for some other reasons.

**Q3:** Learners' choice to study English.

Table 5

*Students' choice to study English.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Optional	71	88.75%
Imposed	9	11.25%
Total	80	100%

The results represented in the table above shows that 71 students (88.75%) of the whole sample have chosen English by their own will, because they like the language and they want to develop their level, besides the desire to become future teachers. 9 students, representing (11.25%), did not choose to study English, however; it was imposed on them for several

reasons, maybe because their baccalaureate averages were not enough for them to join their desired branch.

## **Section Two: Academic Writing.**

**Q4:** What does writing mean to you?

Table 6

*Students' views about the writing skill.*

	Numbers	Percentages
An important skill that needs to be developed	63	78.75%
A tool for communication	12	15%
An activity that you do just for grades	5	6.25%
Total	80	100%

As provided in the table above, the majority of students (78.75%) opted for the first option; therefore, they consider the writing skill an important one that needs to be developed. (15%) think of writing as a tool for communication. The rest of the sample (6.25%) ticked the third option “an activity which they do just for grades”. This implies that nearly all the participants are aware and conscious about the significance of writing.

**Q5:** How do you find the courses of writing expression?

Table 7

*Students' impression about the courses of writing expression.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Very interesting	31	38.75%
Interesting	40	50%
Not really special	9	11.25%
Not interesting	0	0%
Total	80	100%

Throughout the table above we notice that half of the informants (50%) account the course of writing expression as interesting. A number of 31 students, which represents (38.75%) of the sample, consider it as very interesting, whereas 9 participants (11.25%) do not find the courses really special. The last option, however, was not chosen by any one. The results obtained indicate that the majority of students find the module not boring maybe because they get exposed to knowledge which enables them to freely express their thoughts and views about different topics.

**Q6:** How do you evaluate your level in writing?

Table 8

*Students' level in writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Excellent	0	0%
Good	50	62.5%
Average	22	27.5%
Low	8	10%
Total	80	100%

The results in table 9 reveal that 50 informants (62.5%) evaluated their level in writing as “good”. (27.5%) is the percentage of those who claimed having an average level, whereas low level was chosen by 8 students only (10%). None of our participants have an excellent level in writing, maybe because they are still in the learning process. For this particular reason, their writing proficiency is not polished enough for them to reach excellence.

**Q7:** According to you, what is/are the most important element(s) of academic writing?

Table 9

*Students' most important elements of academic writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Organization of ideas	10	12.5%
Clarity of meaning	6	7.5%
Coherence of sentences	11	13.75%
Correct choice of words	6	7.5%
A+B+C	21	26.25%
All together	26	32.5%
Total	80	100%

Results are recorded as the following: (12.5%) of the students ticked “organization of ideas”, others (13.75%) ticked “coherence of meaning”, (7.5%) of the participants chose “clarity” and “correct choice of words”. The observed results reveal that students also blended options, (26.25%) of responses was a combination of items “organization”, “clarity”, and “coherence”. The highest rate, however, is (32.5%), which represents those who ticked all elements together as equally important.

**Q8:** How often do you revise your assignment before the submission?

Table 10

*Students' frequency of revising writings.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Always	49	61.25%
Sometimes	22	27.5%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	9	11.25%
Total	80	100%



The table above reveals that (61%) of students opted for the option “always” when they were asked about the frequency of revision. (27.5%) opted for the second option “sometimes”. This may indicate that learners are aware about the process of revision. 9 students (11.25%) acknowledge that they never revise their writings before submitting, maybe because they pay enough attention to writing during the process of drafting or for other reason. Concerning the option “rarely”, no answer is recorded.

**Q9:** Does the revision help you improve the written assignment?

Table 11

*Learner’s attitude toward revision.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	71	88.75%
No	9	11.25%
Total	80	100%

As provided in the table above, we notice that the highest rate (88.75%) represents learners who ticked the option “ yes”, they claimed that revision helps them discover and correct mistakes, modify some ideas, and reorganize certain structures. Therefore, it is efficient in improving their writings. On the other hand, (11.25%) of students responded negatively; their answers resulted from the previous question (those who never revise their writings). Consequently, they do not relate to the situation.

**Q10:** Do you face any difficulties when you write your academic assignments?

Table 12

*Students facing difficulties in writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	80	100%
No	0	0%
Total	80	100%

The table above indicated that 100% of students confess that they face difficulties when writing academically. Consequently, we can deduce that academic writing is not an easy task to be done since it consists of specific aspects and criteria that learners may ignore or find difficult.

**Q11:** If your answer is yes, which ones of the following areas you face difficulties with?

Table 13

*Students' areas of difficulty in writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Vocabulary	17	21.25%
Spelling	16	20%
Grammar	24	30%
Punctuation	8	10%
All together	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%

This questionnaire seeks to determine areas which learners face difficulties with. The responses to this question are as follows: 17 students (21.25%) chose vocabulary, 16 student (20%) chose spelling, 24 others (30%) opted for grammar, and 8 of them (10%) ticked the option punctuation. The rest of correspondents 18.75% considered all the previously

mentioned elements as areas of difficulties. In other words, poor linguistic background, ignored grammatical rules, misspelled words, and misplaced punctuation are major difficulties which unable learners to write accurately.

**Q12:** What do you think about the expression “Better readers, better writers”?

Table 14

*Students’ impression about the expression “Better readers, better writers”.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Strongly agree	53	66.25%
Agree	21	26.25%
Disagree	6	7.5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	80	100%

This last question about academic writing aims at knowing learners’ impression about the expression “Better readers, better writers”. As it was expected, the table above shows that the majority of students (66.25%) strongly agree, and other (26.25%) agree on the expression. This implies that reading and writing are complementary skills, hence; mastering one skill inevitably leads to the mastery of the other. On the other hand, (7.5%) of students stated that they disagree; maybe because they did not experience reading in relation to writing. No one strongly disagree.

### Section Three: The Use of ICTs to Develop Academic Writing.

**Q13:** According to your last years' experience, which ones of the following ICTS you used to write your training report/ dissertation?

Table 15

*Students' use of ICTs.*

	Numbers	Perctages
Internet	0	0%
Word Processor	0	0%
E-mail	0	0%
Internet+ Word Processor	13	16.25%
Word Processor+ E-mail	28	35%
All together	39	48.75%
Total	80	100%

Based on the data exhibited in the table above, it seems that (48.75%) of Master One students use all the ICTs (internet, word processor, and e-mail) together to write their training reports and dissertations, this indicates that learners have a positive attitude toward these particular technologies. Whereas, the rest of the correspondent's answers varied between the combination of options word processor and e-mail (35%). Therefore, they did not extract information from the internet. The two options "internet + word processor" were combined by (16.25%) of students, simply because they did not contact their supervisors via e-mail.

**Q14:** Do you have access to internet at home?

Table 16

*Students' access to internet at home.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	63	78.75%
No	17	21.25%
Total	80	100%

The aim of this item is to know about the availability of internet for students. 63 of them; representing (78.75%) of the whole sample, responded by “yes”, i.e. they have access to internet at home. In contrast, 17 students; generating (21.25%), responded negatively. We can deduce that the majority of learners have access to internet at home.

**Q15:** How often do you use the internet to learn about the topic you are supposed to write about?

Table 17

*Students' frequency of using the internet as source of information.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Always	44	55%
Sometimes	36	45%
Never	0	0%
Total	80	100%

According to the results shown on the table above, (55%) of the participants acknowledged that they always use the internet to learn about the topics they are supposed to write about, this implies that the internet is an effective source of information. On the other hand, (45%) of them pointed out that they use it for the same sake yet only sometimes, maybe because they

already have background knowledge about some topics, thus they do not need to check the internet.

**Q16:** Which one is your preferable tool to write?

Table 18

*Students' preferable tool to write.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Pen+ Paper	18	22.5%
Word processor	62	77.5%
Total	80	100%

As provided in the table above, the majority of students (77.5%) prefer to write using the word processor, while the (22.5%) of them chose the pen and paper as their preferable tool to conduct their academic writings. These responses are though related to some habitual or psychological reasons, as it reflects personality.

**Q17:** Does the application 'word processor' helps you/ facilitates the writing task?

Table 19

*Students' attitude toward the word processor.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	80	100%
No	0	0%
Total	80	100%

The table reveals that (100%) of Master One' students believe that the application of word processor facilitates their writing tasks. For this question, students are supposed to justify their answers, and the justifications varied between the following:

- Saves time.
- Automatically indicates and corrects mistakes.
- The written document seems more formal.

**Q18:** Does the word processor indicate your errors on the level of grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

Table 20

*Word processor indication of errors.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	80	100%
No	0	0%
Total	80	100%

The results show that 80 students, representing (100%), confirmed that word processor indicates their errors on the level of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This rate implies that all students of Master One are familiar with this application and the way it functions.

**Q19:** How do you react when the word processor indicates errors in your writing?

Table 21

*Students' reaction to the errors indicated by the word processor.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Learn about the nature of the error then correct it	41	51.25%
Correct the error automatically	32	40%
Correct the error then learn about its nature	7	8.75%
Ignore the error	0	0%
Total	80	100%

Throughout the table, we notice that the majority of students (51.25%) learn about the nature of the error then correct it, this helps them avoid committing similar ones in the future. (40%) of them correct the error automatically by the word processor, maybe because it is only a typing mistake caused when they rush using the keyboard. The rest, representing (8.75%), claimed that they correct the error automatically then learn about its nature, this is often the case when the time is limited. When it comes to the last option “ignore the error”, no answer was recorded.

**Q20:** Do you send your written assignments/draft to your teacher/ supervisor via e-mail?

Table 22

*Students' use of e-mail.*

	Number	Percentage
Yes	67	83.75%
No	13	16.25%
Total	80	100%

The table above shows that 67 of informants (83.75%) stated that they use the e-mail to send their draft to their supervisors, this high rate implies that this technology is used as mediator between students and teachers. However, the rest of them (16.25%) reacted negatively; maybe because they contact their supervisors directly without using e-mails or they do not contact them at all.



**Q21:** Which one is your preferable feedback?

Table 23

*Students' preferable feedback.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Immediate feedback via e-mail	60	75%
Late feedback in classroom	20	25%
Total	80	100%

The highest rate represented in the table above  $\frac{3}{4}$  (75%) is for the ones who prefer the immediate feedback via e-mail; it is the case when the ideas about their topics are still fresh in their minds and any modification suggested by their supervisors would be easy applied.  $\frac{1}{4}$  (25%) of students prefer the late feedback in the classroom which means that they like to have a close and direct meeting as their teachers provides them with feedback.

**Q22:** Do you receive e-mails from your teacher/ supervisors in return?

Table 24

*Students' reception of e-mail from their teachers.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	67	83.75%
No	13	16.25%
Total	80	100%

This last question seeks to check whether teachers provide feedback to students about their written compositions via e-mail or not. Consequently, 67 students (83.75%) answered by “yes”, whereas the remaining 13 (16.25%) answered by “no”. In other words, they receive nothing.

