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Faculty of Letters and Languages

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<u>**Title**</u>

Investigating Problems in Learning Academic Writing Case of First Year Master Students of English at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla

Before the Jury:

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Academic Year: 2015-2016

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents. Without their patience, understanding, support, and most of all love, the completion of this work would not have been possible.

El Hadj Brahim Houache.
Djalmami Zakaria.

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I would like to thank Allah the Almighty, the most Gracious and Merciful for giving me the strength and patience to complete this research. Also, I want to thank all of my friends, who are beside me, support me, and advise me for doing the right thing in my study.

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the academic writing problems encountered by students of English at Kasdi Merbah University. The study follows a descriptive (quantitative/qualitative) methodology. The respondents of this study are 30 first-year Master students registered for the academic year 2015-2016 and 5 teachers of academic writing. The data are collected through a questionnaire addressed the teachers and a test distributed for the students. The results revealed that most students have serious problems in their academic writing, essentially in spelling, punctuation, writing a cohesive and coherent paragraph, and in writing some genres, summaries, research article, abstract conference. The lack of these three elements in students' academic papers creates poor communication because academic writing requires from students a high degree of accuracy. In general there are a variety of factors which contribute to such problems. The main factor is the lack of previous experience and knowledge about the conventions of academic writing.

Keywords:

Academic writing, genres, challenges, difficulties

حهدف الدراست الحاليت الي البحث في هشاكل الكخابت ألكاديويت الخي يبجهها طلبت الواسخز في جاهعت قاصدي هزباح بررقلت. حخبع الدراست هُهجيت كويت,ًعيت .عيّت الدراست

اسخهدفج30 طالب في سُت اولي هاسخز للسُت الجاهعيت 2012/2012 و2 أساحذة الذيي يدرسى الكخابت ألكاديويت.جوعج الوعطياث هي اسخبياًأث اسخهدفج ألساحذة و اخخبار اجزي علي الطلبت. أظهزث الُخائج أى أغلب الطلبت يباجهى هشاكل جديت في الكخابت ألكاديويت كألخطاء إلهائليت و عالهاث النقف و عدم قدرة الطلبت علي كخابت فقزاث هخزابطت و هـحدة واألـَاع الُصيت.َقص هذِ الُعاصز في الكخابت ألكاديويت للطالب يؤدي إلي َقص في الخـاصل ألى الكخابت ألكاديويت حخطلب هي الطالب اى يكى دقيقا. عوها هُاك أكثز هي سبب في هشاكل الطلبت في الكخابت ولكي السبب الزئيسي هى عدم الوعزفت السابقت بخعالين الكخابت ألكاديويت.

الكلواث الوفخاحيت : الكخابت ألكاديويت ,األـَاع الُصيت,الخحدياث,الوشاكل.

Résumé

Cette étude vise à examiner les difficultés lesquelles les étudiants d'Anglais à l'université de Kasdi Merbah arrivent a rencontrés. L'étude suit une méthodologie descriptive, (quantitative/qualitative). les étudiants sont interrogés de cette étude sont 30 étudiants première année master 2015-2016, et, 5 enseignants d'écriture académique. Les données sont rassemblées par un questionnaire adressé aux professeurs et un test distribué aux étudiants. Les résultats ont révélé que la majorité des étudiants ont des vrais problèmes lors de l'écriture académique, essentiellement l'orthographe, la ponctuation, rédiger un cohésif et cohérent paragraphe et quelques genres, résumés, des essais des conférences. Le manque de ces trois éléments dans les documents écrits par les étudiants crée une pauvre communication (faible) parce que l'écriture académique requière un haut degré de ponctualité. En général il y a une variété des facteurs qui contribuent aux tels problèmes. Le facteur principal est le manque d'expérience, et, la connaissance des conventions d'écriture académique.

Mots-clés:

écriture académique, genres, défis, difficultés.

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<center>**General Introduction**</center>

1. Background of the Study

Academic writing is one of the most interesting and important topics to be studied especially among students because it reveals their needs and challenges and difficulties they face in doing research. Thaiss & Zawacki (2006) defined academic writing as a term that fulfills and meets the purposes of education in colleges, universities, and institutions related to the use of academic writing features like paraphrasing, strong vocabulary, and organized paragraphs.

Students at higher education should be familiar with aspects of academic writing aspects like cohesion, coherence, references, punctuation, capitalization. These aspect and others help students to produce well organized piece of writing that has the academic characteristics. However most of the students still are not aware of the importance of mastering these norms in their academic writing which lead them to face many obstacles in their writing.

These obstacles and challenges are considered to be as main struggle for teachers to overcome and find solutions for; as result, many studies have been conducted to understand why these learners find academic writing a challenge. One of the study was conducted by Hind (2012) in an EFL context which revealed that teachers find students' academic writing weak and therefore most students face severe problems in learning academic writing. It is assumed to be specifically difficult for those of "non-Anglicized linguistic and cultural and backgrounds", which may be the case of Kasdi Merbah students of English. In general academic writing is not an easy task for both teachers and students; it requires much efforts to comprehend.

2. Statement of The Problem

Academic writing is unlike any other form of writing, such as, journalism or creative writing, and it is an essential requirement that university students develop the proper tone, technique and style for their university assignments. But to reach the level that enables students to write an academic piece, students face obstacles and difficulties to reach this level because academic writing is not an easy task for both teachers in their teaching academic writing and students in the process of its learning.

In this regard, the current study attempts to reveal the basic academic writing difficulties and problems encountered by students, as well as the main factors that

<center>1</center>

may cause those difficulties; additionally the main issues for teachers in the process of teaching academic writing.

3. Aims of The Study

The aims of this study is to determine what difficulties Kasdi Merbah university students of English encounter when learning to write academic English, and the different challenges which are faced by the teachers of Kasdi Merbah university in teaching academic writing.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions are set to guide this study:

1. What are the difficulties that students face in academic writing?

2. Why do the students face these problems?

5. Significance of The Study

The significance of this study, is to investigate the problems that Kasdi Merbah University students of English face in academic writing as well the teachers" challenges. This study focuses on the challenges and problems encountered by both teachers and students when learning and teaching academic writing. If such concerns are addressed, it will be possible to yield students who are better writers in academic contexts.

6. Means of Research

In this study, data are collected by two tools: a questionnaire for teachers in order to collect the required information, and a test is addressed to students.

7. Structure of The Thesis

The structure of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter One is devoted to An overview of English academic writing. Chapter Two is addressed to the major English academic genres. Chapter Three is devoted to the methodology and results.

Chapter one: An Overview of English Academic Writing

Introduction

The ability to write in an academic style is something needed to be developed as part of higher studies. This chapter shows the most important linguistic features of English academic discourse and reviews some general language points vital for writing in English that all students must know and master while writing in academic settings.

1.1. History of Writing

From the ancient time, writing is an extension of human language across time and space. Writing most likely began because of the cities expansion in ancient civilizations, which needed reliable tools for conveying information, recording historical events and similar activities. For most scholars, the most important invention in human history is writing. It provides a relatively and continues permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories, etc. Writing in all its forms allows us to share our communication not only with contemporaries, but also with future generations.. It permits people from the near and far distance past to speak to us. In fact, writing originated from the need of saving cultural values and human"s spiritual.

In today life, we sometimes need to make texts, for the purposes of communication. In such cases, writing skill is the best supportive tool for us, it plays an important role in our life (Nguyen, 2015).

