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Analysing Students' Writing: A Discourse Analysis Perspective.

The case of First Year Master Students in Applied Linguistics and ESP at Kasdi Merbah
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

- ✓ *My late father and mother for their unconditional love.*
- ✓ *My brothers and sisters, especially NDAYIKEZA Longin for his encouragement and guidance.*
- ✓ *My stepmother for her love and care.*
- ✓ *My friends, especially those who have been together with me during my academic studies.*
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List of abbreviations

DA: Discourse Analysis

ESP: English for Specific purpose

M1: First Year Master

FL: Foreign Language

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General introduction

1. Background to the study

Having a high level of writing ability is a predictor of future success in professional and academic situations (Weigle, 2002). It helps students to get access to higher education and to its language and literacy resources (references in libraries) that are available in higher education for producing written texts (Lillis, 2001). As well, it enables students to meet the demands of the many different professional situations in which they may be working. And having a high level of writing ability means being able to write appropriately and effectively, that is, being able to communicate effectively by means of writing (Raimes, 1983). This high level of writing ability is something that foreign language learners would hope to achieve, especially those FL learners whose academic or professional career success depends on their ability to communicate effectively by means of writing. It is, however, an ability that many FL learners find difficult and problematic (Hedge, 2005). The reason for this is that they may fail to make their writing appropriate and effective despite the fact that they have spent many years developing the skill. This failure is the result of the demands that communicating effectively through writing makes on the learners and the nature of the writing activities.

The demands that writing makes on the learners can be understood if we consider how writing was viewed throughout the history of language teaching. In the 1950s and early 1960s, writing skill was considered as subordinate to speaking skill. This means that it was only learned to serve as a reinforcement of learning grammatical and vocabulary knowledge, which in turn served to achieve oral correctness (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan, 2006). In the light of this view, students were required to master the rules of grammar such as verb agreement, sentence structure, sentence boundaries... and the mechanics such as spelling, punctuation... (Raimes, 1983). In other words, they were expected to master the grammatical and the syntactic forms which were regarded as necessary in the production of a piece of a written text. This view, however, had attracted criticism from many researchers who attempted to explore the very act of composing a written text and therefore viewed writing as a complex, recursive and creative process (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juans, 2006). According to some researchers, such as Flower and Hayes (1981), Reid (2001), Kern (2000), students were required to be creative and fluent- during the writing process- in generating ideas, in organizing these ideas, in writing down these ideas and in revising and editing the text

produced. This view, however innovative it was, did not escape criticism. It was noted that it ignored the influence of the sociocultural context on the composing processes, which helps to construct writers' goal and communicative intentions (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan, 2006). Consequently, this has led many researchers and applied linguists such as Canale and Swain 1980, Canale 1983, Savignon 1983, Bachman 1987, 1990... to operationalize Hymes' (1972) communicative competence in an attempt to find an approach to the teaching of writing skill that could help students to develop an ability to communicate effectively through writing. When this new approach emerged, writing was viewed not as a decontextualized activity but as an activity embedded in the cultural and institutional context in which it is produced (Kern 2000; Hyland 2002). Students were, therefore, required to take account of this social and cultural context when producing a written text and to master all the components which make up the construct of communicative competence- namely, grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence.

The nature of the writing activities can be understood if we compare it with that of speech. Compared with speech, writing is a solitary activity. For Hedge (2005), it is detached from the wide range of expressive possibilities in speech. A writer is on his own. He is unable to exploit all the devices available to a speaker such as gesture, body movement, facial expression, pitch and tone of voice, feedback from the listener and so on to get the meaning across effectively (Hedge, 2005). Furthermore, as Byrne (1988) puts it, a speech is maintained through a process of interaction. It is normally spontaneous and therefore a speaker has little time to pay attention to organizing sentence structure or to connecting sentences. He/she repeats, backtracks, expands and so on, depending on how the listener reacts to what he says. In writing, on the other hand, Hedge continues, a writer compensates for the absence of all these features. The writer keeps the channel of communication open through his/her own efforts and ensures, both through his/her choice of sentence structure and by the way his/her sentences are linked together and sequenced, the text s/he produces can be interpreted on its own. S/he can also use certain structures which are less used in speech, or perhaps not used at all, but which are important for effective communication in writing.

In short, these demands that writing makes on the writer coupled with the nature of the writing activities present greater problems to FL learners. The reason for this is that if a writer does

not pay careful attention to them, they cause him/her to fail to communicate effectively. For instance, if he/she forgets some of the social and cultural conventions that are involved in writing, say, an application letter, there is a high probability that s/he risks making the letter uncommunicative. In addition, because of the lack of direct feedback from the reader, the writer may write something which is offensive or incomprehensible. There are many examples that highlight the problems that a writer encounters in communicating effectively through writing, and these problems are exacerbated when writing appropriately and effectively in foreign language.

2. Statement of the problem

The ability to write appropriately and effectively in foreign language requires the writer to integrate, during the writing process, a wide range of different types of knowledge- namely, linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge (Bruce, 2010, p.10). Linguistic knowledge encompasses the knowledge of the language system. This means, knowledge of grammar, lexis, and the ability to use this grammatical and lexical knowledge to create an extended written text which makes sense as a whole. Non-linguistic knowledge involves an ability to link the written text to the social and the cultural situations of which it forms a part. Furthermore, it entails an awareness of the writing process through which a writer goes.

This ability to write appropriately and effectively is one objective for FL learners, especially for M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP who are at a crossroads whether to do further studies or to enter a professional life. However, it is an ability that evades many of us. This in spite of the many years devoted to develop the skill (Tribble, 1996). This difficulty may be due to many things. It may result from a lack of knowledge in the language system or from a failure to use this language system knowledge to create a coherent text. In addition, it may be due to a failure to produce a text which is socially and culturally appropriate, yet linguistically accurate. These difficulties do prevent foreign language students from communicating effectively through writing. The aim of this research is to investigate whether or not M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP have the same problems and to determine where these problems come from. In other words, it aims to investigate whether or not M1 students have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing.

3. Aims of the research

The aims of this research are:

1. To investigate the problems M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP face in communicating effectively by means of writing.
2. To identify whether or not they have grammatical problems in writing.
3. To determine whether or not they have problems in writing cohesively and coherently.
4. To identify whether or not they face problems in linking linguistic features with social and cultural features when producing a written text.
5. To determine whether or not discourse analysis can be used as an approach that would help us to identify a communicative text from uncommunicative texts.

4. Research questions

The study informs the following research questions:

1. Do M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP have problems in communicating effectively through writing?
2. Do they have grammatical problems in writing?
3. Do they have problems in writing cohesively and coherently?
4. Do they have problems in linking linguistic features with social and cultural features when producing a written text?

5. Significance of the study

The findings in this study will make the following contributions. They will make students aware of the problems they have in communicating effectively by means of writing and will therefore prompt them to resolve these problems accordingly. They will raise students' awareness of the progress they have made in communicating effectively through writing. In addition, they will question the effectiveness of the English language program that is taught at Kasdi Merbah University to help students to acquire communicative competence in English.

6. Limitations of the study

This study has some limitations that we cannot ignore. To begin with, we do not pretend that this study has dealt with all the problems that M1 face in written communication skill. We

dealt with those, as Polio (1997) argues, which can affect communication through writing. As well, it cannot be determined for sure how much these problems affect communication by means of writing. For instance, we cannot determine for sure if these problems can cause communication breakdown in writing. More importantly, this study is conducted on M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP at Kasdi Merbah University. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized. We cannot generalize and say that the same findings can be applied on M1 students at other universities using the same means of research.

7. Tools of the research

The data was collected by means of a diagnostic test which was administered to M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP. These data were intended to identify the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively by means of writing. The collected data were analyzed by means of two methods. The first method was holistic rating scale. This method was employed to rate the test. The second method was descriptive statistic. This method was used to measure statistically the results which were obtained from the first method. After that, conclusion and recommendations were made.

8. Structure of the study

The present study is divided into three chapters. The first and the second chapters are devoted to literature review. In the first chapter, the concept of discourse analysis is introduced. This is because, in this study, discourse analysis, is taken as an approach that would help us to identify a communicative text from uncommunicative texts. In the second chapter, what a writer has to deal with as s/he produce a piece of writing and the problems s/he may face are presented. The third chapter is devoted to the methodology. It describes the research design, along with the participants, and the collection of data. As well, it includes the interpretation of the collected data, the conclusion, and the recommendations.

9. Definition of key terms

Effective communication is a process of transmitting information (spoken or written) and common understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 20011).