### 3.1.5. Discussion of the results

The analysis of the questionnaire addressed to Master One students shows that (93.75%) of them are females and most of them have chosen English by their own will. So they were much responsive towards this language. Concerning the second section, the majority of students are aware about the importance of the writing skill, and they try to develop it academically through the course of written expression which is considered as interesting module. According to the results obtained, we notice that most students are between good and average level in writing, yet all of them have difficulties especially on the level of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.

Moreover, the results deduced from the third section help us know about learners' attitudes towards the use and the impact of ICTs particularly, internet, word processor, and e-mail on the effectiveness of academic written productions. Actually, (48.75%) of students declared that they used the combination of the previously mentioned ICTs in writing their training reports and pieces of writing. Furthermore, a large group of students claimed that they regularly use the internet as a source of information to learn more about the topics they are supposed to write about. They also claimed that the word processor helps them indicate and correct their mistakes so that they will avoid in the future. They saw that this application is completely different from the handwriting.

This questionnaire also helped us reveal that the majority of students use the e-mail to contact their teachers and supervisors concerning their academic wrings, and that they receive e-mails in turn containing feedback. Actually  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the whole students prefer this kind of feedback because it helps them modify the written work efficiently since the ideas would be still fresh in their minds.

### **3.1. Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **3.2.1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather information about teachers' perspective towards the role of ICTs; particularly: internet, word processor, and e-mail, in enhancing the academic written achievements, and to see to what extent teachers support the use of such technologies.

#### **3.1.2. Sample and Administration of the Questionnaire**

The teachers who responded to this questionnaire are 10 of written expression with different professional degrees; at English department, university of Guelma. Their experiences, suggestions, and observations in the field of teaching writing are valuable for conducting our research.

#### **3.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 18 items, classified under three sections. The first section (Q1-Q3) deals with background information of teachers to indicate their qualification and experience in teaching written expression. Then, the second section (Q4-Q10) which deals with the academic writing in order to investigate teachers' views about some aspects of writing, including the level of their students and the common difficulties that they encounter while producing their academic writing. Finally, the third section (Q11-Q19), concerning the use of ICTs; particularly: internet, word processor, and e-mail to develop the academic written achievements, and to what extent teachers support the use of such technologies.

#### **3.1.4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

##### **Section One: General Information**

The revealed results show that all our informants held a Magister degree (MA). (60%) of them had a teaching experience at the university between three to six years, whereas for

(40%), it is between seven to ten years. Their experience in teaching written expression is between two to five years for (50%), and between six to nine years for the remaining (50%).

## **Section Two: The Academic Writing.**

**Q4:** What is/are the most important element(s) of academic writing?

Table 25

*Teachers' most important element of academic writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Organization of ideas	0	0%
Clarity of meaning	0	0%
Coherence of sentences	0	0%
Correct choice of words	0	0%
A+B+C	2	20%
All together	8	80%
Total	10	100%

As provided in the table above, the majority of teachers (80%) opted for the elements of academic writing all together, whereas (20%) of them answered through a combination of three options (organization of ideas, clarity of meaning, and coherence of sentences). These responses imply that features of academic writing are not involved separately, however, they are all integrated.

**Q5:** How do you evaluate your students' level in writing?

Table 26

*Teachers' perception towards their students' level.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Excellent	0	0%
Good	3	30%
Average	6	60%
Low	1	10%
Total	10	100%

According to the results displayed in the table above, the majority of teachers (60%) claimed that the level of their students in writing is totally average. (30%) of them evaluated their students' level as "good". Whereas only one teacher (10%) affirms that it is "low". However, none of the respondents saw that his/her students are excellent in writing. The findings reveal that students' level is just medium. Actually their level may vary according to their experiences, motivation, and to what extent they are able to produce correct, precise, and acceptable written composition.

**Q6:** Which approach do you use in teaching writing?

Table 27

*Teachers' use of approaches in teaching writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
The product approach	0	0%
The process approach	0	0%
The gender approach	0	0%
The content approach	0	0%
A mixture of all approaches	10	100%
Total	10	100%

Teachers were asked to tick the one approach they follow in teaching writing. Surprisingly, all of them (100%) responded by ticking the last option “a mixture of all approaches”. This implies that opting for one approach or another depends on the situation or the objective of the course.

**Q7:** Do you think that the time allocated to written expression courses is sufficient to cover the aspects required to develop the writing skill?

Table 28

*Teachers' view about the sufficiency of time allocated to written expression courses.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	3	30%
No	7	70%
Total	10	100%

Greater percentage represents (70%) of teachers who claimed that the time allocated to the module of written expression is not really sufficient to cover all aspects of writing, maybe because teachers found it hard to check and correct students' written compositions, and to provide them with equal opportunities to perform their writing in one session since the writing skill is more practical than theoretical. Whereas the rest of the participants (30%) stated that the time is actually enough, maybe because they know how to manage their time and do not rely only on teaching aspects of writing inside the classroom but also through homework.

**Q8:** Do your students face any difficulties in writing inside the classroom?

Table 29

*Teachers' perspective about learners facing difficulties in writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The table above reveals that all teachers (100%) affirmed the fact that their students have some difficulties in producing their writing. These responses matche the ones recorded when analyzing the students' questionnaire. This insures that writing is not an easy task and certainly students would face some problems while fulfilling it.

**Q9:** If your answer is 'yes'; which one(s) of the followings is/are the most difficult area for them?

Table 30

*Teachers' perception about students' problems in writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Vocabulary	0	0%
Spelling	0	0%
Grammar	0	0%
Punctuation	0	0%
A+B+C	4	40%
All together	6	60%
Total	10	100%

The table shows that (60%) of teachers responded that their students face difficulties in writing with all the elements (vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation). Whereas, (40%) of them ticked only the three first options (vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation). Concerning the options being chosen separately, no answer was recorded. In fact, teachers' answers are according to the mistakes they observe in students' writing, this implies that learners' mistakes are related to one or all the previously mentioned factors, resulted from the lack of knowledge or practice.

**Q10:** How often do students commit errors related to the previous areas of difficulties?

Table 31

*Teachers' views about the frequency of their students' writing mistakes.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Always	3	30%
Often	6	60%
Rarely	0	0%
No answer	1	10%
Total	10	100%

The findings reveal that the rate of teachers who chose the option "often" is (60%), represents the majority of them. (30%) of teachers claimed that students always make mistakes that are related to the previous difficulties. These results indicate that vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation are crucial elements in academic writing. The remaining (10%) is the rate of one teacher who did not respond at all.



### Section Three: The Use of ICTs to Develop Academic Writing.

**Q11:** Do you support the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning languages?

Table 32

*Teachers' view about the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning languages.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The results show that all teachers (100%) responded to this question positively, which means that they support the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning languages. Consequently, no negative response was recorded. Teachers were asked to justify their responses; some of them claimed that it raises motivation and interaction among learners, while others assumed that it helps vary their teaching techniques. One teacher actually states that it is fashionable to teach and learn English through ICTs.

**Q12:** How would you rate the availability of technological support at your university?

Table 33

*Teacher evaluation of the availability technological support at the university.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Good	0	0%
Mediocre	3	30%
Poor	7	70%
Total	10	100%

According to the findings illustrated in the table above, (70%) of informants found that the availability of the technological support at the university is poor. (30%) of them found it

“mediocre”. Concerning the option “good”, no answer was recorded. These responses mean that teachers are not quite satisfied with the materials provided in the university.

**Q13:** Do you encourage your students’ use of internet as a source of information about their writing topics?

Table 34

*Teachers’ attitude toward the use of internet as a source of information.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

The exposed results in the table reveal that almost all teachers (90%) support and encourage the use of internet outside the classroom by their students to extract information. Therefore, internet is considered as source of information through which students learn more about the topics they are supposed to write about. However, one teacher reacted negatively, which means s/he does not encourage the use of internet for the previous sake; possibly, to avoid being influenced by the original text, or any other form of plagiarism.

**Q14:** Do you think that the word processor helps students develop their academic writings?

Table 35

*Teachers’ opinion about the word processor in developing academic writing.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

This question is designed to know teachers' perceptions about the use of the word processor, and whether it helps developing the quality of students' written compositions. As shown on the table above, the majority of teachers (80%) ticked the option "yes". That is to say, they have a positive attitude towards the use of word processor when it comes to the form and the final written product. However, the remaining (20%) of teachers responded negatively; maybe because they prefer the traditional ways and processes of writing, particularly, the drafting stage.

**Q15:** Do you notice any changes between students' hand written assignments and those written by the word processor?

Table 36

*Teachers' opinion concerning hand writing vs. word processor.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The table shows that all respondents affirmed for the existence of a noticeable change between the hand written materials and the ones written by the application of word processor; this might indicate that word processor; as an application designed for writing, has an effect on the morphological level of students' writing. Nevertheless, the effect of this software; whether positive or negative, is revealed in the table.

**Q16:** What do you think about the influence of the auto correction provided by the word processor?

Table 37

*Teachers' impression about the auto correction.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Positive	8	80%
Negative	2	20%
Total	10	100%

According to the table, almost all teachers (80%) believed that the auto correction has a positive effect. They justified their responses claiming that it highlights and draws attention towards the grammatical and mechanical errors that students may commit when they write using the word processor; resulting more polished compositions. In contrast, (20%) of them considered that the auto correction affects writing negatively. They explained that it makes students over-dependent and careless, as they may neglect the revision and edition of the work before submitting it.

**Q17:** Do you correct your students' written productions/drafts via e-mail?

Table 38

*Teachers' use of e-mail to correct written compositions.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	8	80%
No	0	0%
No answer	2	20%
Total	10	100%

The findings give insights into e-mail usage by teachers to check and correct students' written drafts. Hence, almost all correspondents; who represent (80%), assumed that they do so. Therefore, they use this online medium to assess students' works and provide them with the necessary feedback. Whereas, only two teachers (20%) ignored answering the question, maybe they use other medium to interact with their students. However, no response was recorded for the option "no".

**Q18:** How often do your students respond to your comments via e-mail?

Table 39

*Students' response to teachers' comments via e-mail.*

	Numbers	Percentages
Always	1	10%
Sometimes	5	50%
Rarely	4	40%
Never	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The information displayed in the table above concerns the frequency of interaction and reaction of students to teachers' feedback via e-mail. Thus, (50%) of participants claimed that students' response only "sometimes", while (40%) of them asserted that students rarely take into consideration comments and feedback provided via-email. However, only one teacher said that s/he always follow such procedure. None of the respondents chose the option "never". These answers depend on whether students are users or non-users of e-mail for communication.

**Q19:** Do you have any further suggestions or comments concerning the topic?

Only 3 teachers (30%) answered this last question. They suggested the following points:

- Writing like any other skills, requires regular practice inside and outside the classroom.
- Teachers should receive training on how to use and manipulate new technologies for educational purposes in order to be able to guide and give instructions to their students.
- Teaching and learning through ICTs is a fashionable phenomenon that raises motivation among learners and helps ameliorating their levels but only if used academically.