1.2. Definition of Academic Writing

Writing is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life. It is defined as" the logical organization and arrangement of the written sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within the units of discourse and the expression of the ideas" (Abu-Ghararh, 1998, p. 87). Also, writing skill is formally defined as the

"recording of human communication, using signs or symbols to represent the spoken words" (McMillan Encyclopedia, 1986).

As student at university or as an employee in all business sectors or in any academic setting ,a different kind of writing is required which is different from the one of personal writing and the rest of other genres. This kind of writing has come to be known as academic writing. Academic writing is a particular style of writing; part of conversation based on evidence and differs with disciplines which are closely

linked with facts, investigated knowledge and posits ideas or arguments. However, academic writing can be in many forms such as a summary, a research project or even CVs and Bio-data. These different types of academic writing adhere to specific styles, structures, moves.(Alshabaeva)

1.3. Importance of Academic Writing

No one can deny that academic writing is of importance not only to master English language but also to be successful in learning other disciplines where English is the medium of instruction . Academic writing is important because of the English language being a storehouse of world knowledge, it has been chosen as the medium of instruction and interaction between people in many forms including writing. Due to this facts many studies have been established to define what academic writing is and the different approaches to teach academic writing and what learners should learn about academic writing ,that is, moving from one style to another, from one genre to another. Perhaps what learners are facing as problems and difficulties in writing research papers and summaries or any kind of genres and style, is because they are only trained to write in one genre or style and not exposed to all different genres and styles.

1.4.English Academic Style and Language

1.4.1. Formal Style

The style of English academic writing is formal. Its main characteristics are the absence of conversational features and the use of an appropriate academic vocabulary which means that written styles of English tend to be very different from spoken styles. Written styles tend to be formal whereas spoken styles are more casual. Developing the capacity of writing in formal style is extremely important for the students at higher education wishing to master the conventions of English academic discourse. (yakhontova, 2003)

In order to have a formal academic English, students will normally avoid the following. The table shows only some of the forms.

Table 1. Formal and Informal style.

Informal Style		Formal Style
Contract	The research won't be continued until appropriate funding is occurred	The research will not be continued until appropriate funding is occurred
Interjections and hesitation fillers. (i.e., um, well, you know; etc.).	Well, we will now consider the Influence of media on society.	we will now consider the Influence of media on society.
Phrasal verbs	Researchers have found out that many mental illnesses are based on molecular defects.	Researchers discovered that many mental illnesses are based on molecular defects.

1.4.2. Cautious Writing

Yakhontova (2003) stated that academic writing, particularly scientific writing, is factual, simply it is used to convey facts and information. As academic writing techniques and strategies are developing, it is now recognized that an important feature of academic writing is the concept of cautious language, often called "hedging" or "vague language". In other words, the avoidance of definite statements or conclusions. The purpose of such a technique is to be accurate and to protect the academic writer from being criticized from possible errors or invalid claims and judgments. For instance if an author makes a statement like *"All girls like pink",* a reader can show that this statement is not true by simply finding one girl who does not like pink. The author credibility as an academic writer is immediately destroyed. Whereas, if he said, „*Pink is popular with girls',* it will be harder for the reader to disprove. This technique or strategy is well known in scientific context, that is in scientific academic setting.

There are four specific reasons in which writer have to use hedging or cautious language: (1) to avoid absolute statements,(2) to protect themselves when the subject is controversial, (3) to distance themselves from the evidence if it does not have consistent support in the field,(4) to protect themselves if the author is well-respected in the field and they want to disagree with him (Amy, 2010).

According to Yakhontova (2003) the main linguistic forms of doing hedging are as follows:

Table 2 the use of caution in academic writing.

	Not Cautious	Cautious
By using adjectives that express probability It is likely It is probable It is possible	Dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.	It is probable that dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.
By using a *there is* construction with the word *possibility* a strong possibility a definite possibility	Dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.	There is a strong possibility that dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.
By using quantity words. A majority. A large number.	social scientists serve contradictory political and scientific values.	A majority of social scientists often serve contradictory political and scientific values.
By using statements of shared knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs It is *generally agreed* It is *widely accepted*	Dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.	It is generally agreed that dinosaurs died out due to sudden climatic changes.
By using modal verbs. may will must would	The commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now.	It may be said that the commitment to some of the social and economic concepts was less strong than it is now.

1.4.3. Academic Vocabulary

Gerard (2013) claimed that there have been many attempts to define what exactly academic vocabulary is. Many writers think that academic vocabulary is much harder than general English vocabulary. However; academic vocabulary does not mean difficult vocabulary, using academic words is more a question of finding appropriate language, in a specific style in a specific situation, than anything else. In other words, academic vocabulary items consist of words that are quite different from those words we learned from our everyday interactions. Academic vocabulary is about focusing on specialized words, as opposed to the high frequency words. Academic vocabulary refers to the words associated with the content knowledge.

1.4.4. Verbs

As Taylor (2015) reported, the notion of academic verbs means the formal style or the kind of verbs that are used in interpersonal communication, which means that some verbs which are frequently encountered in everyday communication may not be suitable for the use in academic writing. These include verbs which are casual (informal) and commonly used only in spoken English. This does not mean that informal language is inferior to formal language, it simply means that there are verbs which are more appropriate than others for use in each context.

Table 3 list of academic verbs

purchase	emphasize	contract
regulate	exclude	establish
Restrict	survey	require
conduct	transfer	consume
construct	alternate	obtain
consume	categorize	restrict
imply	conclude	coordinate
interact	participate	rely

Note. Retrieved from Communications/EAL Instructor for the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Manitoba, cosette_taylor@umanitoba.ca

Academic writing does not include phrasal verbs. a phrase as ("take off" or "look down") that combines a verb with a preposition or adverb or both and that functions as a verb whose meaning is different from the combined meanings of the individual word. (Taylor, 2015)

Here are just a few examples of phrasal verbs, these informal phrasal verbs, should be avoided in academic writing

Poor: The patient told her husband to get out of the room.

Better: The patient told her husband to leave the room.

Poor: The nurse gave out the medications each morning.

Better: The nurse distributed the medications each morning.

1.4.5. Collocation

Firth (1951) defined collocation as "the company that a word keeps" Collocation refers to a relationship between a word and other words that precede and follow it. knowing a word is not just about knowing its meaning but also knowing the words that collocate with it. Collocation is one of the markers in differentiating proficient and less proficient. collocation can also bring a good level of formality to academic writing, which is something essential in academic writing (Davidson,2016). One way to improve and transform academic writing to the high level of formality is by learning some useful academic collocations:

Table 4. Academic Collocation

Collocation	The meaning
Accurate assessment	correct and precise evaluation of something or someone.
Address the issue	consider or deal with the matter at hand.
Adversely affect	change in a negative way.
Become apparent	to be suddenly clear or obvious.
Broad range	of extensive scope.
Causal link	one thing being responsible for another.

1.4.6.Spelling

Spelling is significant said Susan(2009) for precisely the same reason that grammar and punctuation are important. Poor spelling makes poor communication. English spelling is notoriously challenging to master for native speakers and language learners alike. Because English developed from several different language families, and it easily absorbs new words from other languages which make the English language has many different ways to spell the same sound and many different ways to pronounce the same spelling (student learning,nd).