Writing is the production of the written words that result in a text but the text must be read and comprehended in order for communication to take place (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000)

Chapter I: Discourse Analysis

I.0. Introduction

Communicating effectively by means of writing is not as easy as it may seem. It is not, as some people may think, putting random words or sentences down on a piece of paper and sending them to someone who may be distant in time and place to work out what they are intended to mean. It is, as Byrne (1988) argues, organizing sequence of sentences into a text, into a coherent whole in a way which is as explicit as possible and complete in itself. The question arises as to whether communication through writing is restricted to organizing sequence of sentences into a text which is complete in itself. One explanation is based on the notion of discourse analysis, a notion which is covered in this chapter and which provides us with ways of describing a written text that fulfils the criteria of a communicative text.

In this chapter, we will see that effective communication through writing involves more than a consideration of linguistic knowledge. We will see that a written text which fulfils the criteria of a communicative text is described as being not only linguistically accurate but also socio-culturally appropriate and functionally effective. If we turn to our research question: “Do M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP have problems in communicating effectively through writing?” we will see that the problems these students may face in communicating effectively through writing are not only linguistically related. Let us turn to the subject of this chapter: “Discourse Analysis”, which will help us to describe a written text that meets the criteria of a communicative text.

I.1. Definition of discourse analysis

To define the term “discourse analysis (henceforth DA)” is not an easy task. Suffice it to say that the term DA means different things to different researchers and linguists. To researchers such as Leech (1983) and Schiffrin (1994) DA means the study of language beyond the sentence. To McCarthy (1991) it means the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. To researchers such as Fairclough (1989), Foucault (1980) DA means the study of the way people use language to achieve certain communicative goals. The question that arises in this case is: why is DA defined in different ways by different researchers?

The answers to the above question are based on the fact that researchers and linguists defined DA in a way that fitted the research traditions or the domain of research they belonged to (Alba-Juez, 2009). Before the term DA was defined, many linguists belonged to the research tradition that was concerned with the analysis of single sentences (McCarthy, 1991). Zellig Harris (1952), who belonged to this research tradition, published an article entitled “discourse analysis”. Harris’ aims in publishing this article was to look for language rules which would explain how sentences were connected within a text by a kind of extended grammar (Cook, 1989). This new approach to the analysis of connected sentences within a text influenced many researchers including Leech (1983) and Schiffrin (1994) who belonged to different research traditions- namely, formalism and functionalism, and defined DA as the study of language beyond the sentence (Alba-Juez, 2009). It was then remarked that language is a part of the society in which it is used, a society where people have social, cultural, and personal identities, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, goals and wants (Schiffrin, 1994 in Alba-juez, 2009). This influenced McCarthy (1991) and Fairclough (1989) and Foucault (1980) to define DA as the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used and the study of the way people use language to achieve certain communicative goals respectively. There are, of course, other definitions of DA that were influenced by the above statement by Schiffrin (1994) such as that of Cook (1989) who defines DA as the study of how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users, and that of Hatch (1992) who defines it as the study of language of communication- spoken and written, and so on.

There is no doubt that all these researchers mentioned above belong to different domains of research but share interests in language. This is the reason why some of these researchers define discourse analysis as the study of language beyond the sentence, while others define it as the study of language in use. In this study, because we are interested in knowing the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively through writing, we will adopt the latter definition, for instance, DA is the study of how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users. This choice is motivated by the fact that this definition will help us to describe a communicative text.

I.2. Text and Discourse

It is difficult to establish the differences and the similarities between the two terms “text” and “discourse”. As Nunan (1993) notes, these two terms are used by some researchers to mean the same thing; others draw a clear distinction between them; and others tend to avoid using the term discourse, preferring to use the term text only. The following definitions illustrate this remark.

1. For Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) text means a continuous stretch of language- oral or written- which has been produced as the result of an act of communication and perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive.
2. For Cook (1989) discourse means stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive, while a text is a stretch of language interpreted formally, without context (in Nunan, 1993)
3. For Crystal (1992) discourse means a stretch (especially spoken) of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit, such as a sermon, argument, joke and narrative, while text means a piece of naturally occurring spoken and written, or signed discourse identified for purposes of analysis. It is often a language unit with a definable communicative function, such as a poster, a conversation. (In Nunan, 1993).
4. For Halliday and Hasan (1976) a text is a unit of language in use.
5. For Nunan (1993) the term text refers to any written record of a communicative event, while the term discourse refers to the interpretation of the communicative event in context.

From these definitions, it can be seen that some researchers make a distinction between text and discourse while others do not, which validates Nunan’s remarks and makes it difficult to establish the differences between the two terms.

But, despite these difficulties, we will take position in this study and say what are the differences and similarities between text and discourse. In order to do this, we opt for the definition of text by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) which says that text is a continuous stretch of language- oral or written- which has been produced as a result of an act of communication and perceived to be meaningful, unified and purposive, and the definition of discourse by Nunan (1993) which says that a discourse is the interpretation of the communicative event in context. The reason for this choice is that any text- spoken or written- is the result of an act of communication

and therefore must meet some communicative criteria. These criteria are found in the definition of text by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain. This, therefore, will help us to know a text which is communicative and a text which is not.

I.3. Written & spoken text

As was pointed out earlier, a text is the result of an act of communication. Furthermore, it was pointed out that a text may be written or spoken. Here, we turn our attention to exploring whether or not there exist differences between spoken and written texts. As Tribble (1996) argues, there are differences between them and these differences result from the fact that the social context in which spoken language is used is different from the social context in which written language is used. In fact, the different social contexts in which spoken language and written language are used affect the structure of the text- written or spoken.

In spoken language, because the speaker is in a context where the listener is present, the speaker can exploit all the prosodic and paralinguistic features to get the meaning across, that is to say, to make his/her text communicative. The prosodic features (rhythm, phrasing, and pause) are aspects of spoken language that are used systematically to help give meaning to utterances (Tribble, 1996). The paralinguistic features are those features which are not part of the language, but add meaning to what we say. These include gestures, facial expression, body movement, etc. Consequently, these features affect the structure of a spoken text. As Nunan (1993) puts it, the spoken text contains clauses that are joined together in a complex way. This means that the spoken text contains clauses that are chained together in an additive fashion. In addition, as Tribble (1996) remarks, the spoken text contains many grammatical and content words. Grammatical words include prepositions, pronouns and articles, while content words include nouns and verbs. In contrast, in written language, because a writing activity is solitary, and therefore the writer cannot exploit all the prosodic and paralinguistic features to get his/ her meaning across, he/she has to compensate for the absence of these features (Byrne, 1988). This means, Byrne continues, that the writer keeps the channel of communication open through his/her own efforts and ensures, both through the choice of sentence structure and by the way sentences are linked together, that the text s/he produces can be interpreted on its own. As a result, the text which is produced in these conditions has the following characteristics. Nunan (1993) notes that the text tends to consist of clauses that are internally complex. This means that the text contains main clauses or clauses that

are linked together by conjunctions. As well, the text is written in a heavily nominalized style. The text contains nouns that have been substituted for verbs in dense clauses.

However, these differences in structuring a spoken text and a written text are not absolutes (Nunan, 1993). Spoken texts and written texts share many characteristics. As Tribble (1996) remarks, a writer may choose to write in a speaking-like style by using active verbs in multi-clause sentences. Similarly, a speaker may choose to speak in a writing-like style by using a heavily nominalized style, that is, by substituting nouns for verbs in dense clauses. These choices that a writer makes to write in speaking-like style or writing-like style are determined by many factors such as the social context and the purpose for which he/she writes in the first place, and the same thing can be said about a speaker.

In short, it is essential to writers, especially to students writing in a foreign language, to be aware of the differences between spoken language and written language. This awareness enables them to organize their sentences carefully so as to make their meaning as explicit as possible without a direct feedback from a reader (Byrne, 1988). In addition, it enables them to write in a variety of styles- namely, speaking-like style and writing-like style- depending on the social context and the purpose for which they write. As noted above, since a text is the result of an act of communication, it allows students writing in FL to communicate effectively through writing.

I.4. Co-textual relations

We talked above about some of the differences between spoken and written texts. Here we will consider the way in which a stretch of language is organized, hangs together, has unity, and makes sense as a whole. In doing this, we will look at the organization of a stretch of language from three standpoints. The first is related to thematisation. This concerns the organization of units larger than the sentence in a way that what is put first influences the interpretation of everything that follows (Brown and Yule, 1983). The second is related to cohesion. It deals briefly with the text-forming devices which make sequences of sentences hang together. The third is related to coherence. It concerns the way sequences of sentences make sense as a whole. The consideration of these three elements will help us to identify a text which can be interpreted as a coherent text.