### **3.1.5. Discussion of the Results**

The analysis of the questionnaire administered to teachers of written expression, shows that all surveyed teachers held Magister degree (MA) with different teaching experiences in the module of written expression or other modules.

The majority of teachers (80%) believe that good writing demands a combination of features and elements altogether. All of them tend to adopt a mixture of all the approaches of teaching writing according to learners' needs and objectives. However, the majority claimed that the time allocated to written expression is not really enough to cover the most required element in mastering the skill. In fact, teachers' evaluation of their students' level in writing is between average and good; this latter ameliorates even more with practice and experience. Moreover, All the informants assert that their students have problems and difficulties in writing their assignments/drafts, yet (60%) of them reveal that those problems occur on the level of stylistics (the unconventional grammar and poor vocabulary) and mechanics (inappropriate use of punctuation and misspelled word).

The analysis shows that all teachers are aware about the integration of ICTs and its significance in developing teaching and learning language, yet (70%) of them confessed that their university is poor when it comes to the availability of ICTs. Moreover, the majority of teachers (90%) claimed that they support the use of internet to extract information that concerns the topics they are supposed to write about. Besides, all teachers affirmed that their learners' hand written productions differ from those written using the word processor, especially on the morphological level. (80%) of teachers also believed that the application of word processor helps students develop their academic writings and that the auto correction provided by this application has a positive effect since it draws learners' attention towards the errors or mistakes they have committed during the writing task so they produce a mistake free compositions. The analysis also reveals that the majority of teachers (90%) claimed that they use e-mail to receive their learners' productions/drafts in order to correct them and provide them with necessary feedback; however, (50%) of them only asserted that learners respond to their e-mail in return. Finally, (30%) of the participants provided different suggestions through which they draw attention towards some aspects such: as the necessity of regular practice in order to enhance the writing proficiency, use of ICTs under the instructions and guidance of teachers, as well as their significance when they are used appropriately and academically.

## **Pedagogical implications**

Based on the results obtained from the present study, it is possible to propose some suggestions and recommendations, which would hopefully be useful in increasing the rate of ICT manipulation to develop the quality of the academic written achievements.

The most important suggestion is establishing and investing in ICT equipments and facilities at the university, so that students with no access to such technologies at home can have the opportunity to operate them in fulfilling their academic tasks.

Moreover, teachers should receive enough training through workshops and relevant programs, in order to be able to use and manipulate the modern technologies and applications effectively and thus avoid anxiety or fear resulted from their lack of experience.

Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the advantages of feedback via e-mail, in order to use it more frequently in communicating with their students, keeping them updated, and providing them with extra activities outside the classroom setting. This would give more chance to those introvert students who feel more at ease working on computers at home, as well as expending the time allocated to written expression sessions to do more activities instead of checking and correcting learners' compositions.

Teachers also are recommended to motivate their students to use the writing related ICTs by creating electronic groups for students, where they can work together and share their written achievements with their classmates. In fact, teachers can be involved too; as instructors and organizers of the tasks given to them.

Concerning recommendations for students, it is highly recommended that they should be aware about the causes and consequences of plagiarism, thus it is important to attribute credit



to the sources found on the internet by using the techniques of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Finally, students should carefully check and revise the typed tasks before sending it via e-mail. In fact, it is better to investigate and learn the correct grammatical forms and spelling of words before attempting to correct it automatically, so that students would memorize the rules and never commit the same mistakes again.

## **Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter is to test the hypothesis and reach answers for the questions raised at the beginning, through the views and opinions gathered using the two questionnaire. The statistical analysis of the two questionnaires reveals that the great majority of both, Master One students and written expression teachers at English department, are aware about the role and contribution of ICTs in improving academic writing. In fact, both students and teachers find the internet as a significant source of information. Besides, the interpretation of the data obtained shed light on some problems encountered by students when writing their academic assignments/draft, which lead them to commit errors related to stylistics and mechanics; however, they can be indicated and processed when using the word processor application. Furthermore, it is confirmed that e-mail is the most formal mediator between teachers and learners to check, correct, and assess learners' written draft and final academic achievements. Consequently, academic writing proficiency might be enhanced through the involvement of all/one of the three notions: internet as source of information, word processor as application of writing, and e-mail as mediator between teacher and learner. In this respect, the positive results obtained in this chapter confirm and fortify our hypothesis.

## **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

Foreign language writing is proved to be crucial and tremendously complex. Students at University are supposed to fulfill certain academic requirements, yet they are still unable to formulate efficient and grammatically correct written compositions. Therefore, the present research is conducted in order to investigate impressions about using ICTs to develop academic written achievements. Saying it differently, the study aims at drawing attentions on the impact of the internet as a source of information; through which learners extract sources to learn about the topics they are supposed to write about, the word processor as an application for writing; which enables learners to type the data required and automatically correct the errors occurring, and the e-mail as a mediator between teachers and learner, which enables teachers to provide the necessary feedback to learners in order to ameliorate their academic writings.

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire distributed to both teachers of written expression and students of Master One, it appears that the writing task is hard to be fulfilled because of the problems and difficulties that students encounter; such as vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of writing. However, it is proved that students are able to overcome the problems due to the support of ICTs provided. In other words, students' access to internet helps them learn and collect the information needed for the writing task. Also, it is easy for them to realize and correct grammatical and mechanical mistakes occurring in their compositions. Finally, sharing and assessing the final written product, thanks to e-mailing.

Consequently, it is worth mentioning that the final results confirm our hypotheses, which entail that students' appropriate use of the internet, word processor, and e-mail would increase their writing achievements and that university student's use of writing related ICTs would enable them to produce well organized, coherent, and grammatically correct compositions.

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# Appendices

## Appendix

### Figures

Figure 1

*A Sequence of Ideas.* (Murray and Hughes, 2008, p. 46)

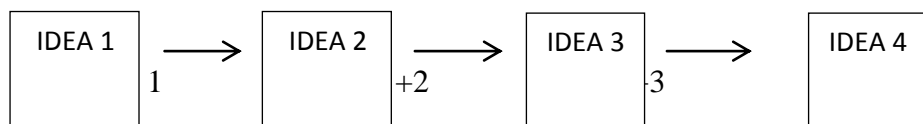


Figure 2

*Krashen's Process Writing Model* (Richards & Renandya, 2003, p. 315)

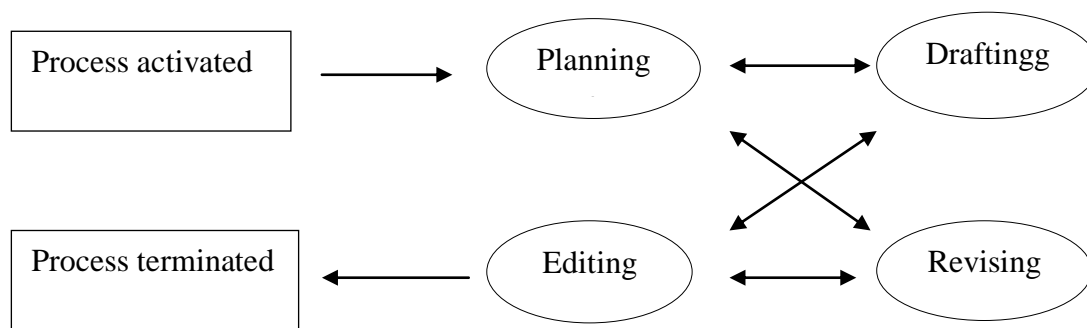


Figure 3

*Correcting grammar mistakes* (VanHuss et al., 2011, p.107).

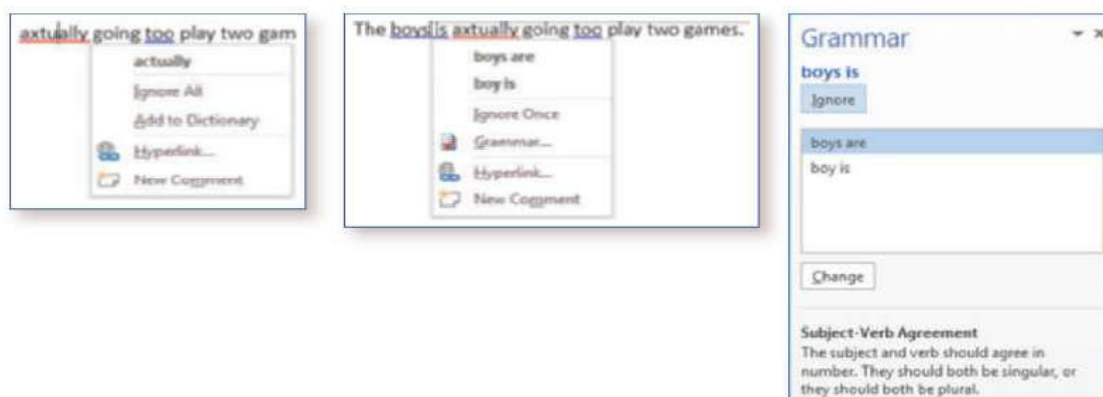


Figure 4

*Correcting spelling mistakes* (VanHuss et.al, 2011, p.107)