In academic writing, spelling should always be consistent and accurate because academic writing requires a high degree of accuracy and consistency, that means the writer should follow either American spelling or British spelling from the beginning to the end, and cannot be mixed. The following is some general remarks about spelling:

Common errors in spelling

Words ending

ant/ent ….eg: dependent, dependant

cede/ceed/sede ….eg: precede, proceed, supersede

ice/ise…. eg: noun practice, verb practice

Words including

ie/ei .... The old rule is a good one: **I before E except after C, when the sound is E.**

Words beginning

de/di ....eg: despair, divide

im/in ....eg: impossible, inconceivable

US v UK Spelling

British **ogue**/ American **og**: catalogue/catalog

British **our**/ American **or**: colour/color

1.4.7.Capitalization

There are many rules that must be followed when writing in the academic context. These rules generally are categorized under the notion of grammar. One of the most important concepts in grammar deals with capitalization. Capitalization defined as "using the capital form of the first letter in a word, while all the other letters in the word remain lowercase". There are many rules of capitalization, but to

understand the rules of capitalization and to be able to master them, is first to understand the importance of capitalization. (Angela,2016)

Why capitalize? A very simple question but yet it is important to know the answer and understand it. All the rules in standard grammar serve some sort of purpose that always relates to conveying a clear meaning. Capitalization's purpose helps to show the reader the importance of different words .It is important to show this in academic writing. Let us consider these two phrases: *'The White House'* and *'the white house'*. Because the first phrase is capitalized , it refers to the house where the President of the United States lives in; lowercase, it refers to any house that is white. In this example, we can see how capitalization shows the reader the clear meaning of the words.

1.4.8.Punctuation

Different punctuation marks are used in different situations but all help with conveying the message with clarity. It is therefore essential, in academic writing in particular, to use punctuation accurately. Punctuation is the system of signs or symbols given to a reader to show how a sentence is constructed and how it should be read, it helps the reader to read the sentence as it is supposed to be read and give the exact wanted meaning. Sarwan (2015) points out that the marks of punctuation play a very important role in giving intended meaning to the language. The use of wrong mark of punctuation or even wrong placement of marks of punctuation can result in the change of meaning of the sentence completely and sometimes even convert the sentence to complete nonsense. The examples bellow show the importance of punctuation:

let's eat grandma.   Let's eat, grandma.

1.5. Important Elements of Academic Texts

The following are considered some important features and elements of academic writing essential for texts of different genres.

1.5.1 Paragraphs and Paragraph Division

As yakhontova (2003) mentioned, the division into paragraphs is an important feature of any type of writing. A paragraph may be defined as a textual unit that consist of a number of sentences which deal with one main idea. Usually the first

sentence of a paragraph is slightly indented to the right in relation to the rest of paragraph. In English academic writing, all paragraphs with the exception of the first one should be indented. A paragraph is, therefore, a visual textual unit. By dividing a text into paragraphs, writers help the readers to see how their texts is moving, unlike if the paragraph is in one block it will not allow the reader to read it properly and to see how it moves and how ideas are moving within one text, that is because when moving into a complete new idea, a new paragraph should be started. Moves of the paragraphs or moves of the ideas are like a chain, they complete each other in a well-organized structure. Effective paragraph or academic paragraph should have four fundamental characteristics: a topic sentence, unity, coherence, and adequate development. These four items specify to students how to structure paragraph.

1.5.2.Unity

Unity as (Acheil ,n.d) suggests, it refers to the extent to which all of the ideas and thoughts contained within a provided passage "hang together" in a way that make it easy for the reader to understand and go smooth with it. When the writer shift to a new idea and concept the writer should begin a new paragraph. Unity is important because it helps the reader in following along with the ideas of the writer and make it easy for the reader to see how the passage or paragraph is moving.

1.5.3.Coherence

Coherence is referred to the extent to which the stream for thoughts in a paragraph is effectively understood by the reader. For this reason, coherence is nearly related to unity. When a writer shift main ideas or topics within a paragraph, confusion often results. To achieve coherence, then, a writer should indicate how all of the ideas contained in a paragraph are relevant to the main topic. (Acheil ,n.d)

1.5.4.Adequate Development

Acheil (n.d) also sees that paragraph is adequately developed when it describes, clarifies and supports the topic sentence. If the reader could not understand the paragraph, means that the paragraph has not been adequately developed. Generally speaking, a paragraph which comprises of only two or three sentences is not well-developed. A good paragraph is the paragraph that contains at least four sentences which explain and elaborate on the topic sentence.

1.5.5. Topic Sentences

the paragraph which begins with a topic sentence is one of the best ways to achieve clarity and unity in one's writing. The purpose of a topic sentence is to describe what the paragraph will be about, in such way the reader will have a clear expectations about what will follow. An effective topic sentence contains only one main point. After reading a topic sentence, one should be able to anticipate the type of information contained in the rest of the paragraph. If the writer did not provide the reader with clear topic sentence, the paragraph will lack unity, coherence and adequate development and this will result in the lack of understanding. (Acheil, n.d)

1.5.6. Titles

Titles are important components of academic writing. It may seem a simple task, but it requires some serious thought. Velany (2013) reported that titles deduce what a text is about and its relevance to them based on the title. Considering this, it is clear that the title of any academic text is the most important determinant of how many people will read, it is the face of the text that attract the attentions . John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak, linguists and authors on academic writing textbooks, suggest the following requirements for good academic titles:

1. The title should indicate the topic of the text.

2. The title should indicate the scope of the text (i.e., neither overstating nor understating its significance).

3. The title should be self-explanatory to readers in the chosen area."

4. The title should be simple, brief and attractive: The primary function of a title is to provide a precise summary of the text"s content. So the title should

be brief and clear. The verbs in titles should be active verbs instead of complex noun-based phrases, and avoiding unnecessary details. Moreover, a good title for a research writing is typically around 10 to 12 words long. A lengthy title may seem unfocused and take the readers" attention away from an important point.

1.5.7. Citations

One of the most important feature of academic writing is making use of the ideas of other people. This is significant because the writer needs to show that The writer needs to show that he understood the materials used by others and he/she can

use their ideas and finding properly . In fact, this is an essential skill for every writer. Spack (1988, p. 42) has pointed out that the most important skill a student at higher education must know is the skill of use of others ideas and works in academic way. It is an important skill for students to use in academic setting. Any academic text must contains the voice, ideas and concepts of other writer. Therefor; students must know how to cite them. The citation process must be made twice: once in the body of the text (or sometimes in footnotes) in the place where the source is referred to; and once with full details at the end of the work paper in a reference list or bibliography.

The most popular citation for the reference is in the text itself which is in-text citation. It includes the authors (authors') last name(s) and the year of publication and page numbers in parentheses (separated/not separated by a comma or a colon), e.g.: (Osofisan 1986, 786-7), or (Chan 1993: 31). If a reference is made to the whole work, the page numbers are usually not given: (Durning, 1990). If several authors are simultaneously cited, their names are separated in parentheses by a semicolon: (Edwards, 1992; Schuldiner, 1995). Sometimes, an ampersand (&) is used in place of *and* between the names of two authors, e.g.: (Sudhof & Jahn, 1991). If a reference is made to a paper written by more than two authors, it is possible to give the name of the first author followed by the Latin abbreviation *et* al.: (Liu et al., 1992; Krickson et al., 1992) As in the first case, the lull references arc given in the bibliography at the end of the text. Failure to acknowledge that some of opinions and information have come from others can be seen as plagiarism But accusations of plagiarism may result from carelessness, poor practice, or lack of understanding.