I.4.1. Thematisation

Everyone writing in foreign language is faced with the problem of organizing what they want to talk about. They have to order words into sentences, and sentences into texts. They have to choose a point of departure. This starting point, as Brown and Yule (1983) put it, constitutes the initial textual context for everything that follows and influences the reader's interpretation of everything that follows in the text. Brown and Yule illustrate this with the following examples:

- a. I can't stand Sally Binns. She is tall and thin and walks like a crane.
- b. I do admire Sally Binns. She is tall and thin and walks like a crane. P.125

From these two examples, it can be seen that the first sentence influences the interpretation of the sentence that follows it. As Brown and Yule explain, in "a" the attributes 'tall' and 'thin' and 'walk like a crane' are assumed to be unattractive, while in "b" the same attributes are assumed to be attractive. This problem of organizing what we want to say and of choosing the starting point is discussed under what has come to be called *thematization*. We shall talk of thematization at the sentence and at the discourse levels.

At the sentence level, the thematic organization of a sentence consists of 'theme' and 'rheme'. Nunan (1993) argues that a theme refers to the initial element in a sentence. It is the element around which the sentence is organized, that is, the starting point of the sentence. 'Rheme', as Brown and Yule (1983) put it, refers to everything that follows the theme in the sentence, and which consists of what the writer says about the starting point of the sentence. To illustrate this, let us look at the following example from Brown and Yule (1983):

John kissed Mary. P. 127

From this example, it can be seen that John is the starting point and everything that follows John says what John did. However, this is not the only way of organizing the above sentence. As Brown and Yule (1983) notes, there exist different ways of organizing what we want to say. As a result, the above sentence may be expressed in the following ways:

- a. John kissed Mary.
- b. Mary was kissed by John.
- c. It was John who kissed Mary.
- d. It was Mary who was kissed by John.

These sentences are different but express the same information. In each sentence, as Brown and Yule explain, although we have different starting points, it is asserted that kissing went on and that John did the kissing and that Mary was the one who was kissed. They go on to explain that the reason why we have different ways of expressing the same thing is that the choice of one form rather than the other depends on the intention of the writer.

There are other grammatical elements such as adverbs or adverbial phrases which can be the theme of the sentence. This can be noted in the following sentences:

- a. Later that afternoon she received a reply paid telegraph... (64)
- b. In one place Betty saw the remains of the study safe... (64)
- c. Without hesitating Betty replies... (64)

The examples we have been considering so far show the different ways available to the writer to organize what s/he wants to say at the sentence level.

At the level of discourse, thematization concerns the organization of sentences into a text. At this level, the theme, according to Brown and Yule, refers to the topic entity. The topic entity refers to what is talked about in the text and to the starting point around which the text is structured, and it influences the interpretation of everything else that follows it in the text. Sometimes, the topic entity is the theme of all the sentences that constitute the text. The following example illustrates this point.

Mr Mitsujiro Ishii

Mr Mitsujiro Ishii, who as a former speaker of the Japanese House of representative was instrumental in staging the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics and the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics, died on September 20. He was 92. Ishii had served as Industry and Commerce Minister and in other cabinet posts under the late Prime Ministers, shigeru Yoshida, Nobusuke Kishi and Eisaku Sata, before retiring in 1972. He was the speaker of the house of representative from February 1967 to July 1969. (From The Times, 25 September 1981, Brown and Yule, 1983)

From this example, it can be seen that Mr Mitsujiro Ishii as the topic entity of the text above is the theme of each sentence that constitutes the text. However, this is not always the case because, as

Brown and Yule (1983) remark, the topic entity may be the theme of some sentences in the text, but not all the sentences. This can be illustrated in many examples in which the topic entity is the theme of some sentences in the text, while adverbial phrases are the theme of other sentences in the same text. The reason why a writer may choose to write in this way is that s/he may want to organize what s/he wants to say about the topic entity according to different (temporally determined) perspectives on the individual concerned (Brown and Yule, 1983).

In short, to understand the notion of thematization is of particular importance to writers, especially to students writing in a foreign language. It enables them to organize what they want to say at the sentence level and at the discourse level. At the sentence level, it gives them the possibility of organizing what they want to say in different ways. At discourse level, it permits them to organize what they want to say around a topic entity. This topic entity, as pointed out earlier, is what is talked about in the text, and it is the starting point around which the discourse is structured and it influences the interpretation of everything else that follows in the discourse.

I.4.2. Cohesion

Earlier, we briefly talked about organizing sentences into text. But, although we did say that these sentences are organized around a topic entity, we did not indicate the way in which these sentences that form a text are organized. Here, we will talk about the way sentences are organized to form a text. In order to do this, we will answer the following questions. Are sentences that constitute a text organized in a random way? Is a random group of sentences interpreted as a text? Are sentences that form a text related? The answers to these questions are based on the view that Halliday and Hasan (1976) have of what makes a text form a unified whole. According to them, a text is considered as a text if there are cohesive relationships within and between the sentences that constitute it (1976). They continue to say that these cohesive relationships create texture. Thus, a text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. The texture is provided by the cohesive relations. The cohesive relation is set up in a text when the interpretation of some elements is dependent on that of the others (1976). They illustrate this by the following example:

Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fireproof.

They explain this sentence by saying: “It is clear that “them” in the second sentence refers back to (is anaphoric to) the six cooking apples in the first sentence. This anaphoric function of “them” gives cohesion to the two sentences, so that we interpret them as a whole; the two sentences together constitute a text.” (1976: 2)

It can be seen that the sentences that constitute a text are not organized in a random way, but rather they are related and form a unified whole. Furthermore, it can be seen that there are elements in the text that make the sentences form a unified whole. These elements are what Nunan (1993) calls cohesive devices or text-forming devices. These text-forming devices are classified by Halliday and Hasan (1976) under three broad types: reference, ellipsis/substitution, and conjunction.

Reference items include pronouns (e.g. he, she, it, him, they, etc.), demonstratives (this, that, these, those), the article the, and the items like such a (McCarthy, 1991). These items when they are found in a text cannot be interpreted semantically in their own right; they make reference to something else in the text for their interpretation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). To illustrate this, let us look at the following example:

Doctor Foster went to Gloucester in a shower of rain. He stepped in a puddle right up to his middle and never went there again. (From Halliday and Hasan, *ibid*)

It can be seen that “he” and “his” refer back to Doctor Foster for their interpretation and that “there” is semantically related to Gloucester.

Ellipsis is the omission of some essential structural elements from a sentence and these elements can only be recovered by referring to an element in the preceding text (Nunan, 1993). The following example illustrates this:

My father and my mother celebrate together their birth anniversary, both were born on December 25th, 1952.

It can be seen that the nouns “my father and my mother” are omitted and replaced by “both” in the second clause.

Conjunction is a cohesive device that, unlike reference and ellipsis which remind the reader of previously mentioned entities, signals relationships that can only be fully understood through reference to other parts of the text (Nunan, 1993). There are four different types of conjunction-

additive, adversative, causal, temporal (McCarthy, 1991). The following two examples illustrate the point:

She is intelligent. And she is very reliable. (Additive) (From McCarthy, 1991)

I am afraid I will be home late tonight. However, I will not have to go in until late tomorrow. (Adversative) (From Nunan, 1993)

From all these examples, it can be noticed that there are certain elements which make sentences form a unified whole. These elements as pointed out earlier are called cohesive devices, and a text that contains these devices is interpreted as a text. However, as Brown and Yule (1983) argue, there are cases of texts which are interpreted as texts, but which do not contain any explicit cohesive device. The following example illustrates this:

Thank you for your comments about voicing. I will eventually get back to that lesson. (Beginning of letter) (From Brown and Yule, 1983)

These sequences of sentences are normally interpreted as a text although there is no explicit cohesive device in the text. This raises many questions such as: Do cohesive devices always lead us to interpret a text as a text? Is a text that contains cohesive devices always interpreted as a text? Is a text that does not contain cohesive devices always interpreted as a non-text? Brown and Yule (ibid) answer these questions by saying that cohesive devices do not always lead us to interpret a text as a text. According to them, a text does not only depend on the cohesive devices to be interpreted as a text, but also it depends on the context of situation. Thus, a text that does not display any explicit cohesive device is interpreted as a text.

In short, to understand the notion of cohesion is of particular importance to students writing in a foreign language. It enables them to exploit the cohesive devices to create a text that forms a unified whole.

I.4.3. Coherence

As pointed out early, a text is interpreted as a text if it has texture, that is to say, if it contains cohesive devices that make the sentences that constitute it hang together. In other words, a text is interpreted as a text if it makes sense as a whole, that is, if it is coherent. However, as Widdowson (2007) argues, cohesive devices do not always lead us to interpret a text as coherent. To support his argument, he gives the following example:

We spend our holidays in Romania. This is a country where grapes are grown. They are a kind of fruit. So are banana. Fruits contain vitamins, and these are essential for a healthy life. So is regular exercise. Jogging is good for you. We do it every day...