Figure 5

*Students' distribution according to gender.*

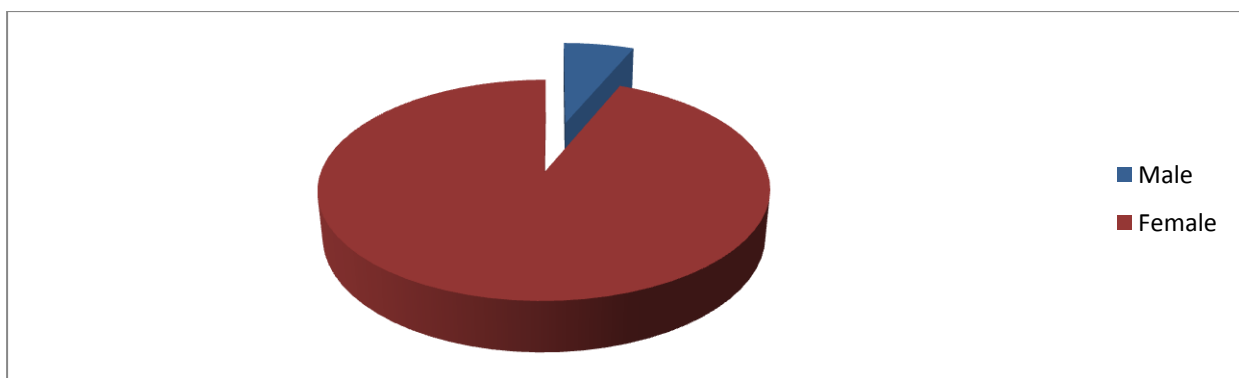


Figure 6

*Students' distribution according to age.*

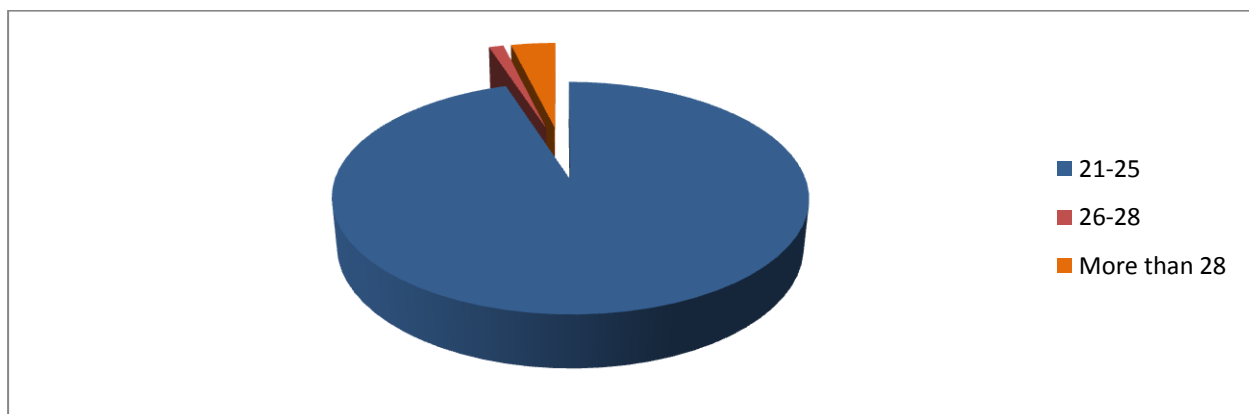


Figure 7

*Students' choice to study*

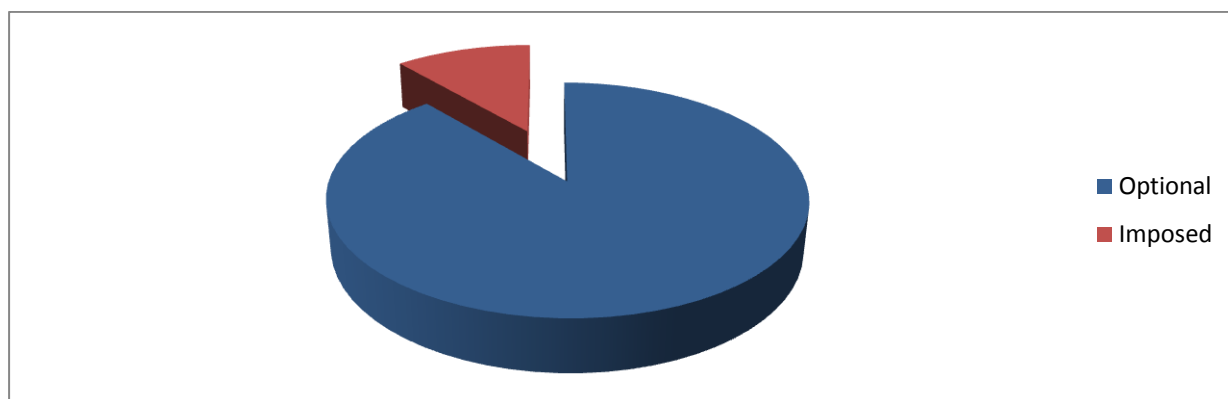


Figure 8

*Students' views about the writing skill.*

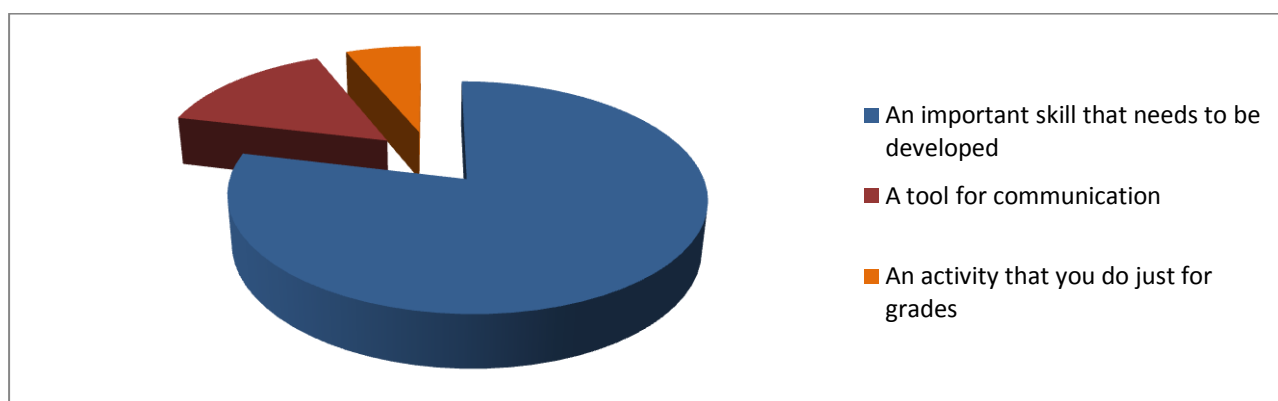


Figure 9

*Students' impression about the courses of writing expression.*

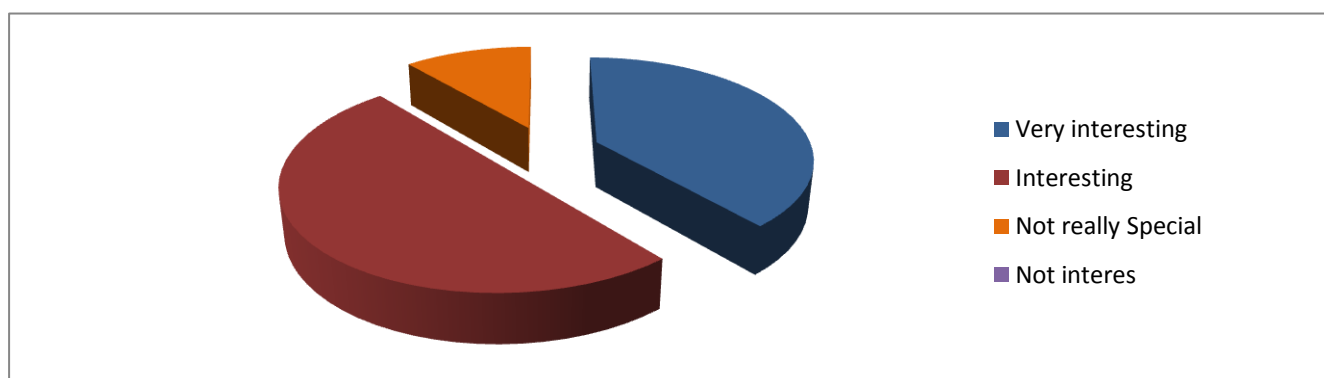


Figure 10

*Students' level in writing.*

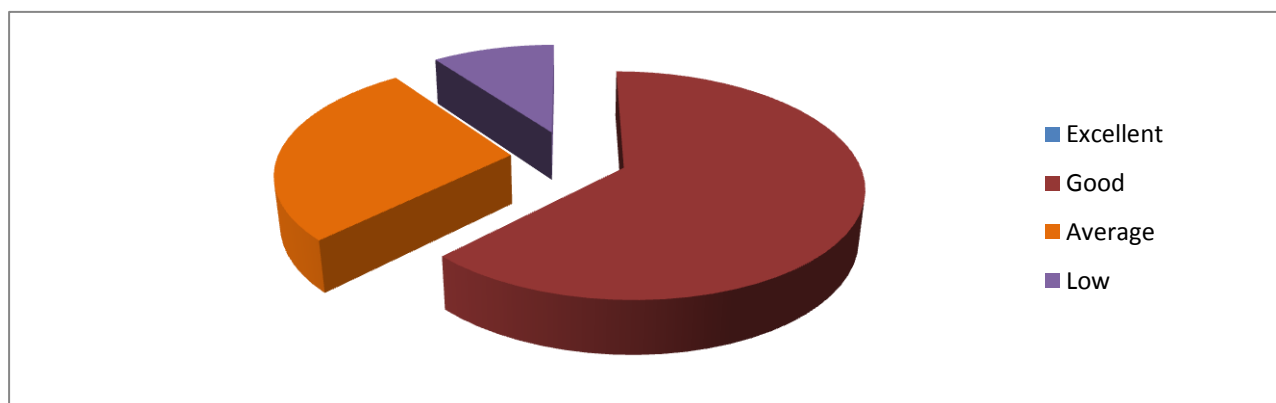


Figure 11

*Students' most important elements of academic writing.*

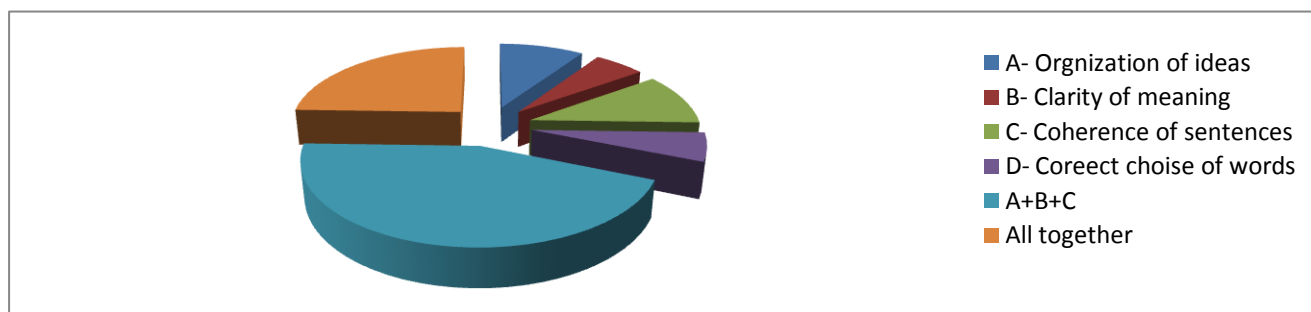


Figure 12

*Students' frequency of revising writings.*

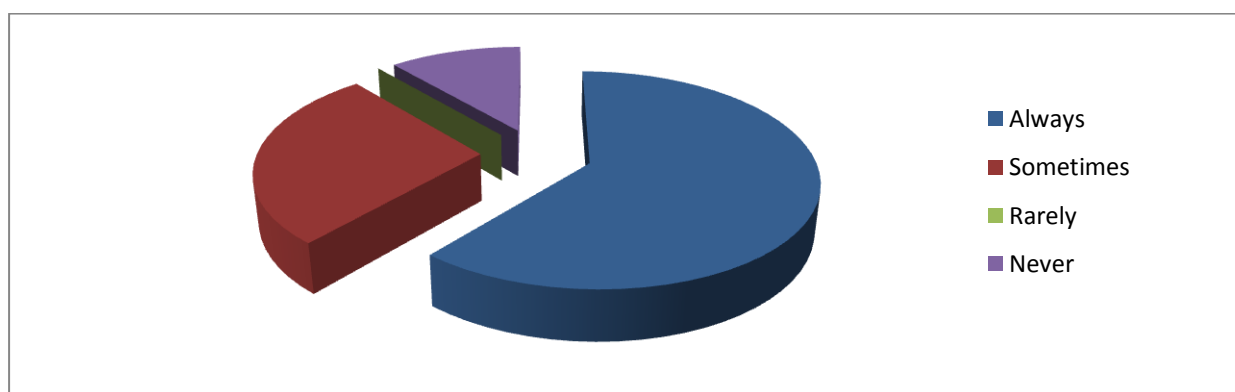