1.5.8.Lists of References

Many guidance books such as APA guide the 6th edition and MLA books have tackled the point of academic writing . Academic writing requires to read and cite the work of others and that students are asked to be academic in their research by knowing how and when to cite and use the reference list. „References‟ is a list of all the sources which are quoted or paraphrased. At the end of the paper the writer should arrange entries in alphabetical order by the author‟s last name or, if there is no author, by the first main word of the title. It should start on a separate page at the end of his paper. There are specific guidelines that academic writer must follow when referencing in the text and in the References section. There are many systems of referencing, but only two are widely accepted in academic setting which are :

The American Psychological Association (APA) style as it is reveals by the 6th edition of APA, is widely accepted in the social sciences and other fields, such as education, business, and nursing. The APA citation format requires parenthetical citations within the text rather than endnotes or footnotes. Citations in the text which is called in text citation show the brief information, usually the name of the author and the date of publication, to help the reader to the source of information if he wants more detail about the author and the whole work in the reference list at the end of the paper. The other type of references is the MLA style which is accepted way to document source material for many types of humanities documents. It is simpler than some other style guides, such as the APA Style Guide or the Chicago Manual of Style. (APA. Guide)

Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt to review the literature related to academic writing in general has been made. Writing is a complex process that requires a number of various skills. As a result, different writing styles have also been categorized. Having a formal tone and style is often required in academic writing. Also in this chapter we dealt with the main characteristics of the style of English academic writing which are the absence of conversational features and the use of an appropriate academic vocabulary. However developing a capacity of writing in formal style is extremely important for nonnative speakers wishing to master the conventions of English academic discourse.

<h1 style="text-align:center">CHAPTER TWO: Major English Academic Genres</h1>

Introduction

One aspect of academic writing, that students should be familiar with, is the notion of genres or academic genres. This notion is at the very center of academic writing. It refers to the type of the texts that has a specific structure and form and more precisely specific moves. The following chapter tackles the different types of academic genres.

2.1. Summaries

A summary is a record in a reader's own words that summarize the main points of a piece of writing such as a newspaper article, the chapter of a book, or even a whole book. It is also possible to summarize something that is heard, such as a lecture, or something that have seen and heard, such as a movie. In summarizing the small details, and unnecessary point are omitted (summary ,n.d). The development of summarizing skills is therefore important for those who wish to master English academic writing

2.1.1. When Are Summaries Used?

In general terms, writing summaries is a good way for enhancing one's capacity to read ,because it oblige the reader to focus with understanding the whole work rather than on just following each word or sentence. In academic terms, summaries are used in the following case:

(a) In case of reading something that is very important for the studies and/or difficult to understand, writing a summary appear here to help and make what is difficult easy to understand. For the summary another option which is that it can be referred to it later to refresh the memory, for example when revising for an exam, or when talking about it in class. (It is also a good idea to turn lecture notes into summaries.)

(a) When writing academic papers people often need to insert summaries of something that they have read or heard. For example, to summarize the main points of a book that is relevant to the topic understudies.

2.1.2. Steps in Writing a Summary

Yakhontova (2003) mentioned, that any summary should go through some steps ,these steps are as follows:

(a) The first step is during reading, the writer should underline all the important points and all the important evidence. For example, to look for all the topic sentences. Words that are repeated several times are likely to be keywords. Transition words can help understanding of the overall structure of a passage.

(b) the text should be divided into sections, each section must have important information.

(c) The first sentence of the summary should be started by the name of the author of a summarized text, its title, and the main idea.

(d) Add appropriate transition devices (logical connectors) to show the logical relationship of the ideas and to improve the flow of the summary. (Summary, n.d)

2.2.Research Papers (article)

A research paper (article) might be characterized as relatively short piece of research which is usually published in a journal or a volume. A research paper is also an extended article that presents the writer interpretation, believes, evaluation or argument. When writing a research paper the writer build upon what he knows about the subject and makes a thoughtful attempt to find out what experts know. (what is a research,2016)

However the most important thing about a research paper or an article is to know how to write it academically and how it should be organized in academic way, and the reason for teaching this to students, is that they will be able to perform them in their career in academic way. John (2003) state that in formulating a research paper or article it is important to know most elements of an article which are as follow:

Table . 5 Elements of Article

Experimental process	Section of Paper
What did I do in a nutshell?	Abstract
Whatis the problem?	Introduction
How did I solve the problem?	Materials and Methods
What did I find out?	Results
Whatdoesitmean?	Discussion
Whohelped me out?	Acknowledgments
Whose work did I refer to?	Literature Cited
Extra Information	Appendices (optional)

(John,2003)

2.3.Conference Abstracts

A conference abstract is an abstract that is to be submitted for consideration to present a paper at a professional conference or at academic conference . It is usually

much longer than a summary abstract and functions independently from the paper. Its length is usually specified by the conference organizer, but will rarely be more than 500 words (just short of two double-spaced pages). A conference abstract is important because it does not only say something about the paper that is been proposing, but also a lot about the writer or the student state, it gives the space to an experienced evaluator who is giving his time for the tedious process of paper selection and will attentively study the proposal. (conference abstract)

For students to present at a conference, they generally have to submit a proposal. The conference proposal is a rather unique kind of writing, and it can be difficult for the students. As a genre, conference proposals vary widely from discipline to discipline. The paper abstract is highly formulaic as mentioned by Karen's (2011). It needs to show the following:

1) big picture problem or topic widely debated in the field.
2) gap in the literature on this topic.
3) the project which is filling the gap.
4) the specific material that is examine in the paper.
5) original argument.
6) a strong concluding sentence.

2.4. Review Article

A review article is the article that provide both a summary and/or a synthesis of the findings of research being published by other authors. The primary motivation behind a review article is to look and examine the findings results and to what extent these information are to true valuable to initiate a discussion about the chosen methodology and its findings. Therefore, a review article should always contain a list of supporting references.

Students at higher education often meet or asked to read about the new finding in their domain, so they should know how to write a review article for future studies of their own or even to review the work of other professionals and to know the structure and the function of review article for the reason that they are in academic setting. The benefit of teaching a review article for students, is that it help them to develop their critical thinking and enable them to see the world from a different angles and prospective. (Batovski n.d)

Reviews are published in the special sections of scholarly journals or even university magazine. The size of reviews depends upon the requirements of a particular journal. Normally, their overall format includes the following sections:

a. Introduction

- It Includes some few opening sentences that announce the author(s) and the title, with brief explanation of the topic of the text.

- It includes presentation of the aim of the text alone with summarizing the main finding or key argument.

- The introduction should be concluded by a brief statement of the evaluation of the text. This can be a positive or negative evaluation or, as is usually the case, a mixed response.

b. Summary

presentation of the key points along with a limited number of examples. It may also include a brief explanation of the author‟s purpose/intentions throughout the text and a brief description of how the text is organized.

c. Critique

From the most important to least important conclusions of the text.

.If the critique is more positive than negative, then the negative points should be presented first and then the positive at the last and vice versa.

d. Conclusion

This is usually a very short paragraph, To Restate the overall opinion of the text. A brief presentation of recommendations. If necessary some further qualification or explanation of the judgment which can be included. This can help the critique sound fair and reasonable.(current students,n.d)

2.5.Research Projects

A research project, or grant proposal is a project which proposes to conduct a certain research in certain field and requests funds for it. The primary purpose of grant proposals is to persuade proposal reviewers and grant agency officials to fund the research proposed. Grant proposals, therefore, represent persuasive writing which is an important skill for the students because it help them to learn the skills of persuasion. yakhontova(2003).

2.5.1.The Structure of Research Project

According to Swales (1990: 186-187), the typical structure of a research

proposal is as follows:

1. Front Matter

a) Title or cover page b) Abstract

c) Table of contents 2. Introduction

3. Background

4. Description of proposed research

5. Back matter

a) Description of relevant institutional resources

b) References

c) Personnel d)

Budget

2.6.Letters

The need for effective oral and written communication skills is becoming increasingly important in the work force. Therefore, it is critical that students at the end of their academic studies should be able to write professional and academic letters throughout job search to effectively market themselves to potential employers. Letters play an important role in academic communication. Many of them are sent nowadays via email, although traditional letters continue to function. (yakhontova, 2003).