He explains this example by saying that although this text is co-textually connected with cohesive devices, it is not interpreted as a text. The reason for this is that it is difficult to make any coherent sense of it. This raises the following question: what makes a text be successfully interpreted as a text? Widdowson (ibid) answers this question by saying that the interpretation of text as a coherent text depends on how far it can be related externally to contextual realities, to the ideational and interpersonal schemata that readers are familiar with in the particular socio-cultural world they live in. Contextual realities involve the social and cultural context in which a language is used. The ideational schemata entail the function that language has of being about something and of expressing ideas (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Interpersonal schemata involve relationship between people who are using a language (Halliday and Hasan, ibid). All these have a considerable bearing on the interpretation of a written text as a coherent text.

I.5. Genre

We saw earlier that the successful interpretation of a text as a coherent text depends not only on how far sentences that constitute it form a unified whole, but also on how far the text is related externally to contextual realities. Some of these contextual realities, as Tribble (1996) argues, are related to the notion of genre. According to him, genre refers to different types of social activities enacted through different texts- spoken or written. This argument is similar to that made by Swales (1990). For Swales genre is used to refer to a class of communicative events in which language plays both a significant and an indispensable role. He argues that the most important characteristic of a communicative event is the functions that language fulfils in the event and that

these functions determine the form and the structure of the text and the expectation of the persons participating in the event. To clarify this, let us look at a communicative event that involves writing a promotional letter. This event of writing a promotional letter is explained by Tribble (1996) as follows:

A sales executive may decide to send a promotional letter to some potential business clients. If the executive understands the genre constraints associated with this sort of writing in a particular cultural context, s/he will not only know about the form or structure of the promotional letter, but s/he will be able to make appropriate lexical, grammatical, and content choices to give the letter the best chance of success with this type of reader. The executive, the letter, and the potential clients are all participants in the event of writing a promotional letter.

From this explanation, we understand the way in which the functions that language fulfils in a given communicative event determine the form and the structure of the text that results from the event. But, we have to understand that this event that involves promotional letter writing is not the only event that exists. There are other communicative events that involve writing. For instance, political speech, newspaper articles, reports, and so on are communicative events that involve writing. These communicative events have their own distinctive characteristics in terms of the functions that language serves, and in terms of the way in which these functions determine the form and the structure of the text that results from each event.

In short, from these explanations of the notion of genre, we can understand that the interpretation of a text as a coherent text depends on how far the text is related externally to contextual realities, and some of these contextual realities are related to the notion of genre.

I.6. Context

We have already said that the interpretation of a text as a coherent text depends on how far the text is related externally to contextual realities and that some of these contextual realities are related to the notion of genre. Here, we will expand on this and include other contextual realities that the interpretation of a text as a coherent text may depend on. These other contextual realities entail, as Lillis (2001) argues, the context of situation and the context of culture.

The context of situation involves a consideration of the immediate context in which an instance of language use occurs by looking at, for instance, the place, the participants- the writer and the reader- and the relationship between them, the purpose, and so on (Lillis, 2001). On the other hand, the context of culture involves a consideration of what Van Dijk (1997) refers to as norms and conventions that communities establish for their language users. These norms and conventions are the commonsense notions, ideologies, or belief system that defines a given community, its social practices, and its interaction with other communities.

These contextual realities- namely, the context of situation and the context of culture- determine the form, the structure of the text produced in the same way as they determine the choice of vocabulary, grammar, content during the production of the text. From this, we can infer that the interpretation of a text as a coherent text depends on how far the text is related externally to the contextual realities. The reason for this inference is that it may become difficult to interpret a text as a text independently of the contextual realities.

Conclusion

We have seen that a text- written or spoken- is the result of an act of communication and that the interpretation of such a text depends on many factors. It depends on linguistic factors and socio-cultural factors. The linguistic factors encompass a consideration of how far the text is thematized, cohesive and coherent. The social and cultural factors involve a consideration of how far the text is related to the immediate social context in which an instance of language use occurs by looking at, for example, the place, the participants and the relationships between them, and the purpose for which the text is produced. In addition, they entail a consideration of how far the text respects the cultural norms and conventions that the community in which the text is produced has established for its language users.

As we are investigating the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively by means of writing, this view of text as a result of an act of communication describes the kind of written text FL students have to produce. In addition, it gives us an idea of how the written texts produced by these students are to be interpreted. In this chapter, we described the kind of text M1 students are required to produce. In the next chapter, we will explore the problems that these students may face in producing the kind of written text described in the first chapter.

Chapter II: Discourse Analysis and Second writing

II. 0. Introduction

Students writing in a foreign language too often encounter problems. These problems, as Hedge (2005) argues, are related to the demands that writing makes on the students and the nature of writing activities themselves.

These demands that writing makes on the students can be understood from two standpoints. The first is related to the view that Chomsky (1965) and his followers have of performance and competence in a language, according to which competence means knowledge of all the grammar and lexis of a language and performance means the use of this grammatical and lexical knowledge to communicate. From this view, it can be understood that students writing in FL are required to master the grammar and lexis and that the problems that they may face are related to grammar and lexis. The second is related to the criticism of the above view of competence and performance. As Hymes (1972) remarks, competence does not only involve knowledge of grammar and lexis of a language, but also it involves knowledge of the aspects of the society in which language is used. Performance involves the ability to link the grammatical and lexical knowledge with the socio-cultural knowledge when communicating (Cited in Cook and Seidlholfer, 1995). From this, we can understand that students writing in FL are required to master, in addition to grammar and lexis, social aspects and that the problems that they may face are grammatically and socially related.

Compared with speaking, a writing activity is solitary, and the writer is unable to exploit all the expressive possibilities available to a speaker such as feedback from the reader, gestures, body language, and so on (Hedge, 2005). Byrne (1988) argues that a writer has to organize his sentences into a coherent whole. In addition, s/he has to select carefully vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the socio-cultural context. It can be seen, then, that the problems that students writing in FL may encounter are related to the organization of sentences into a coherent whole, to the selection of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, sentence structure, and to style. In this chapter, we will deal with these problems one by one and will explore the way in which they can prevent EF students from communicating effectively through writing.

II.1. Linguistic Aspects of Writing

Any writer draws on different types of knowledge when s/he undertakes a task of writing. One of these different types of knowledge is linguistic knowledge. This linguistic knowledge involves knowledge of grammar and lexis and the ability to use this grammatical and lexical knowledge to form sentences and to arrange them into a cohesive text that makes sense as a whole. Furthermore, it involves an ability to select a style which is appropriate to the context in which a language is used. However, it would be wrong to think that the writer draws on this knowledge correctly and that s/he will not meet any problems. As Allen (2005) argues, a writer encounters a lot of problems when he undertakes a writing task. Some of these difficulties are related to grammar, lexis, organization of sentences into a coherent text, and some others are related to style. Similarly, Hedge (2005) argues that these problems that a writer encounters are exacerbated when writing in a foreign language. In what follows, we will investigate these problems and we will explore the way in which they prevent FL students from communicating effectively by means of writing.

II.1.1. Grammar and Lexis

Grammar is a set of rules that govern a language. These rules concern the way in which words change their form and combine with other words to make meaningful phrases and sentences. On the other hand, lexis is a list of all words that a language contains. One can infer that anyone who undertakes a task of writing has to know all these rules, and as many words as possible along with their meaning. However, knowing all these grammatical rules does not always result in producing a written text which is free from grammatical mistakes. As Allen (2005) remarks, writers sometimes make grammatical mistakes despite the fact that they claim to have good command of grammar. These grammatical mistakes, according to him, result from some difficult rules. These rules concern three class of categories: the first category includes words, the second one includes sentences, and the third one includes meaning of words.

For Allen (ibid), words are the building blocks of language and we use words to express our thoughts and ideas and to form phrases and sentences that express meaning. He continues to say that these words are grouped into word classes according to the roles they play in a language. These word classes are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions,

interjections, determiners, and so on. These words sometimes change form when they are used in a sentence. For instance, when nouns are used to name one thing they keep their original form, but when they are used to name more than one thing they change their form. For example, “hand” becomes “hands”, “child” becomes “children”, and so on. These word classes and the way in which words change forms are what a writer is required to know before undertaking a task of writing. However, when drawing on this knowledge, the writer encounter many problems. These problems are reflected in the number of errors and the severity of mistakes that the writer makes (Cumming et al. 2005). For Cumming et al. (ibid), a writer who has many problems makes many severe errors, which affect comprehensibility of the text, while a writer who does not have problems may make few unnoticed errors, which do not affect the meaning of the text. As noted by Allen (2005), the following explains some example of mistakes that writers often make.

- Using a plural verb (as in they look) when a singular verb is needed (as in she looks), especially in long sentences in which the verb gets separated from the subject, e.g. in the badly formed sentence I have come to ask them what their understanding of the changes are;
- Making a slip with verbs ending in –ed and –ing, producing results that are imprecise or even absurd: Reduced to a pile of ashes, he gazed at the place where his house had been;
- Using incorrect forms, as in between you and I (the correct form is between you and me).