Figure 13

*Learner's attitude toward revision.*

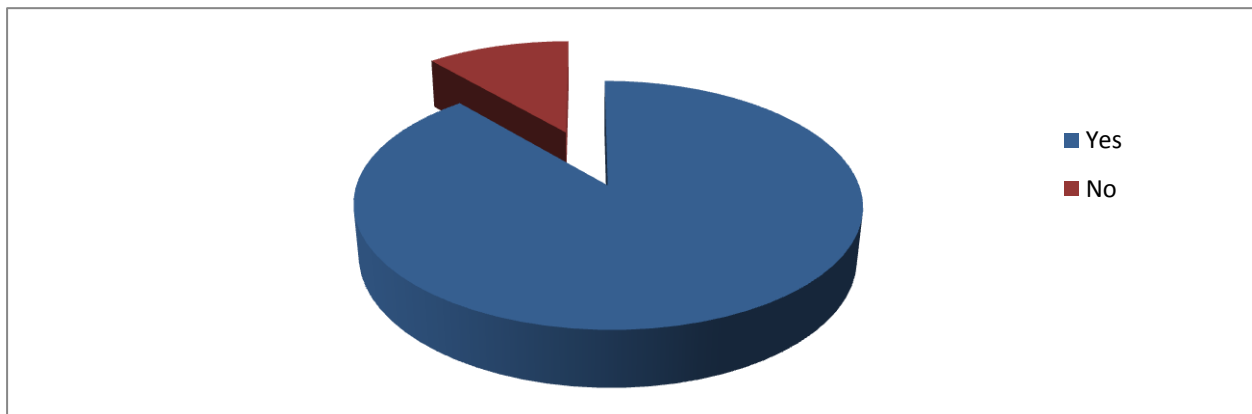


Figure 14

*Students facing difficulties.*

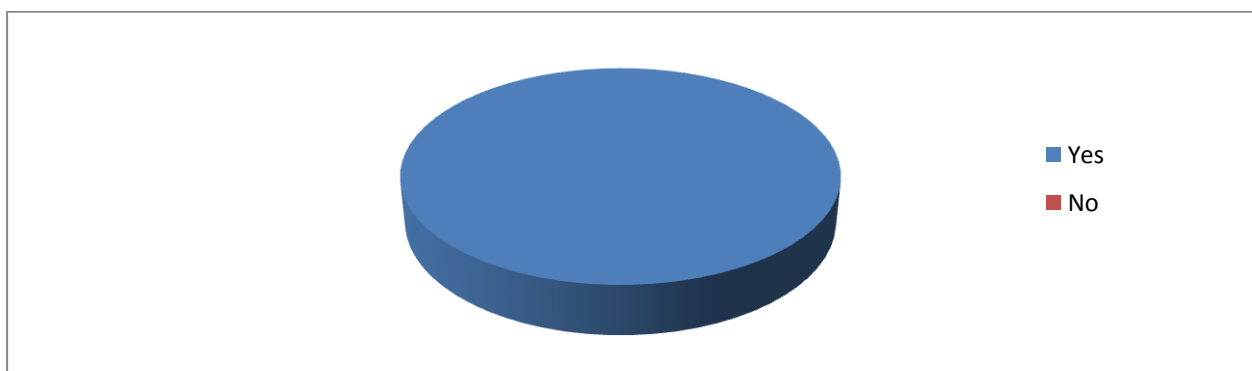


Figure 15

*Students' difficulties in writing*

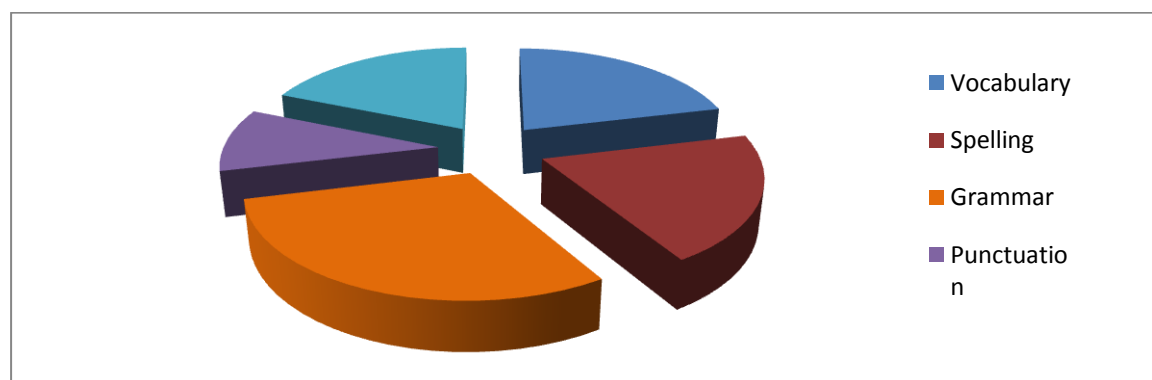




Figure 16

*Students' impression about the expression "Better readers, better writers"*

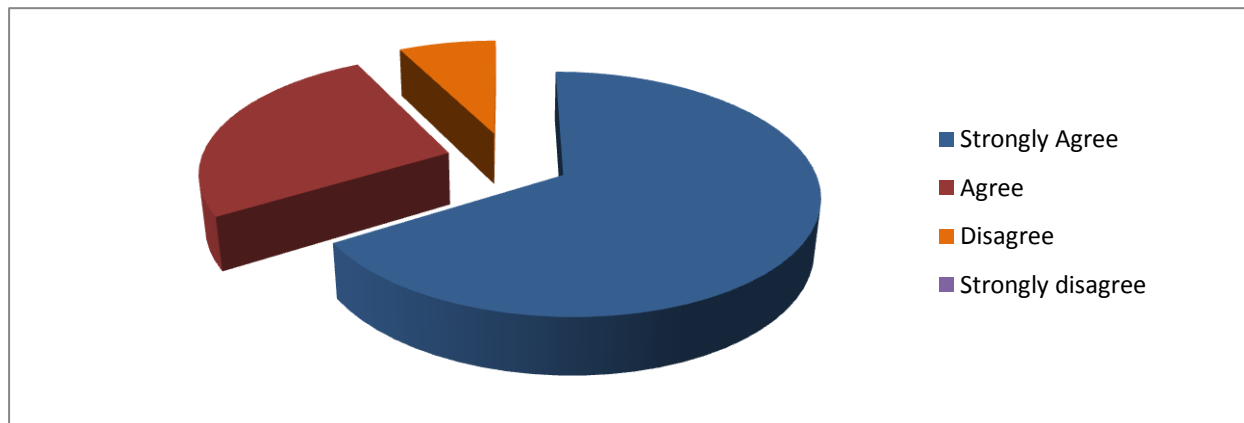


Figure 17

*Students' use of ICTs.*



Figure 18

*Students' access to internet at home.*

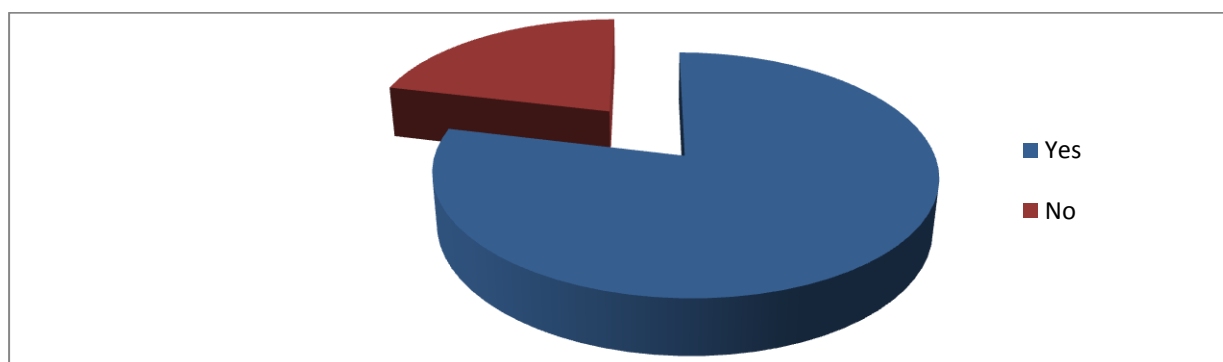


Figure 19

*Students' use frequency of using the internet as source of information.*

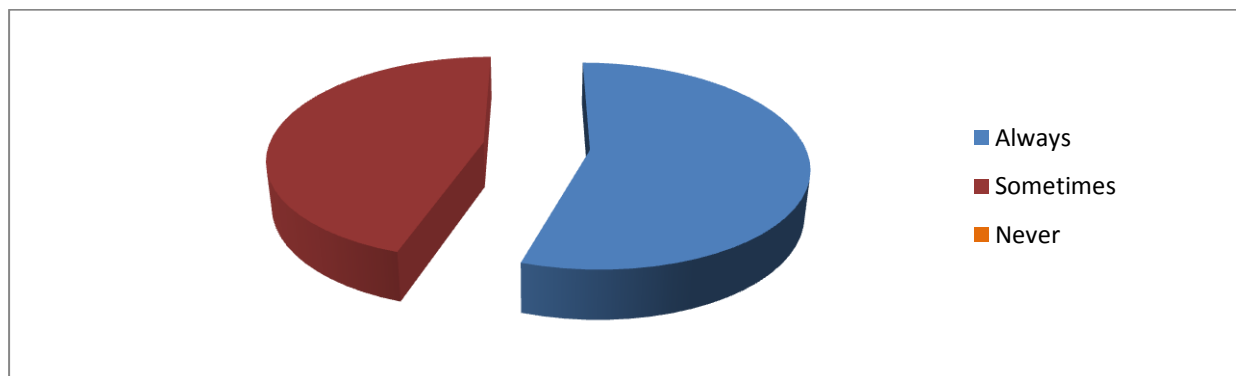


Figure 20

*Students' preferable tool to write.*

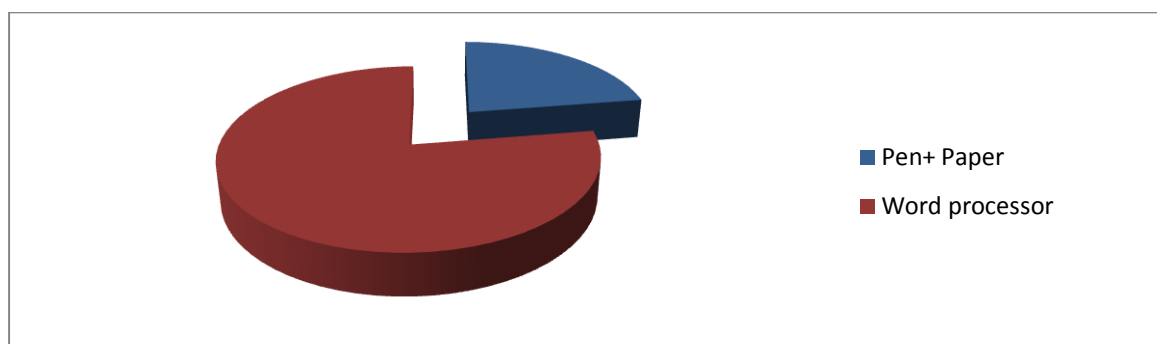