2.6.1. Letter of Recommendation

There exist a hundred types of letter, for each of them a purpose and a function. Letter of recommendation is one of them. In simplest terms, a letter of recommendation is a letter that makes a statement of support for a candidate it presents a well-documented evaluation, providing sufficient evidence and information to help a selection committee in making its decision. The letter of recommendation has a format of a letter with the introduction, body, and conclusion (Precht, 1998):

- the introduction states the purpose of writing and serves as a frame for the letter
- the body contains the main evaluation of the applicant.
- the conclusion contains predictions of the applicant s success.

The letter of recommendation should also include name, position, and address of a referee (a person who provides a letter of reference). It is also recommended to describe the context in which the writer has known the applicant. Often, the applicants

personal qualities (such as intelligence or industriousness) are described at the end of the body of the letter.

Conclusion

Academic writing takes many forms. It is important for students at higher education to know the types of academic writing they will be doing , its moves and the purpose it serves. When students know the specific features of a genre, they will have a better understanding of what the writing will look like, what it will contain and the style of language used. The importance of genres for students at higher education is that after they know the genres and its typical structure , moves they will be able to perform well when they are in academic setting. A genre such as letters, has its own style and language and moves, it will be important for students to master them well, because after their graduation they will write letters to employ for job, they will have to write a research proposal if they want financial support from a company or government. In general the genre notion is at the center of academic writing and that students have to know them.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology and Results

Introduction

The objectives of this study are to determine what difficulties EFL students encounter when learning to write academic English. By recognizing the learners' academic writing difficulties, there will be a clear picture of the most effective and efficient ways to improve and enhance their performance in academic writing. Also the purpose of this study is to determine different challenges that are faced by the teachers of academic writing. This chapter, then, is devoted to explaining the method used to carry out this study; it defines the population, the sample, the tools used to collect data and a detailed description of teachers˝ questionnaire and students test

3.1. Methodology and Methods

This research follows the descriptive approach as Burns and Grove (2001, p. 248) stated that "Descriptive design helps to identify problem in a current practice with a view to improve outcomes". Also, this study follows the mixed method since our study involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting of data, the mixed method is the appropriate method to fulfill our objectives.

3.1.1 Methods

The tools used in this research are a questionnaire and a test .The questionnaire was for teachers and the test was for students. To gather the data, we used a questionnaire because it allows us to collect a large amounts of information from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way. And the results of the questionnaires can usually be quickly and easily quantified .We used the test to have more valid information from the students.

3.1.2. The Test

We used a test because it is a very effective and economical way of collecting quantitative data. It is a more valid source of data. To obtain reliable results, the test was conducted for the students instead of questionnaire. The test gives more consistent results because it takes place inside the classroom and not outside unlike the questionnaire.

3.1.2.1. Description of The Test

The test includes two sections. The first section is about English academic style and language. It contains 8 questions. Each question was devoted to one aspect of English Academic Style and Language formal style, academic verbs, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and referencing. 5 questions are about choosing the correct answers and the remaining 3 questions are about writing the correct answers. The second section is about the different types of genre, the genre questions was about the meaning of the genre and its structure.

3.1.2.2. Administration of The Test

The test was given to 30 students from the fields of linguistics, translation and literature. The students were gathered in the classroom to provide an appropriate atmosphere for answering the test.

3.1.2.3. Data Analysis and Procedures

Once the data are collected, the appropriate statistical tests were performed to analyze the data. All data analysis for the study is conducted using the Microsoft Excel program.

3.1.3. The Questionnaire

We used a questionnaire because it allows us to collect a large amount of information from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way, and the results of the questionnaires can usually be quickly and easily quantified .

3.1.3.1. Description of The Questionnaire

The questionnaire includes four sections. The first section tackles the difficulties of writing in order to have a deep insight on writing difficulties faced by students from the teacher''s perspective. The second section covers the factors behind poor writing and the third section is about the aspects of academic writing. The last section tackles some possible solutions to overcome the problems of academic writing.

3.1.3.2. Administration of The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given out to 5 teachers of writing skill at their free time in order to guarantee consistent results.

3.1.3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Once the data are collected, the appropriate statistical tests were performed to analyze the data. All data analysis for the study are conducted using Microsoft Office Excel.

3.1.4. Population and Sampling

The respondents for the questionnaire were 5 teachers of writing skill at the university of Kasdi Merbah during the academic year 2015-2016. The respondents for the test were 30 students from the first year master degree during the 2015-2016 academic year at the university of Kasdi Merbah.

3.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data for this study are collected through two instruments (questionnaire and the test). These data are analyzed by using the Microsoft office excel.

3.2.1.Students' Test

In this study students were given a test to answer. This latter includes two sections. Each one of them collects targeted information. The first section tackles the point of English Academic Style and Language, it contains 8 questions, each question was devoted to one aspect of English Academic Style and Language starting from the academic form of sentences, academic verbs, spelling, collocations, capitalization and punctuation, moving to the questions seven and eight which are about paragraphing and referencing, whereas the second section is about the different types of genres which are summarizing, research project and abstract conference. , the genre questions was about the meaning of the genre and the structure of it.

2.1.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation of The Test

The results of the students test are presented in tables as follows:

Section One : English Academic Style and Language

Q1. Tick (√) The Academically Accepted Form From The List Below?

Table 6. academic form

	Numbers	Percentages
Correct	24.00	80.00
Wrong	6.00	20.00

The data from the table have revealed that 80% of the students have answer the question correctly, and 20% of the students did not answer questions. So it can be observed that these participants 20% face slight challenges related to academic sentences in their academic writing.

Q2. Choose The Academic Verbs From Non-Academic From The List Below?

Table 7. academic and non-academic verbs

	Numbers	Percentages
Correct	20,00	66,67
Wrong	10,00	33,33

Concerning the second question of the test that deals with the point of academic verbs which must be used when they are in academic context, the analysis revealed that 66,66% of the students were able to know and choose the right answer and only 33,33% of the students have chosen the wrong answers. According to these results it can be assumed that students at the level of master degree still face slight challenges in academic writing concerning the choice of verbs which are academic.

Q3. Choose the correct answer from the options given below to each question?

Table 8.collocation table.

	Numbers	Percentages
Correct	16.00	53.33
Wrong	14.00	46.67

In the third question, which talks about collocation, students were asked to choose the suitable collocation for each sentence, and the results showed that 46,67% have chosen the wrong collocation and 53,33% have chosen the right answer. This result clearly shows that a considerable amount of students find the use of collocation as an obstacle to have a good academic piece of writing.

Q4. write the missing words into the gaps. the word in (brackets) tells you how many letters are missing

Table 9. spelling

	Numbers	Percentages
correct	16.00	53.33
wrong	14.00	46.67

Spelling is one of the difficulties faced by students when writing in academic English. The table 3.4. revealed that 53,33 % of the students have answered the question wrong and only 46,66 have answered the question correctly. The problem of misspelling is a real challenge for both teachers and students because it can lead to misunderstandings, harm one"s credibility, and it implies that one does not care enough to ensure accuracy especially, in academic settings. This explains a lot why teachers usually emphasize the spelling over other aspects of academic writing.