Sentences are made up of words and phrases and clauses. The problems that can be encountered when arranging these words, phrases, and clauses into sentences are many. These problems are reflected in the number of grammatical errors that a writer makes (Hayes, 1996). For Hayes (ibid), some of these grammatical errors may affect the comprehensibility of the text. These grammatical mistakes are:

- Errors related to word order, e.g. do you eat every day meat? A correct form of this sentence is “do you eat meat every day?” This is because verb and object normally go together. We do not usually put other words between them.
- Mistakes related to verb + preposition, e.g. let me describe them what I saw. A correct form of this sentence is “let me describe to them what I saw.” This is because “describe” in this sentence is an intransitive verb.

- Errors related to spelling, e.g. Tom and Jean want to swim. This sentence is ambiguous because it is not clear if the verb want is in a correct tense or the writer of this sentence wants to mean “went” the simple past of the verb “go”.
- Mistakes related to punctuation, e.g. my brother Longin who lives in Bujumbura is a civil engineer. A correct form of this sentence is “my brother Longin, who lives in Bujumbura, is a civil engineer. This is because the relative clause “who lives in Bujumbura” does not tell us which person the writer of this sentence means. We already know which person is meant. It gives us extra information about the person. (from Murphy, 2004)

When we use words to form sentences, we have to pay attention to what these words mean. The reason for this is based on the fact that if we do not pay attention to the meaning of the words we are using to form sentences, we can have many difficulties in expressing our thoughts and ideas clearly. As Allen (2005) remarks, there are many problems that result from our lack of attention as to the meaning of the words we use to construct sentences. He illustrates this with the following examples and explanations.

- We can use words with controversial meaning. E.g. “alibi” which is a legal term for evidence of where an accused person was at the time of a crime can also mean an excuse or pretext. But, we cannot use this term if we simply mean excuse or pretext as in the sentence: Management is provided with an alibi for poor performance by the constant ministerial interference.
- We can confuse the meaning of words, especially words which have closer form. For instance, regrettable means to be regretted (as in their intervention was regrettable) and regretful means having regrets (as in she shook her head with a regretful smile).
- We can use harsh or direct words that are offensive or embarrassing instead of using euphemism. Euphemism is the use of words or phrases which are less unpleasant and offensive. For instance, instead of using old age, we can use senior citizen or sunset years; instead of using nakedness, we can use in one’s birthday suit or in a state of nature. But, we have to be careful in using euphemism because some euphemisms obscure or generalize the meaning (e.g. sexual assault for rape) or cause misunderstanding (e.g. cloakroom for lavatory).

To conclude, there are a lot of grammatical problems that a writer encounters. These problems are related to grammatical errors that the writer makes. As Cumming et al. (2005) notes, these problems may affect the comprehensibility of the text

II.1.2. Organization of Written Texts

Earlier, we talked about the organization of words into sentences and the problems that a writer encounters when arranging words in sentences. We will consider the way in which sentences are organized into a coherent text and the problems that a writer faces in organizing sentences into a coherent whole. In doing this, we will look at the linguistic devices which link sentences together to form a coherent whole.

As was pointed out in the first chapter, there are certain linguistic elements which connect sentences together to form a coherent whole. These linguistic elements, as Nunan (1993) argues, are called cohesive devices. These cohesive devices are classified into five categories, reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical relationships. Since in the first chapter we dealt with how these cohesive devices are used to form a coherent text, we will explore the problems that a writer encounters when using these devices. For Hegde (2005), there are a lot of problems that a writer may face when connecting sentences using cohesive devices. These problems result from a failure to use appropriately cohesive devices to form a coherent whole. Hedge (ibid) illustrates this with the following explanations and examples.

- A writer may use an unclear cohesive tie, e.g. Three times daily for seven days only, except the condition deteriorates.
- S/he may use an appropriate cohesive tie but not realize their syntactic constraints and place them wrongly in a sentence, overuse them, or fail to use the correct punctuation, e.g. People who live in the country, whereas, have a pleasant environment. On the contrary, town dwellers suffer from noise and furthermore cramped conditions.

However, as we have seen in the first chapter, cohesive devices do not always help us to construct a coherent text. There exist texts which do not display any cohesive device but which form a coherent whole. The question which arises in this case is: what makes a text form a coherent whole? The answer to this question is provided by Hoey (1983). According to him, the coherence of a text is provided by discourse relations. These discourse relations are explained in two ways.

The first is based on the logical relationships which sentences have within a sequence. The second is based on schema, which is described as the expectations the users of a language have of how information or ideas are organized in the real world. Hoey (ibid) continues to say that when we are writing we associate sentences with elements of the general schema: situation- problem- solution/response- evaluation/result. He illustrates this with the following example:

I was on sentry duty. I saw the enemy approaching. I opened fire. I beat off the attack.

From this example, we can see that there is a logical relationship between the sentences that form the text and that there is an evidence of the elements of the general schema. But, it would be wrong to think that this new way of thinking about how sentences are organized into a coherent text does not cause problems to the writer. In fact, as Tribble (1996) notes, there are problems that a writer faces when organizing sentences into a coherent text according to this new way of thinking. These problems result from a failure to connect sequence of ideas together to form a meaningful whole. He illustrates this with the following examples and explanations.

- We can write a text in which the opening sentence does not seem to be connected with the statements which follow, e.g. A Breathalyzer indicates the amount of alcohol in a person's body, rather than his reaction to alcohol. Dr Donald E. Sussman has developed a device which measures the unsteadiness of a drinker's eyes- just one of the neurophysiological effects of drinking. The problems lie in the fact that the writer of this text wanted to establish a problem—solution pattern, but failed to do so. The failure results from the fact that the second sentence does not answer the question which the reader would have asked if the text were a dialogue. After the first sentence, the reader would have asked such question as “How do Breathalyzers do this?”

We can conclude that there are many problems that a writer face when organizing sentences into a coherent text. On the one hand, these problems are related to the cohesive devices which link sentences together. For instance, a writer may face the problem of overusing cohesive ties or using unclear cohesive ones. On the other hand, these problems are related to the fact that the writer may write a text which consists of sentences that do not form a logical sequence. Consequently, these problems prevent the writer from producing a coherent text.

II.1.3. Style

There is a notion that plays a crucial role in the organization of a written text. It is style. Style is defined as an effective and appropriate way of organizing what we want to say when we write. Tribble (1996) identifies two major aspects of style- namely, formality and commitment or hedging. Organizing a written text according to these two aspects of style can cause problems to FL students.

Tribble (1996) argues that formality can have a critical impact not only on how easy the text is to be read, but also on the way readers perceive their relationship with the writer. He continues to argue that this aspect of formality allows us to make our text formal and informal depending on the social context in which we are writing. In addition, he argues that when we are writing a formal text, we avoid using colloquial words or expressions, slang, jargon, tautology, vague words or phrases, and everyday similes. From these arguments by Tribble, we can infer that there are many problems that students encounter when organizing their texts according to formality. These problems result from a failure to write according to formality. Turk and Kirkman (1989) illustrate this with the following explanation:

- Students can write in an informal style in a context in which formal style is required.

Hedging refers to the way in which a writer signals to the reader where s/he stands in relation to what s/he is writing about (Tribble, 1996). This means that the writer signals to the reader the distance between himself and what he is writing. In so doing, s/he uses words and expressions that signal uncertainty (Jordan; 1992). Furthermore, s/he uses personal or impersonal style in order to increase and decrease his/her distance in relation to what he is writing (White and McGovern, 1994 in Tribble, 1996). From this, we can infer that FL students can encounter the following hedging problems when writing.

- Failure to use words and expressions that signal uncertainty in a context in which they are required.
- Using personal style in a context in which impersonal style is needed and vice versa.

To conclude, understanding the notion of style is of particular importance to students writing in FL. It enables them to organize what they want to say in a way which is effective and appropriate

to the context in which they are writing. In addition, it allows them to avoid the difficulties that are outlined above.

II.2. Social Aspects of Writing

Earlier, we saw that knowledge of the language system is one of the different types of knowledge that a writer draws on when he undertakes a task of writing. In what follows, we will explore other different types of knowledge that a writer draws on. This other type of knowledge includes social context knowledge. This social knowledge involves knowledge of aspects of the specific context of situation in which instance of language use occurs (Lillis, 2001). These aspects of the specific context of situation include four components, the types of communicative event, the topic, the purpose, and the participants.