Figure 21

*Students' attitude toward the word processor.*

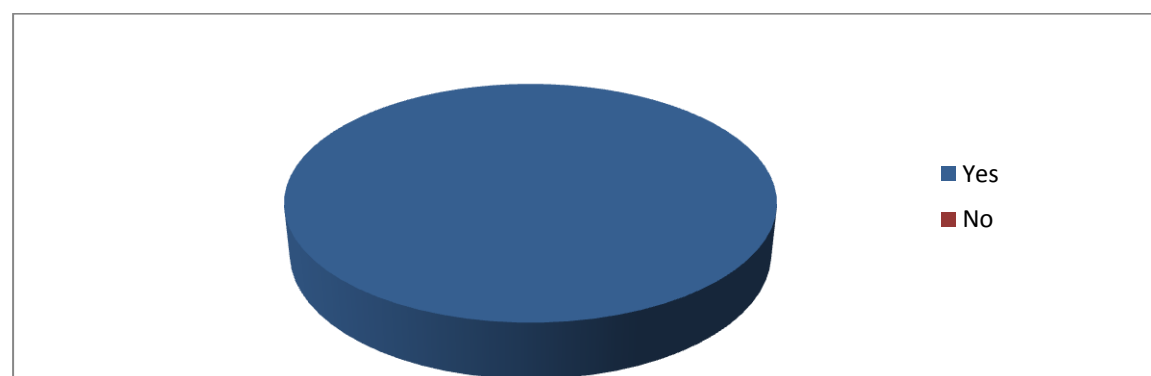


Figure 22

*Word processor indication of errors.*

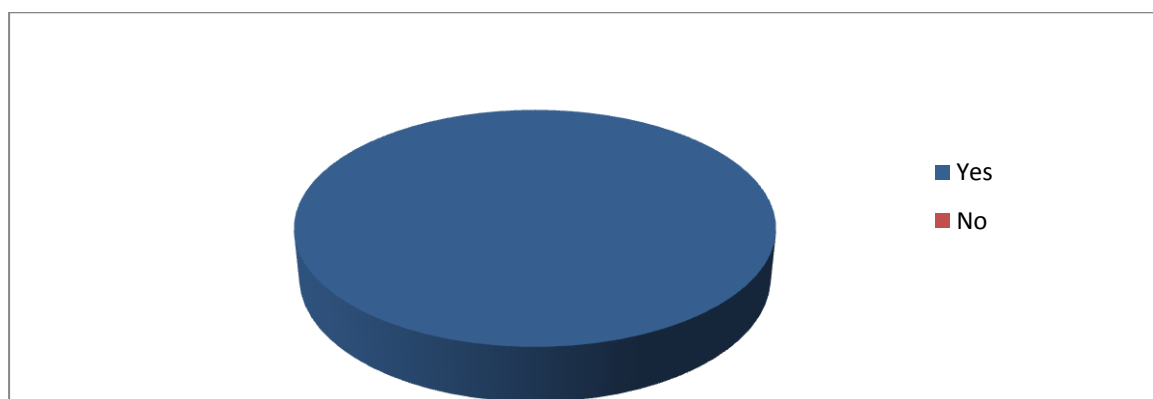


Figure 23

*Students' reaction to the errors indicated by the word processor.*

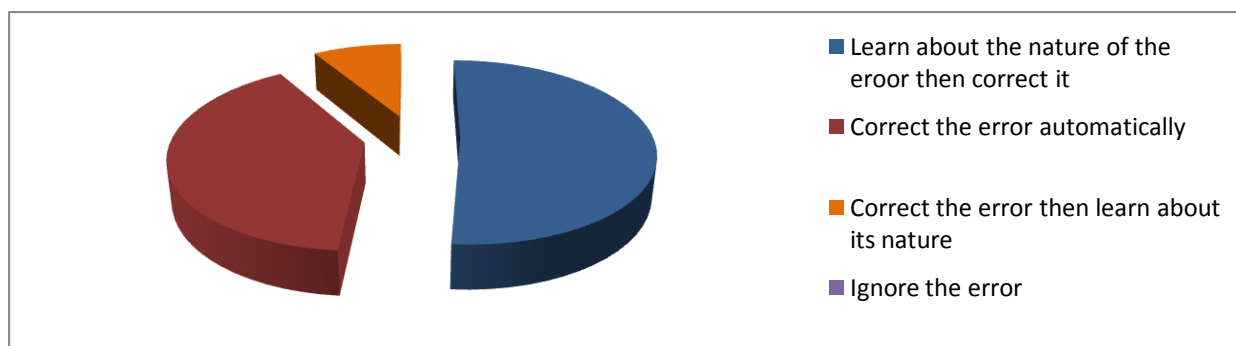


Figure 24

*Students' use of e-mail.*

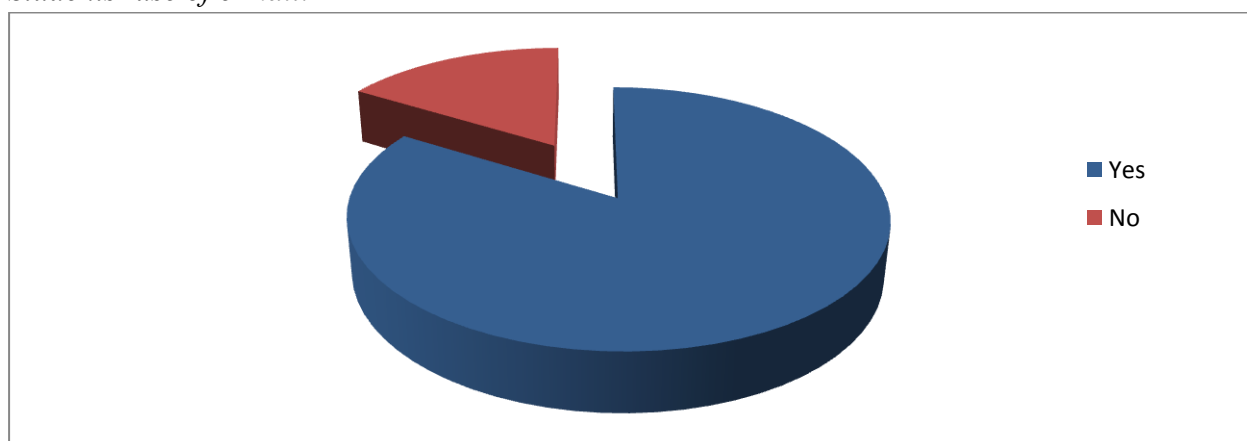


Figure 25

*Students' preferable feedback.*

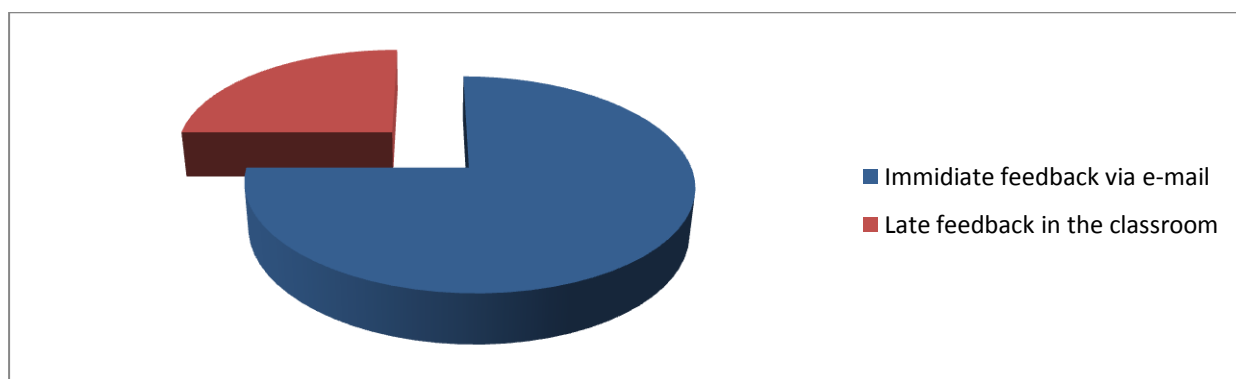


Figure 26

*Students' reception of e-mail from their teachers.*

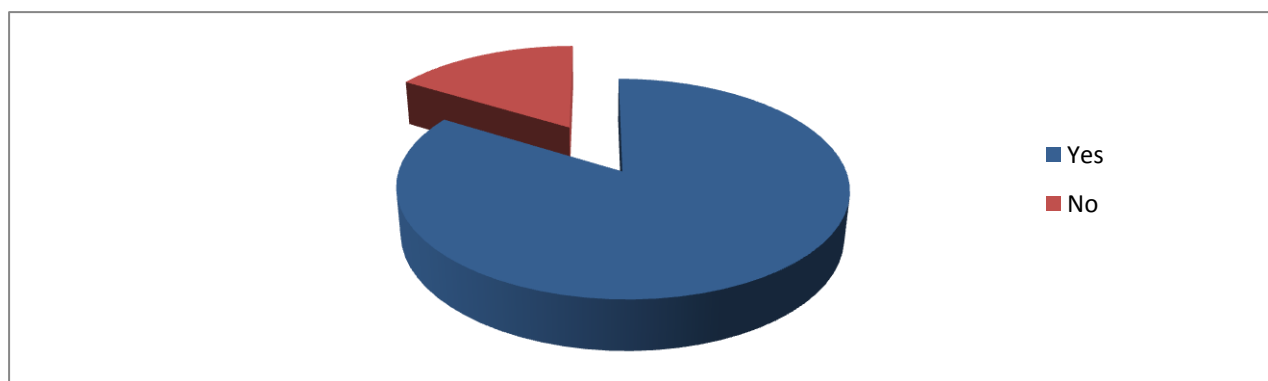


Figure 27

*Teachers' most important element of academic writing.*

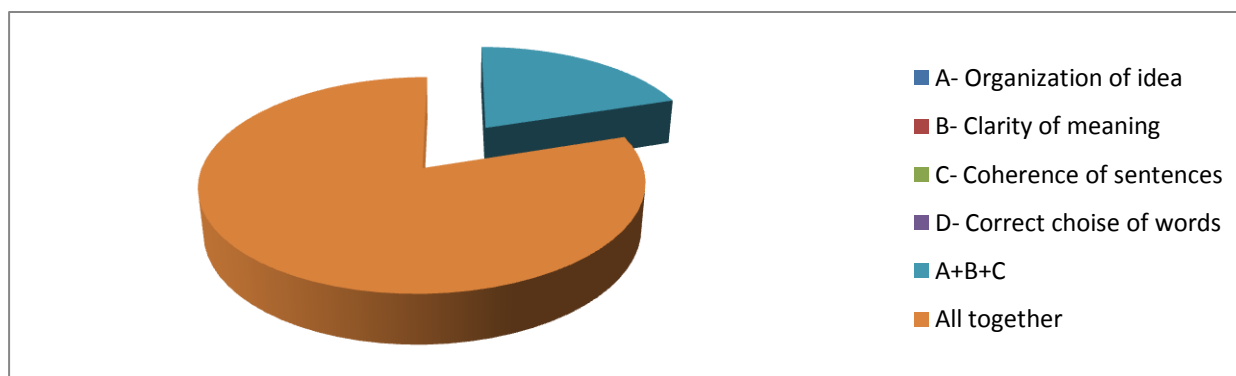


Figure 28

*Teachers' perception towards their students' level.*