Q5. Choose the sentence in which capital letters are Used correctly. circle the right answer

Table 10. Capital letters

	Numbers	Percentages
Correct	1900	63.33
Wrong	11.00	36.67

Capitalization was another issue discussed in the first chapter and students were given an exercise in which they choose the sentence that has a correct capitalization .63,33% of the students have selected the correct sentence that has the correct capitalization and only 36,66 did not have the correct answer. The data display that nearly half of students find challenges when it comes to capitalization. capitalization is important as the rest of the aspects of academic writing because it effects comprehension.

Q6. choose the correct punctuation mark. circle the right answer

Table 11. punctuation marks

	Numbers	Percentages
Correct	17,33	56.67
Wrong	13.00	43,33

Punctuation is also an aspect of academic writing and most of the students find difficulties on where and when to use the appropriate punctuation marks. The data display that 43,33 % of the students have problems in the use of marks of punctuation. The data revealed that almost half of students face some obstacles in punctuation.

Q7. is the following g paragraph a good paragraph. if not, write and illustrate why it is not?

Table 12. Paragraphing

	number	percentage
Correct	12,00	40,00
Wrong	18,00	60,00

The seventh question in the test, which is about paragraph, students were given a paragraph and asked to write if it is good paragraph or not, based on students' responses, the data indicates that a considerable number of them, 60% are not aware of the coherence and cohesion which were the most missing elements in the given test along with punctuation. This high percentage explains why teachers focus and insist in this two elements. The fact that this data much 100% to what teachers said in their questionnaire.

Q8. what is missing in the following paragraph?

Table 13. Referencing

	number	percentage
Correct	12,00	40,00
Wrong	18,00	60,00

The last question in Section One tackles the point of references. The data show that about 86,66% of students did not answer the question when they were given a scientific paragraph and asked to tell what is missing in it. The question of reference is a real challenge for students because in academic settings, we need to have references in order to avoid plagiarism.

Recapitulation
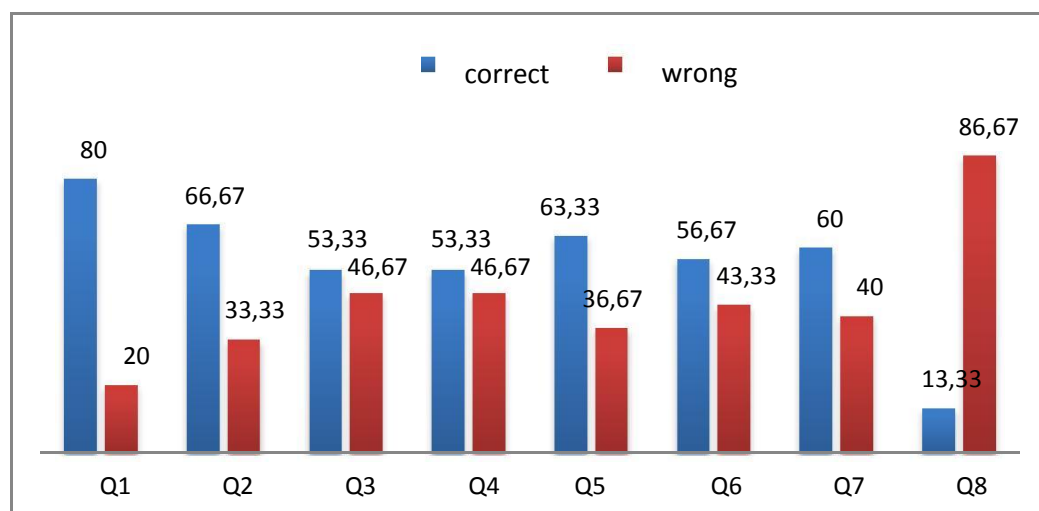
Figure 1. Section One answers

In figure **1** all the questions of the first section are gathered in one figure and the wrong answers are highlighted, in order to give a clear picture about students" deficiencies in the tested aspect, of academic writing. We can notice in this figure that there some precise area in academic writing in which students have more obstacles than other area. These area are spelling, punctuation and reference.

Section Two: Genres of Academic Writing

The section two is devoted to the genres in academic writing and the data are displayed in table 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11.

Q1. what is a summary? and what are the steps of writing a summary?

Table 14. Summary

	number	percentage
Correct	21,00	70,00
Wrong	9,00	30,00

The first question of the second section which is about the definition of a summary ,and the steps of writing a summary. The data display that 30% of the students do not know what summary is .70% answered the question of what is a summary successfully. This percentage can indicate that students may not know much knowledge about summary.

Q2. what is a research project (proposal)? and what is the structure of a research project?

Table 15. research project (proposal)

	number	Percentage
Correct	16,00	53,33
Wrong	14,00	46,66

The second question which is about giving a definition of the research project (proposal) and the structure of the research project . The majority of students 53,33 % do not know what a research project is and do not know about the structure of the research project, whereas 46,66% do.

Q3. what is conference abstracts? and what does conference abstracts serve?

Table 16. Conference Abstract

	Number	percentage
Correct	00,00	00,00
Wrong	30	100

The third question is about the conference abstract and what it serve. All students 100% do not know the answer. This means that students have no idea about this genre which may also mean that teachers do not teach this genre to their students.

Recapitulation
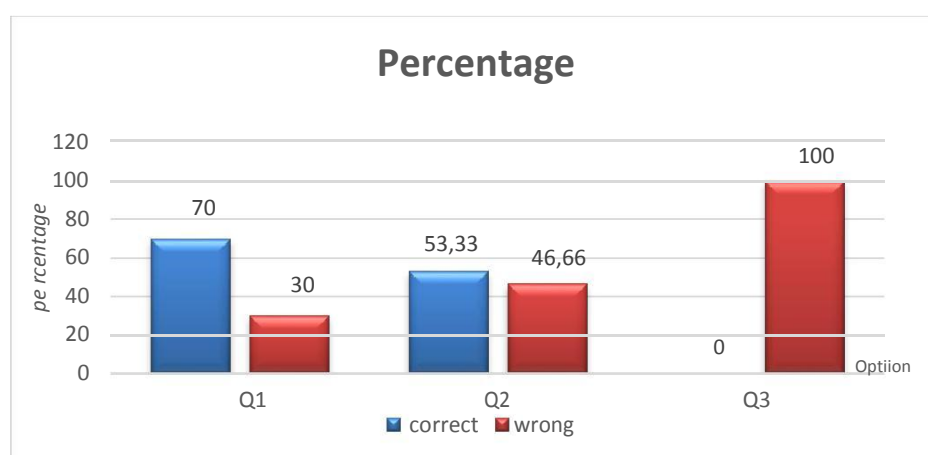
Figure 2. section two answers.

3.2.2 Teachers' questionnaire

The results of the teachers, questionnaire are presented in tables of percentages as follows:

Section one: The difficulties of academic writing

Section One of the questionnaire is devoted to the difficulties of academic writing faced by students

Q1. do your students find difficulties when writing in academic English?

Table 17.Students Difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0

100% of the respondents declare the fact that their students find difficulties when writing in academic English. This means that academic English is not an easy task to learn and it needs much effort to overcome this problem. It may be through offering more extra- hours to teaching writing or through providing writing center where students will have much time to practice their academic writing.

Q2. these difficulties are due to:

a. Teacher

b. Syllabus

c. Learner

d-Others?"

Table 18. Reasons of Difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
a+b+c	2	40
b+c	2	40
a+c	1	20
a+b+c+d	0	0

We notice that teachers" choices are integrative, combining two to three options. Moreover, there is a frequent repetition of option (c), which represents

"learner ", in percentage of (100%)in each choice. Hence, the learner is classified in the first place. We can also notice the frequent repetition of the option" syllabus" in which it was repeated twice along with the option "teacher" it also important to mention that 40% of the respondent have chosen "b" and "c" . Also 20% of the respondent have chosen "a" and "c" which stands for teacher and learner.