The types of communicative event encompass a variety of activities in which a language is used. Some of these activities may involve writing. For example, activities that involve writing are dissertations, reports, political speeches, newspaper articles, and so on. The topic involves what is written about in these activities, for instance, an activity that entails writing reports, we may write about the danger of smoking in public places. The purpose entails the intention the writer wants to achieve in writing the report. The participants are the writer and the reader, the relationship between them, and their background knowledge and expectations. These aspects of specific context of situation, as Tribble (1996) argues, determine the choice of vocabulary, grammar, and content and the structure of the written text. Similarly, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) argue that these aspects of context of situation determine how much has to be said on a particular topic. They see that these aspects of context of situation help realize Grice's (1975) maxims of cooperation (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner). They then elaborate on these maxims of cooperation by explaining each one as follows:

- The maxims of quantity requires the writer to carefully consider the amount of information that should be imparted in the text.
- The maxim of quality requires the writer to provide support and justification for his/her position in order to render the text accurate and give it truth-value.
- The maxim of relevance requires the writer to create a text that makes a sense in the potential context in which it will be read.

- The maxim of manner requires the writer to make the text clear in terms of its linguistic forms and sentence structure as well as clear in the physical shape or format in which it is presented, so that form and content are compatible and processing made possible.

From this, it can be seen that a writer draws on the social context knowledge when s/he undertakes a task of writing. In addition, as Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) argue, it can be seen that the writer who draws on this knowledge as required by the society in which s/he is writing is able to create a text which is comprehensible and communicative in nature. However, it will be wrong to think that the writer will be able to draw on this knowledge appropriately, that s/he will not encounter problems. As Allen (2005) puts it, there are a lot of problems that are related to the social context knowledge that a writer encounters. These problems result from a failure to appropriately use this knowledge. Allen (ibid) argues that this failure can have the following consequences on the writer:

- The writer may write something which is hard to read and therefore difficult to understand.
- S/he may have trouble deciding how much has to be said on a particular topic or issue and how to stay on the same topic without boring the reader.
- S/he may write something which does not meet the expectations of the reader.
- S/he may write something that contains words or phrases that irritate the reader from overuse.
- S/he may write something which is offensive to the reader, for instance s/he may unintentionally use words that are offensive to some people such as words based on disability, words based on sex and gender, and so on.

To conclude, the social context knowledge is one of the different types of knowledge that a writer draws on when s/he undertakes a task of writing. This type of knowledge enables the writer to create a text which is comprehensible and communicative in nature. But, as we have seen, there are a lot of problems that are related to this knowledge and that prevent the writer from producing a communicative text.

II.3. Cultural Aspects of Writing

In the last point, we talked about the social context knowledge that a writer draws on when s/he undertakes a task of writing. Here, we will expand on this and consider another type of context knowledge that a writer uses. This context knowledge is known as the cultural context knowledge. It is not easy to understand the way in which a writer uses this knowledge to create a written text. To solve this problem, we have to turn to the notion of contrastive rhetoric introduced by Kaplan (1966).

According to contrastive rhetoric many aspects of writing are influenced by culture. This influence is reflected in the distinctive differences that are observed in the written discourse of writers from different cultures (Kaplan, 1966). This means, for instance, that a native speaker of Arabic writing in Arabic organizes his/her written discourse in a way which is different from the way a native speaker of English writing in English organizes his/hers (Weigle, 2002). These differences in the organization of a written text can cause problems to the native speaker of Arabic writing in English as a foreign language. These problems may result from the fact that the native speaker of Arabic writing in English may organize his/her text in an Arabic organizational pattern, that is, in a way that Arabic speakers organize their text in Arabic (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Furthermore, this influence is reflected in the consequence that cultural expectations can have for the coherence of written texts (Weigle, 2002). Coherence, as Leki (1992) notes, is not an inherent quality of the text itself, but rather comes from the accuracy of the writer's assessment of what the reader will be able to infer from the text (see Weigle, *ibid*). Because the reader of the text brings his/her background knowledge and expectations to the text, the mismatch between the writer's intended message and the reader's interpretation of the message can occur. This mismatch may result from the fact that the writer organizes his/her text according to a rhetorical organizational pattern which is unfamiliar to the reader. For example, as Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) note, a native speaker of Arabic writing in English may organize his/her text in Arabic organizational pattern. Such a text may be viewed by many readers, especially native speaker of English, as lacking in coherence and unity.

Cultural context knowledge is then another type of context knowledge that a writer draws on. This knowledge enables the writer to meet the expectations of the reader in terms of the organization of a written text into a coherent whole. As well, it enables FL students to avoid

difficulties that they may encounter when organizing their text. These difficulties are related to the rhetorical organizational differences between different languages and cultures.

Conclusion

Writing is an activity in which many people engage for the purpose of communicating something to others who may be distant in time and place. For instance, people write to communicate information to others, to express their ideas and beliefs, or to establish relationships with others. This activity of writing puts some demands on people who engage in it. We have seen in this chapter that these demands are classified into two broad categories- namely, language system knowledge and contextual knowledge. The language system knowledge involves grammar and lexis and the ability to use this knowledge to arrange words into sentences and to organize these sentences to form a text that makes sense as a whole. The contextual knowledge encompasses the social and cultural context in which the task of writing takes place and the ability to create a text which is linguistically accurate and socio-culturally appropriate. However, we have also seen in this chapter that people who engage in the writing activity are likely to encounter many problems and that these problems result from these demands that the writer is required to meet. These problems that a writer is likely to encounter are related to grammar and lexis, to the organization of a written text into a coherent whole, to style and to the social and cultural context in which the writing activity takes place. More importantly, we have seen that these problems prevent the writer from writing accurate and comprehensible sentences and from producing coherent and communicative text. In other words, these problems cause the writer to fail to communicate effectively by means of writing.

From these statements, we can say that M1 students, when they undertake tasks of writing for the purpose of communicating something, are likely to encounter the same problems mentioned above. In fact, Hedge (2005) argues that these problems that are met by many writers change when writing in FL. This means that, given the fact that M1 students are EFL learners, they are likely to meet the same problems that people writing in foreign language face.

Chapter III. Methodology

III.0. Introduction

This study aims at investigating the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively through writing. It was carried out by means of diagnostic test that was given to thirty participants in the study. This diagnostic test involved writing a 15-line paragraph on one of the argumentative topics that were distributed to the participants. Since diagnostic test measures problems, or weaknesses, or strengths (Cohen, et al. 2007), the output of the test was analyzed in search for the problems that the participants have in written communication skill. These problems were codified into three categories. The first category included problems that were related to grammatical rules, such as grammatical errors that were found in the written texts that were produced by the participants. The second categories involved problems that were related to cohesion and coherence, such as cohesive and coherent errors in the written work of the participants. The third category entailed problems that were related to the social and cultural aspects of writing, such as the content that was not related to the topic and the purpose for which the text was written.

III.1. Participants

Participants in this study were First Year Master students in Applied Linguistics and ESP at Kasdy Merbah University. The choice of these students was motivated by two factors. The first factor is that they have been studying English at University for over three years, therefore their proficiency in written communication skill is at a higher level. The second factor is that they would inform the study of the problems that most FL learners encounter in written communication skill. The number of M1 students who participated in the study was 30 and they were asked to write a 15-line paragraph on one of five argumentative topics that were distributed to them.

III.2. Administration of the test

The test consisted of a list of five argumentative topics. This test was distributed to the participants in the study. The participants were asked to select from the list one topic and to write a 15-line paragraph on the selected topic. In order to write this paragraph, they were given 45

minutes- the time that a lecture lasts. After this time, the output from the test was collected and was analyzed.

III.3. Research methods

The objectives of this research aim at studying and answering one main research question. This question is: “Do M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP at Kasdy Merbah University have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing?” This question was answered by means of three sub questions. These sub questions are: Do M1 students face grammatical problems? Do M1 students have problems in writing cohesively and coherently? Do M1 students have problems in linking linguistic features with social and cultural features when producing a written text? The data collection to answer these questions employed a diagnostic test which involved writing a 15-line paragraph on one of five argumentative topics that were distributed to the participants. The collected data was analyzed by means of holistic rating scale developed and used by Bamberg (1983), by Hamp-Lyons and Henning (1991), and by Cumming et al. (2005). This method of analysis measures the severity of the problems (Polio, 1997)

In order to measure the extent to which the participants face the problems using holistic rating scale, the analysis was codified into three categories. The first category comprised grammatical problems which were reflected in grammatical mistakes that were found in the written work produced by the participants. The second category included rhetorical organizational problems which were reflected in a failure to write a cohesive and a coherent text. This failure was, in turn, reflected in misuse of cohesive ties, in overuse of cohesive tie, in the incoherence of the text. The third category comprised social and cultural problems which were reflected in the irrelevance of the text to the topic and to the purpose for which the text was produced. This codification enabled us to classify the problems into four levels in each category. Each level indicated how severe the problems encountered were. In the first category which included grammatical problems, the problems were classified according to Hamp-Lyons and Henning’s (1991) holistic rating scale into four levels. This classification is shown on the following table.