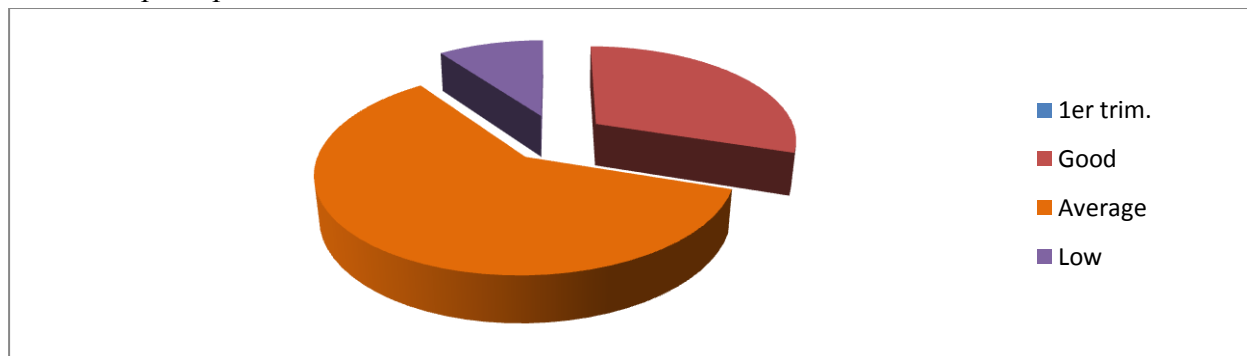


Figure 29

*Teachers' use of approaches in teaching writing.*

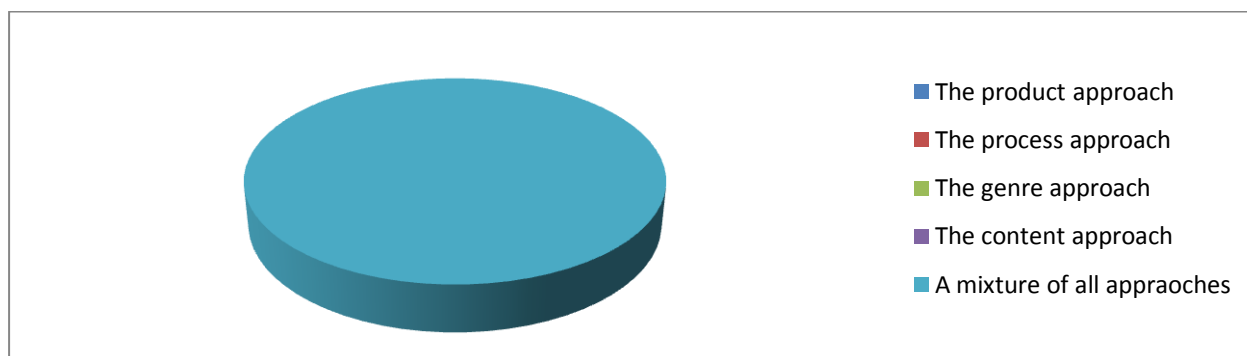


Figure 30

*Teachers' view about the sufficiency of time allocated to written expression courses.*

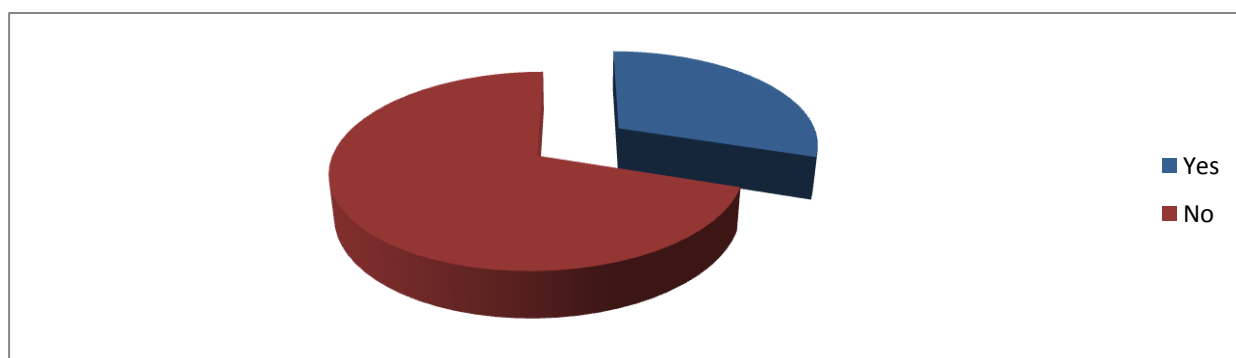


Figure 31

*Teachers' perspective about learners facing difficulties in writing.*

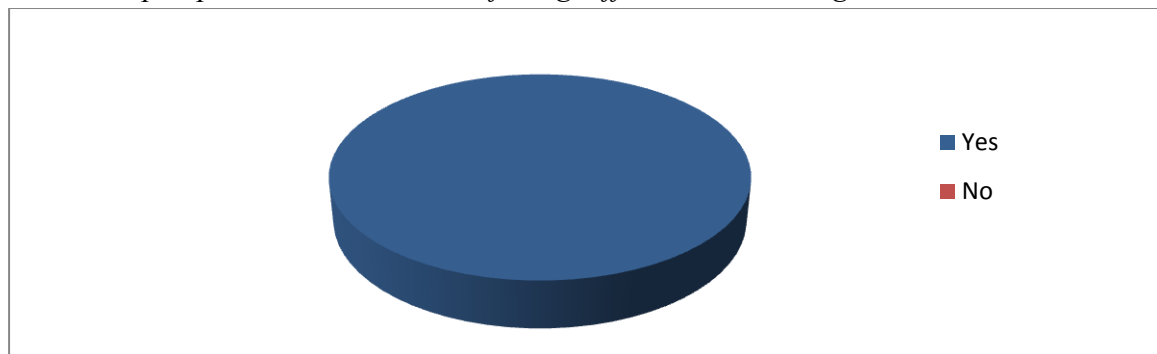


Figure 32

*Teachers' perception about students' problems in writing.*

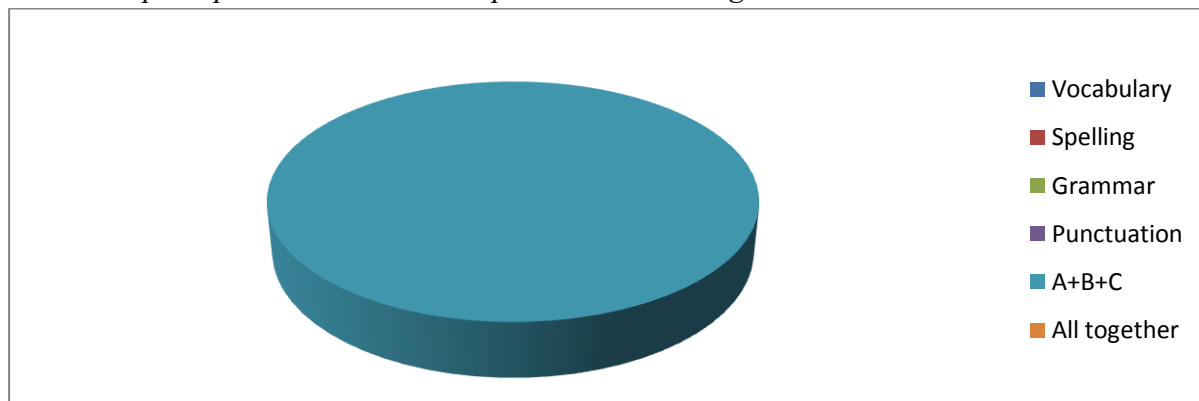


Figure 33

*Teachers' views about the frequency of their students' writing mistakes.*

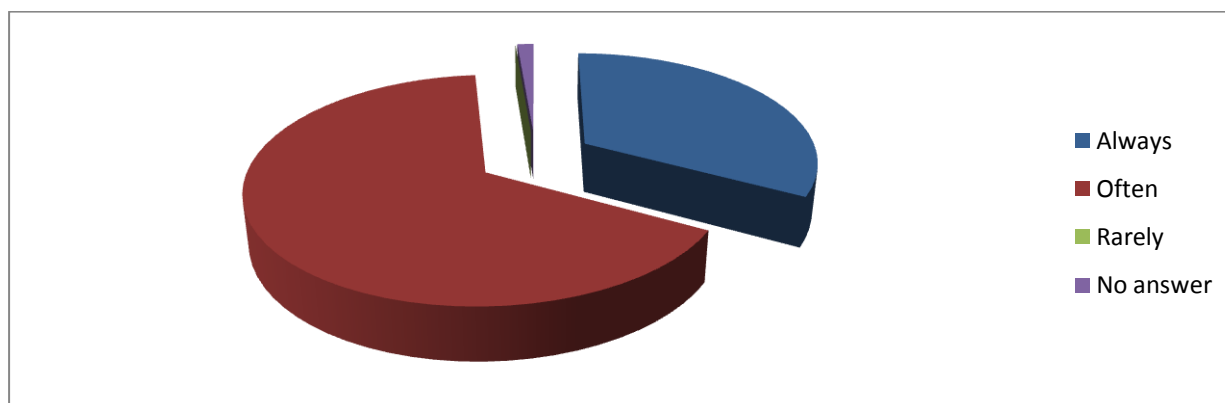


Figure 34

*Teachers' view about the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning languages.*