Section Two tackle the factors behind difficulties of students in academic writing.

Q1. do out-numbered classes affect the learners" written performances?

Table 19. Out-numbered class effect.

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	80
No	1	20

Almost all the respondents (80%) declare that out- numbered classes affect the learners" written performances. It is difficult for the teacher to deal with out – numbered class in terms of explaining and giving feedback, which is important for the student to improve their academic writing.

Q2. is the time allocated to teaching written expression sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of the students?

Table 20. the time allocated to teaching written expression

Option	Number	perecentage
A	4	80
B	1	20

80% of the teachers select the option (A) which is "Yes" the time is sufficient to cover most of the aspects of academic writing and only 20% of the teachers said "No".

Q3. if the teacher is a source of students" poor writing is related to?

a. Lack of teacher"s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement.

b. Lack of training in teaching academic writing.

c. Teacher's response to students" written productions.

d. The teacher as a source of demotivation.

e. Other, please specify.

Table 21. Teacher as a source of students' poor academic writing

Option	Number	Percentage
a +c	1	20
b+c	1	20
a+d	1	20
a+b+c+d	0	0
A	2	40

The majority of the respondents (40%) emphasis that the reasons behind this problem can be related to the lack of following elements: Lack of teacher"s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement and 20% have chosen option (A)and (C) which are the lack of teacher"s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement and teacher's response to students" written productions, also 20% of the teachers have chosen option (A) and (D) which are the lack of teacher"s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement and the teacher as a source of demotivation. What is noticeable in this question is option (A) which is frequently repeated.

Q4. if the learner is the source of the writing difficulties, is it related to?

a. Lack of background knowledge in the subject.

b. lack of background knowledge in the type of writing. C. Lack of motivation to writing.

e. Other, please specify.

Table 22. learner is the source of academic writing difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
a+b	2	40
a+b+c	1	20
C	2	40
a+b+c+d+e	0	0

40% of the respondents have selected two main elements behind the poor writing of student, which are: (A) Lack of background knowledge in the subject,(B)

lack of background knowledge in the type of writing. Also 40% have chosen only option (C) which is lack of motivation to writing which is an important element towards improving academic writing. Whereas 20% have selected (A) Lack of background knowledge in the subject, (B) lack of background knowledge in the type of writing (C) which is lack of motivation. Indeed, it is an important element in improving academic writing.

Q5. does the syllabus include the most important aspects of academic writing?

Table 23. important aspects of academic writing in the syllabus?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	80
No	1	20

This question was asked for teachers in order to stand behind the factors that cause problems for students in academic writing, 80% of the teachers agreed that syllabus include the most important aspects of academic writing whereas only 20% did not agree.

Q6 . is teaching written expression during two academic years sufficient to train your students in the writing skill?

Table 24. Teaching written expression during two academic years

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	20
No	4	80

Almost all the respondents 80% find it insufficient to teach written expression during two academic years.

Section three: aspects of academic writing

this section tackles the aspects of academic writing

Q1. what aspects of academic writing do you actually present to your students?

a. Correct Grammar.

b. Good Ideas.

c. Academic vocabulary.

d. proper Spelling/Punctuation.

e. Knowing the academic genres and their structure.

Table 25. Aspects of Academic Writing

Option	Number	Percentage
a+b+c+d+e	1	20
a+b+c+D	1	20
a+c+d	1	20
B	1	20
a+b+d	1	20

20% of the teachers present the following aspects: correct grammar, good ideas, academic vocabulary, proper spelling and genre and their structure.
And 20% of the teachers present   correct grammar, academic vocabulary and proper spelling. According to them, all these aspects integrated to constitute a good piece of academic writing.

Q2. which of the following academic genres do you actually teach to your students?

A. Summaries.
B. Research Papers.
C. Conference Abstracts.

D. Reviews.
E. Research Projects.

Table 26. Academic genres taught to students

Option	Number	Percentage
a+d+e	2	40
a+b	1	20
B	1	20

Teaching academic genres for students is also an aspect in academic writing 40% of the teachers actually teach the following genre: summaries, reviews and research project and 20% teach summary and research papers and 20% teach only research papers. Research paper and summary was the common genre between the

teachers thus because the purpose is to enable students to write a good academic research.

Section four: possible solutions about academic writing problems.

This section tackle some possible solutions about academic writing problems.

Q1. is it possible to overcome academic writing difficulties?

 Table 27. possibility of overcoming academic writing difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0

100% of the teachers reported that it is possible to overcome the difficulties behind students" poor performances in academic writing simply by more practice.

Q2. is there anything else you would like to add about ways to improve academic writing?

Table 28. additional information

Option	Number	Percentage
	4	80
	1	20

This question is meant to give the informants freedom to add any comments that may help to improve the teaching of academic writing, the majority of the teachers 40% said that teachers should work hand In hand to improve the teaching of academic writing. 20% of the teachers said that a writing center should be provided

3.3. Summary

In order to guarantee the accuracy of the results that are gathered from the two instrument used for this study, which are the questionnaire that was submitted for the teachers and the test for the students, a step was made which is synthesizing the results of the two instruments. the results were exactly the same, that is what teachers have revealed about problems of academic writing faced by the teachers in their students were exactly the same what results of the test revealed. Teachers have reported that their students have problems in academic writing in terms of spelling,

punctuation, coherence and cohesion, the same thing was found when analyzing the student''s test. The test have shown that 46.67% of students face problems in spelling and 43.33% of students struggle with use of punctuation and highest percentage in the test of students when they were given paragraph and asked to illustrate it 60% of the students were unable to answer the question. These three important aspects of academic writing are challenge for students to overcome. And According to the questionnaire that was submitted for the teachers, the results showed that teachers find academic writing very difficult to teach because of many obstacles they face when teaching academic writing, this obstacles are because of many factors, these factors are , the time allocated for teaching academic writing is not sufficient, we can see that from their answers in the questionnaire when they were asked if the time allocated for teaching academic writing is sufficient or not, 80% of them said no the time is not sufficient. Also another factor is the out -numbered class, 80% of the teachers said that out-numbered class is problem in teaching academic writing. The third factor is the syllabus, again the same percentage 80% said that the syllabus does not include the most aspects of academic writing.

Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with the methodology followed by interpreting of the results of the two instruments that are used for this study. Data analysis procedure are described and the finding are presented in tables of percentages. After the analysis of the results of students'' test and teachers questionnaire, it has been found that both students and teachers find academic writing a challenge. In the analysis of the students'' test, the results have shown that students of master degree face a problems in academic writing in relation to the accepted academic form of sentence structure, spelling , punctuation ,coherence and cohesion for section one and genres and their structure for section two in a simple writing task.

For the teachers, the results have revealed that teaching academic writing for them is a big challenge, because of many factors, such as out-numbered class students, the time that is allocated for teaching academic writing is not sufficient. In genera academic writing is not an easy task to learn or to teach it needs a huge collaboration between teachers, and hard work from students.

General Conclusion

The aim of this piece of research was to investigate two issues: First, the problems students facing in learning academic writing. The second is the difficulties teachers face when teaching academic writing. The Students of master degree in English department, sometimes fail in academic writing .It is due to different writing problems. The first year Master students most encountered problems reported are (1) students find difficulties when writing in academic English. in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, the choice of vocabulary, coherence and cohesion (2)students struggle from the interference of mother tongue. And teachers reported that (1)it is possible to overcome the difficulties behind students" poor performances in academic writing simply by more practice.(2) All teachers agree that they should work hand In hand to improve the teaching of academic writing.(3)They reported that students can refine their performances in academic writing simply by more practice.