Table 1

Levels	Problems that are reflected in grammatical errors
4	Many severe grammatical errors, such as, spelling, punctuation, word choice, word order, tenses, and awkward form which make the intended meaning very difficult or harder to recover.
3	Serious grammatical mistakes, such as, mistakes related to word choice, word order, tenses and awkward form which make the intended meaning difficult to recover.
2	Minor grammatical errors, such as, punctuation and spelling, which do not obscure the intended meaning.
1	No grammatical mistakes are found in the text.

Adapted from Cumming et al. (2005)

In the second category which comprised problems related to cohesion and coherence, the problems were classified according to Bamberg's (1983) holistic coherence rating scale into four levels. This classification is shown on the following table.

Table 2

Levels	Problems that are related to cohesion and coherence.
4	The text is at all incoherent, that is, it does not make sense as a whole.
3	There is a misuse of cohesive ties, there is an overuse of cohesive devices. The text consists of paragraphs which do not begin with topic sentences and end with closing sentences.
2	There is an overuse of cohesive ties.
1	Cohesive ties are used appropriately and the text makes sense as a whole.

Adapted from Bamberg (1983)

In the third category which included social and cultural problems, the problems were classified according to Bamberg's (ibid) holistic coherence rating scale into four levels. The classification is shown on the following table.

Table 3

Levels	Problems that are related to social and cultural aspect of writing.
4	The text is irrelevant to the topic and the purpose for which the text is written.
3	There are frequent digressions from the topic and from the purpose for which the text is written.
2	There are digression from the purpose for which the text is created.
1	The text is related to the topic and the purpose for which the text is produced.

Adapted from Bamberg (1983).

The results from this analysis were used to measure statistically the mean and the standard deviation and to interpret the data. To measure statistically the mean and the standard deviation, we took the scores which were obtained from the analysis of the essays produced by the participants and we computed the mean and standard deviation using Microsoft excel 2013. To interpret the data, we used Polio's (1997) method of interpretation. This method counts the severity of the problems which are perceived in the text by the rater.

Interpretation of the problems:

3-4: Very severe problems which severely affect the communication of the writer's intended meaning.

2-3: Serious problems which affect the communication of the writer's intended meaning.

1-2: Minor problems which do not affect the communication of the writer's intended meaning.

III.4. Analysis of the data

III.4.1. Holistic rating of the data

Table 4. The rating of grammatical problems using Cumming et al.'s holistic rating scale.

Scores	Number of students
4	1
3	16
2	12
1	1

Since holistic rating measures how much the problems interfere with the communication of a writer's intended meaning (Kobayashi and Kinnert, 1992), the above table contains scores which show to what extent the grammatical problems affect the communication of the participants intended meaning. As pointed out on Table 1, Score '4' indicates that the grammatical errors which were found in students' essays severely affect the comprehensibility of the text. Score '3' shows that the grammatical errors which were found in students' pieces of text affect the meaning of the text. Score '2' indicates that the grammatical mistakes that were found in students' essays do not affect the intended meaning of the text. Score '1' shows that the students did not make any grammatical mistake.

III.4.1.1. Sample grammatical errors analyses

In this section, examples of grammatical errors from students' essay are followed by a description. Each score is represented by one example.

Score '4': *Internet is important and prominate means in our days, through which, it would have many benefites for university students (From S25).*

This sentence is very difficult to understand. It contains not only spelling and grammatical mistakes, but also awkward form errors. As kobayashi and Kinnert (1992) points out, awkward form errors consist of grammatically and semantically deviant phrases or sentences which obscure the writer intended meaning. This means, as indicated on the Table 4, that one student out of thirty who took the test produced a text which contains sentences which are very difficult to understand.

Score '3': *Technology in our days developed and it becomes a means that facilitate the life of people. From S21*

This sentence is difficult to understand because it contains awkward form error. This means, as shown on the Table 4, that sixteen out of thirty students who took the test wrote texts which contain sentences which are difficult to understand.

Score '2': *No one disagree with the following statement that says: « the world become a city. » (From S11).*

This sentence can be understood, despite the fact that it contains spelling errors. This means, as indicated on the Table 4, that twelve out of thirty students who took the test produced texts which contain grammatical mistakes which do not affect the meaning of the text.

Score '1': *Nowadays, the internet is widely used. It is so important and beneficial that wherever you go you find people using it (From S12).*

These two sentences do not contain any grammatical error. This means, as shown on the Table 4, that one out of thirty students who took the test wrote a text which does not contain grammatical mistakes.

Table 5. The rating of cohesive and coherent problems using Bamberg's holistic coherence rating scale.

Score	Number of students
4	5
3	6
2	13
1	5

This table contains scores which show how much the participants face cohesion and coherent related problems. As pointed out on Table 2, Score '4' indicates that the text produced by the student is incoherent. Score '3' shows that the essay written by the students contains inappropriate use of cohesive devices which affect the coherence of the text. Score '2' indicates

that the text produced by the student contains inappropriate use of cohesive ties which do not affect the meaning of the whole text. Score '1' shows that the text produced by the student is coherent.

III.4.1.2. Sample coherence related error analyses

In this section, examples of coherence related errors from the students' written text are given. Each score is represented by one example.

Score '4': *Marks are one of the ways by which students all over the world are evaluated. Students differ in the way they look at these marks, of course if some students get a good mark it would be a kind of motivation and acquirence of self-confidence. They continue their studies as normal as possible but in the other hand if they get a bad ones it would be a kind of discouragment because all student work for marks, for geting good marks (From S1).*

In this paragraph, the sentences do not form a coherent whole. This means, as shown on the Table 5, that five out of thirty students who took the test produced texts which are incoherent

Score '3': *Childhood is the most important stage of one's life because it affect in one way or another the future personality of the person (From S7).*

In this example, the students wanted to establish a causal relationship but failed to do so. This failure to use an appropriate cohesive tie severely affects the meaning of the text as a whole. This means, as indicated on the Table 5, that six out of thirty students who took the test face this problem

Score '2': *Smoking do not only effect the person who smokes, but moreover the persons who are near him (From S19).*

In this example, because of the clearly signaled relationship between the two clauses, the reader will be able to infer that 'also' would have been used instead of the additive conjunction 'moreover'. This means, as shown on the Table 5, that thirteen out of thirty students who took the test face this problem.

Score '1': *Internet seems important for many students of university. Nowadays, many students use it. They consider it as a source of information. They use it in their studies and for other reason (From S6).*

From this example, it can be seen that the student tried his best to make the text form a coherent whole. This means, as indicated on the Table 5, that five out of thirty students who took the test produced texts which form a unified whole.

Table 6. The rating of social cultural problems using Bamberg’s holistic coherence rating scale.

Score	Number of students
4	1
3	10
2	12
1	7

This table contains scores which indicate how much the participants face social and cultural related problems. As pointed out on Table 3, Score ‘4’ shows that the content of the text produced by the students is not related to the topic and to the purpose for which the text is written. Score ‘3’ indicates that the text written by the students contains frequent digression from the topic and the purpose for which the text is produced. Score ‘2’ shows that the text produced by the students contains digression from the purpose for which the text is written. Score, ‘1’ indicates that the content of the text written by the students is related to the topic and to the purpose for which the text is produced.

III.4.1.3. Sample social and cultural problem analyses

In this section, examples of social and cultural problems from the students’ written text are given. Each score is represent by one example.

Score ‘4’: *Childhood is the most important stage of one’s life because it affect in one way or another the future personality of the person. Therefore to know how to deal with the child during the stage take a huge importance by researchers or psychologist. So they give a list of advices and instruction for child’s parent to deal well with them like preventing child from watching television or using internet (From S7).*

The content of this paragraph is not related to the topic: « Watching television is bad for children. » As well, it is not related to the purpose of producing an argumentative paragraph. This means, as

shown on the Table 6, that one out of thirty students who took the test produced a text which is irrelevant to the topic and to the purpose for which the text is written

Score '3' : *Nowadays, the television becomes the most important part in our lives, in order to follow what hapening by watching news, movies, programmms, sports, and so on. But, is watching television bad for the children? When children watching television they didn't get or understand what they watching, at the contrary, watching television may complicate their ideas. Because they are not ready yet to understand what they watching such as, news, sports, political debates, and so on. But parents should select what is useful for them, like program for children (From S4).*

From this example, it can be seen that the students frequently moved away from the topic: « Watching television is bad for children » In the first sentence, the student says that television is important to us. In the second sentence, he asks himself or herself if watching television is bad for children. In the next sentences, instead of answering the question, s/he says that children do not understand what is talked about on TV because they are not mentally ready to understand most TV programmes and that parents should select programmes that are useful to them. This means, as indicated on the Table 6, that ten out of thirty students who took the test face this problem.