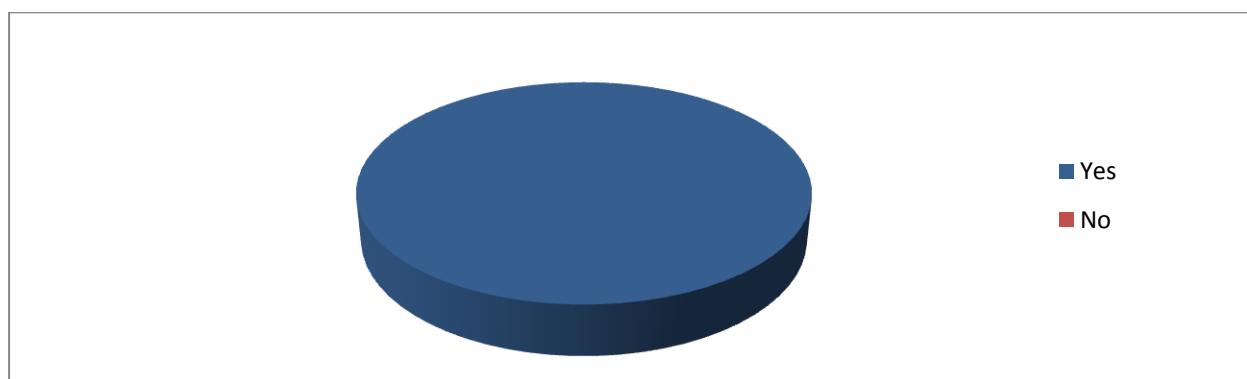


Figure 35

*Teacher evaluation of the availability technological support at the university.*

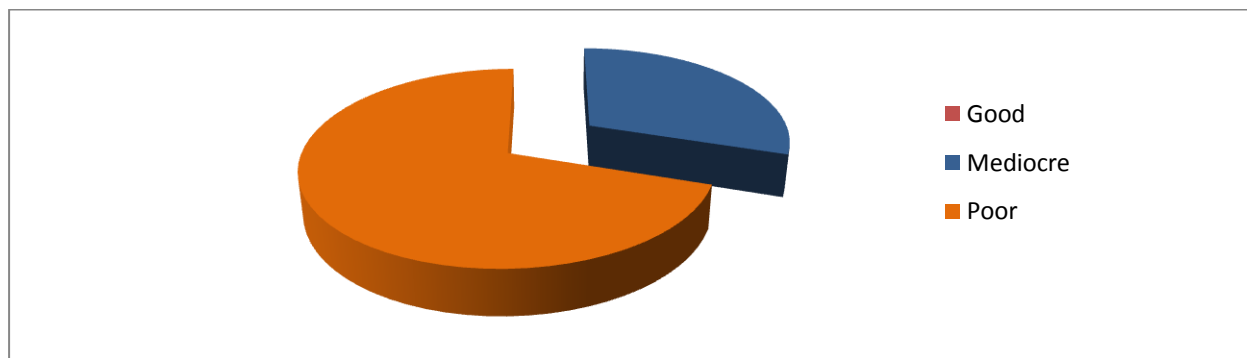


Figure 36

*Teachers' attitude toward the use of internet as a source of information.*

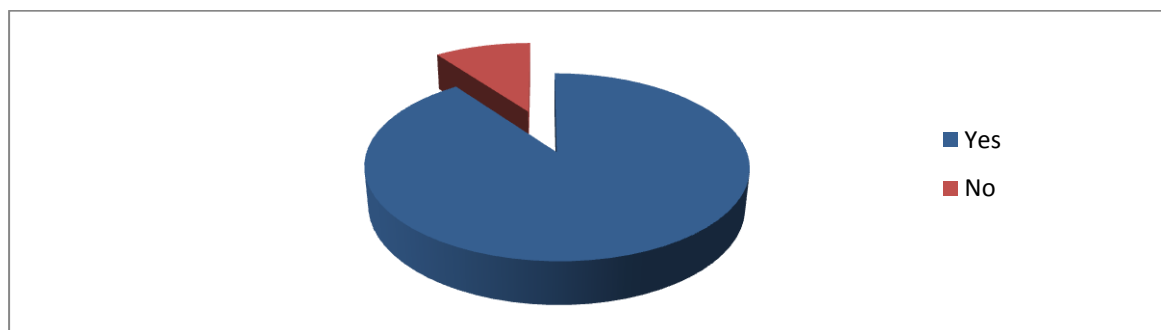


Figure 37

*Teachers' opinion about the word processor in developing academic writing.*

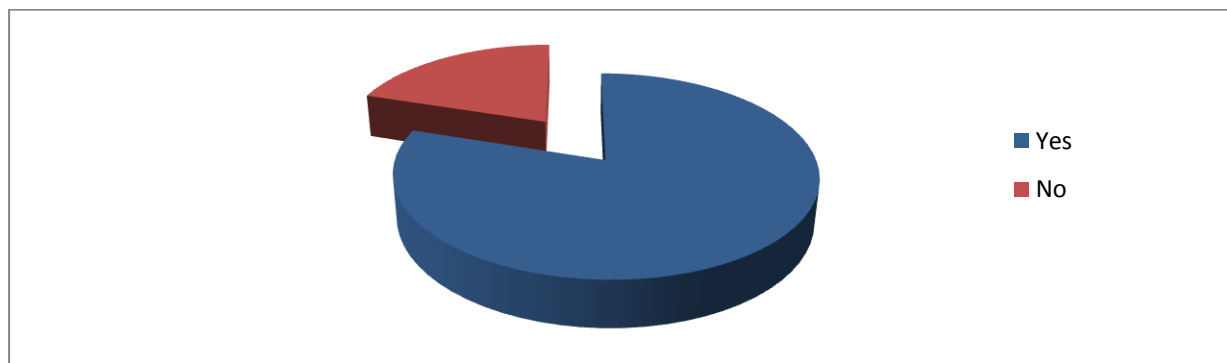


Figure 38

*Teachers' opinion concerning hand writing vs. word processor.*

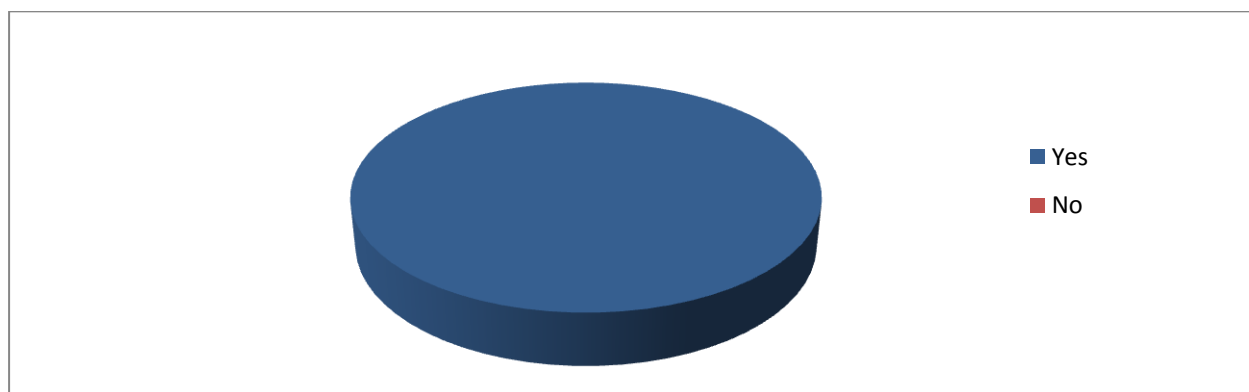


Figure 39

*Teachers' impression about the auto correction.*

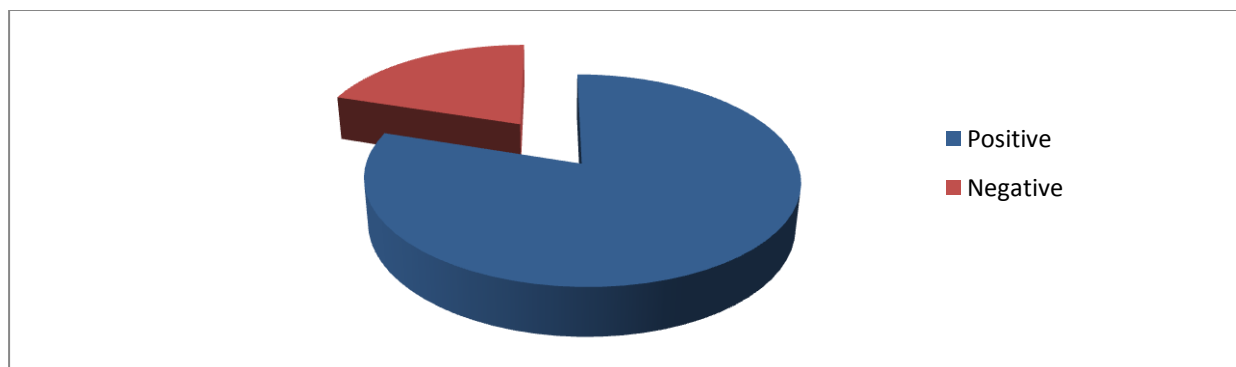




Figure 40

*Teachers' use of e-mail to correct written compositions.*

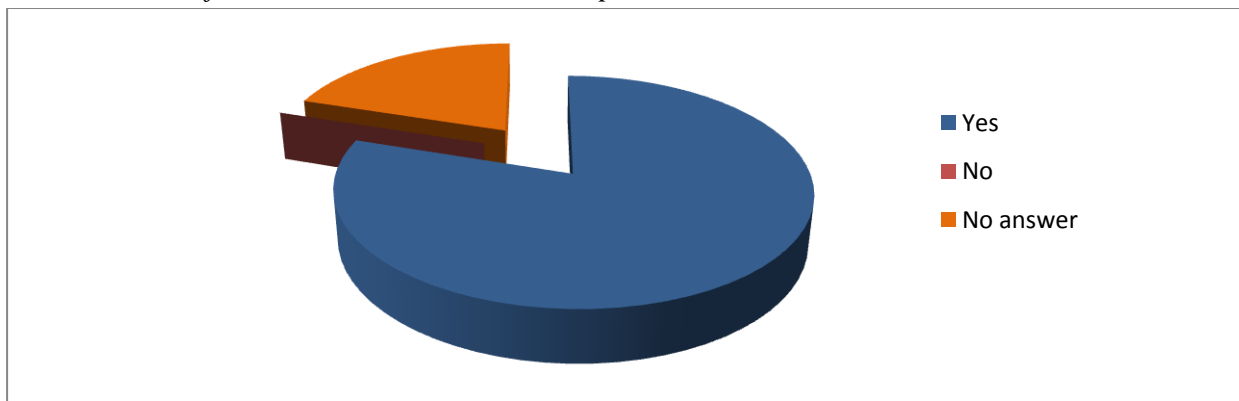


Figure 41

*Students' response to teachers' comments via e-mail.*