Therefore, there should be an in-depth investigation to be carried out on the difficulties of academic writing of a larger number of learners of different majors. Learners in EFL contexts could have different difficulties and different external and internal factors causing the difficulties in academic writing. This issue is also worth investigation.

Finally we believe that this work will be beneficial to all teachers of all modules and more specifically written expression to improve their ways in teaching the writing skill. We hope also that it will pave new ways for investigating other aspects related academic writing problems.

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Dear Student,

This writing test is part of a piece of research that deals with academic writing. We aim at detecting students' difficulties in academic writing. The goal is to obtain a close view about the main issues that are faced by students when producing a piece of academic writing. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Doing this set of activities would be of great help to us.

Thank you for cooperation

Section one

1. Tick (√) the academically accepted form from the list below:

1. It is been a gloomy day.
2. we will now consider the influence of media on society.
3. They aren't used to it and I don't want them to be.
4. This is good business. Now, the important thing here is revenue.
5. This is good business. The important thing here is revenue.
6. Our schedule is wide open. You know, we can do many things.
7. Our schedule is wide open. We can do many things.
8. Researchers have found out a new way to hack an iPhone.
9. Researchers have discovered a new way to hack an iPhone.
10. The book doesn't raise many important issues.
11. The book raises few important issues.
12. The locals enjoy excellent health because of the water quality.
13. One reason put forward to explain the generally good health of the local population is the quality of the water.
14. The weather in Amsterdam is always cold, grey and dull.
15. From October to March Amsterdam experiences winter weather that can frequently be cold, dull and grey.

2. Choose the academic verbs from non-academic from the list below

Got	children
resolve	gained
focus	reduce
impose	investigated
got better	resolve
turned down	put on
decline	kids
looked into	a hit

3. Choose the correct answer from the options given below to each question.

- The meeting took almost five hours so it was impossible to……..attention all the time.

 a) pay   b) have   c) keep

- I always avoid his company because he is a crashing …………………….

a) bore   b) nuisance   c) guy

- It is a golden ………………………… If you miss it, you will regret it.

a) chance   b) opportunity   c) offer

- Although I was ………………. annoyed by her attitude, I said nothing.

a) moderately   b) lightly   c) slightly

4. Write the missing words into the gaps. The word in (brackets) tells you how many letters are missing (number of underscores).

My father works as an……....................(electr_ _ _ _n).

I like to ride my……….............. (b_ _ _cle) in the evenings.

Daniel had an……….............… (a_ _ _ _ent) last Friday. He broke his left leg.

In 1906 there was a terrible……….............. (ear_ _ _ _ake) in San Francisco.

It never……………….(occurred, ocured) to him to take a taxi even thought it was past midnight

5. Choose the sentence in which capital letters are used correctly. Circle the right answer

 (A) This afternoon, you and I will play basketball with Kathleen and Beth.

 (B) This afternoon, You and I will play basketball with Kathleen and Beth.

 (C) This afternoon, you and i will play basketball with Kathleen and Beth.

 (A) Marie Curie, the famous chemist, worked with her Husband, Pierre.

 (B) Marie curie, the famous Chemist, worked with her husband, Pierre.

 (C) Marie Curie, the famous chemist, worked with her husband, Pierre.

 (A) The only way to have a friend," said Emerson, "is to be one."

 (B) "the only way to have a friend," said Emerson, "is to be one."

 C) "The only way to have a friend," said Emerson, "Is to be one."

6. Choose the correct punctuation mark. Circle the right answer

1. My favorite movie is Lord of the Rings__ Return of the King.

a) .

b) !

c) :

d) ;

2. Could you pass the salt
please__ a) !

b) .

c) :

d) ?

3. Please do not use your cell phone in class__ it is distracting for the other students. a) .

b) ,

c) ;

d) :

4. I would like a shiny__ new car.

a) ,

b) .

c) :

d) ;

5. I do not like sushi__ but she likes it very much.

a) ,

b) .

c) ;

d) :

7. Is the following paragraph a good paragraph. If not, write and illustrate why it is not?

People who study abroad can get a better job when they return to their home country. For example students have to cope with the challenges of living alone and meeting new people from different cultures.. this is because their qualifications and experience mean that they tend to get jobs that are higher paid they will become more confident in their life and in their relationships with others, also studying abroad is the independence students can gain, and they can also gain promotion quickly, Studying abroad grants the opportunity to completely immerse in a new language, and there is no better way to learn than to dive right in. Studying abroad allow to visit many touristic places

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8. What is missing in the following paragraph?

A few researchers in the linguistics field have developed training programs designed to improve native speakers' ability to understand accented speech, Their training techniques are based on the research described above indicating that comprehension improves with exposure to non-native speech. Conducted their training with students preparing to be social workers, but note that other professionals who work with non-native speakers could benefit from a similar program.

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Section two

1 what is a summary?

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2 what are the steps of writing a summary

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3 What is a Research Project (proposal)?

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What is the structure of a Research Project?

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4 what is Conference Abstracts?

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What does Conference Abstracts serve?

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Thank you

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers

We would like you to contribute to this study which deals with some difficulties that face students in academic writing. Being a teacher of written expression, you are kindly requested to respond to the following questionnaire, which is meant to gather feedback and information about problems of academic writing faced by students. Your answers would be of great help to us.

Thank you for cooperation

Please tick (√) the corresponding box or give a complete answer.

1. Do your students find difficulties when writing in academic English?

a. Yes   ☐

b. No   ☐

2. What kind of difficulties do they have exactly? -

……………………………………………………..

-……………………………………………………..

-……………………………………………………..

-……………………………………………………..

-…………………………………………………………..

-…………………………………………………………

3. These difficulties are due to:

a. Teacher ☐

b. Syllabus ☐

c. Learner ☐

d. Others, please explain……………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION TWO

1. Do out-numbered classes affect the learners' written performances?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

2. The time allocated to teaching Written Expression is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of the students.

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

3. If the teacher is the source of students' poor writing, is it due to:

a. Lack of teacher's adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement. ☐

b. Lack of training in teaching academic writing. ☐

c. Teacher's response to students' written productions. ☐

d. The teacher as a source of demotivation. ☐

e. Other, please specify…………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………

4. If the learner is the source of the writing difficulties, is it related to?

a. Lack of background knowledge in the subject.   ☐

b. lack of background knowledge in the type of writing.   ☐

C. Lack of motivation to writing   ☐

e. Other, please specify...

…………………………………………………………………………………….

5. Does the syllabus include the most important aspects of academic writing?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

1. Is teaching written expression during two academic years sufficient to train your students in the writing skill?

Yes ☐

No   ☐

SECTION THREE

1. What aspects of academic writing do you actually present to your students?

a. Correct Grammar.   ☐

b. Good Ideas.   ☐

c. Academic vocabulary.   ☐

d. proper Spelling/Punctuation.   ☐

e. Knowing the academic genres and their structure.   ☐

2. What aspects of academic writing do you think are the most important?

……

……

……

3. Which of the following academic genres do you actually teach to your students?

    Summaries.

    Research Papers.

    Conference Abstracts.

    Reviews.

    Research Projects.

SECTION FOUR

1. Is it possible to overcome academic writing difficulties?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

2. If "Yes", please explain how.
....
....
....

3. If "No", explain why.
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4. Is there anything else you would like to add about ways to improve academic writing?

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THANK YOU