Score '2': *Societies, anywhere, are suffering from bad behavior and issues, which are performed by human. One of the most observable one is smoking in public places, which have bad impacts on human health as well as on the beauty of nature (From S17).*

From this example, it can be seen that the students moved away from the purpose of arguing: « Smoking should be banned from public places. This means, as shown on the Table 6, that twelve out of thirty students who took the test have this problem

Score '1': *Nowadays, the internet can be considered as beneficial tool for university students. Many electronic resources are available on the internet. This can help to save time and money.(From S30).*

From this example, it can be seen that the student tried his best to write something which is relevant to the topic: « Is the internet beneficial to university students? » This means, as indicated on the Table 6, that seven out of thirty students who took the test produced texts which are at least relevant to the topic.

The essays from which we extracted all these examples were scanned and put in the appendix

III.4.2. Statistical analysis of the data

Mean and standard deviation

Table 7. Grammatical problems

Mean	2.52
Standard deviation	0.62

As revealed on Table 7, the mean is 2.52 with the standard deviation of 0.62. From this result, it can be interpreted, as pointed out earlier, that the participants face serious grammatical problems which affect the meaning of the text they produce.

Table 8. Cohesion and coherence related problems

Mean	2.33
Standard deviation	0.99

As indicated on Table 8, the mean is 2.33 with the standard deviation of 0.99. From this result, it can be concluded the participants have serious cohesion and coherence related problems. These problems, as pointed out earlier, interfere with the communication of the participants' intended meaning.

Table 9. Social and cultural related problems

Mean	2.16
Standard deviation	0.83

As shown on Table 9, the mean is 2.13 with the standard deviation of 0.83. From this result, it can be interpreted that the participants face social and cultural problems related to writing. As pointed out earlier, these problems affect the communication of the participants' intended meaning.

Table 10. Mean and standard deviation indicating participants' written communication problems

	Means	SD
Grammatical problems	2.53	0.62
Cohesion and coherence related problems	2.33	0.99
Social and cultural problems	2.16	0.83
Average	2.34	0.18

In order to answer the research question “Do M1 students have problems in communicating effectively through writing?”, several methods of analysis were employed to analyze the collected data. First, holistic rating scale was used as a method of analysis to rate the problems the participants face in written communication skill. Second, descriptive statistic was used to measure the results which were obtained from the holistic rating of the participants' written communication problems. Table 10 summarized the results that were obtained after the statistical analysis of the participants' written communication problems. The result from the statistical analysis of the overall problems (M= 2.34, SD= 0.18) indicates that the participants face grammatical problems, cohesion and coherence related problems, and socio-cultural problems. From this result, it can be concluded that the participants face problems in communicating effectively by means of writing.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the methodology that was employed to investigate the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively by means of writing. After the

collection of data, two methods were used to analyze the collected data. The first method was holistic rating scale. Because the data collected involved written texts produced by thirty participants in the study, this method was employed to analyze the data and to rate them according to the severity of the problems found in the texts. The second method was descriptive statistic. This method of analysis was used to measure statistically the results that were obtained from the first method. The results from the latter method of analysis led us to conclude that M1 students have problems in written communication skill.

General conclusion

This study aimed at answering one main question which is: “Do M1 students have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing?” This question was answered by means of three sub questions. Do M1 students face grammatical problems? Do M1 students have problems in writing cohesively and coherently? Do M1 students face problems in linking linguistic features with socio-cultural features when producing a written text? After the analysis of data to answer these questions, the following results were obtained.

First, the findings revealed that M1 students have serious grammatical problems. These grammatical problems were reflected in grammatical errors that were found in the written texts produced by the students who participated in the study. As pointed out earlier on Table 1, these grammatical mistakes include errors related to word order, word choice, tenses, and awkward forms. In addition, it was pointed out that these errors affect the communication of the writers’ intended meaning. This means that the grammatical errors that were found affect the communication of M1 students’ intended meaning.

Second, the findings indicated that M1 students have cohesion and coherence related problems. These problems resulted from the participants’ failure to write cohesive and coherent texts. This failure was related to the misuse of cohesive ties, the overuse of cohesive devices, the use of unclear cohesive ties, and the lack of unity between sentences that constituted the texts the participants produced. The results from the statistical measurement of the mean and standard deviation showed that these problems interfere with the communication of M1 students’ intended meaning.

Third, it was shown that M1 students face social and cultural problems. These problems are related to the fact that the participants in the study frequently digressed from the topic and the purpose for which the texts were produced.

Finally, it was concluded that M1 students have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing. Two factors led us to draw this conclusion. The first factor is that the results from the analysis of the data indicated that M1 students have grammatical problems, cohesion and coherence related problems, and social and cultural problems. The second factor is that it was concluded that the severity of these problems affect the communication of M1 students’ intended

meaning. The latter factor then led us to conclude that M1 students face problems in communicating effectively by means of writing.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the present study, the following recommendations can be formulated.

First, since it was found that M1 students have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing, teachers should do the following to help students to solve these problems:

1. When correcting a piece of writing produced by students, teachers should focus more on those errors that affect the meaning of the text.
2. After every correction, teachers should indicate to the students the mistakes they have made and should encourage the students to work toward correcting these errors.
3. Teachers should encourage students to practice writing as much as possible.

Second, Written Expression course should be incorporated in programs that are taught to Master students.

Finally, since the current investigation was carried out with M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP as participants, generalization is limited. Therefore, a more representative study that would include M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP, M1 students in Literature, and M1 students in Translation as participants should be carried out. This study would help to shed light on the problems that Kasdi Merbah University students face in written communication skill.

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Appendix

A TEST

Dear fellow students, write a 15-line paragraph on one of the following topics:

1. Smoking should be banned from public places.
2. Watching television is bad for children.
3. Grades (marks) encourage students to learn.
4. Should the internet be censored?
5. Is the internet beneficial to university students?

Remarks: Write your essay with an audience in mind. This means that you have to produce a text that effectively communicates something to a potential reader. For instance, on the first topic, you have to produce a text which persuade smokers to stop smoking in public places. As well, you have to write a text that make people who work in social services take tough measures that deter the habit of smoking in public places. To achieve this, your text has to conform to the following points:

- It has to be coherent.
- It has to be in a formal style.
- It has to be related to the topic.

S25

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Is The internet Beneficial to university student

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical
problems (error)
4
cohesion
and coherence
4
social
cultural
problems
3

Internet is important and prominate means
im and diff, through which, it would have many
benefites for university student, Internet contain
such as benefites Nat can help the student of university
during their studies periode and research as well as
it provide certain knowledge about their studies.
Internet encourage the student to learn and get
more informatio and reinforcement and construct
their knowledge. However, the internet help the
student in acquiring different informatio and organizing
and construct stories topics.

591

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Should the internet be censored?

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
3
Technology in our days developed
cohesion and coherence
3
and it becomes a means that facilitate the life of people. One of the main important technologies is the internet which is a so vast world that help people ^{to} communicating especially in bar countries, also it helps people (students) to gather more information.
social and cultural problems
3
But unfortunately there are a lot of sites that affect the user behaviors like the sexual sites, for example, has too much negative results on the users, and there is a scientific statistics proved that watching ~~on~~ sexual sites is more dangerous than eating drugs or drinking alcoholic.
And it's a responsible of parents at first to control their children when they using internet, and what's more better is to cover all bad sites on the net to protect our society from social dangerous.

S11

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Should the internet be censored?

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
 2
 Cohesion and coherence
 1
 Social and cultural problems
 2

No one disagree with the following statement that says "the world become a city". The world's largest communities are connected to each other despite all the cultural and social varieties via the most reliable invention created by human kind "the network". The question arises above may have two perspectives. One may say or disagree with the constraint of the government to censor the internet. Some will agree especially parents because they do believe that their children should be banned at a certain age from using the network for a particular reason. One of the reasons is that most children are addicted to a sexual facts, and the ^{Adults} statistics shows that with highly percentage. This in fact is the common reason. But in my opinion I disagree and the internet should not be censored or controlled.

S12

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: 4. Should the internet be censored?

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
1
cohesion and coherence
1
social cultural problems
1

Nowadays, the internet is widely used. It is so important and beneficial that wherever you go, you will find people using it. But this is not the end of the story. In fact, the internet can endanger people, or more than that, nations. Therefore, it should be censored.....

Governments should take into account that the internet comprises many negative things that may harm the country as a whole. For instance, there are several sites that contribute to the deconstruction of the social values and morals in a way or another in an attractive way. Moreover, the increasing amount of games on the net may make children lose their time, and therefore, instead of praying or studying, they spend all the day in front of the computer. Also, children may learn bad behaviours which will negatively affect their education as well as their personality.

All in all, the internet can be considered as a coin with two sides. The first is positive while the other is negative. This latter should be controlled.....

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57

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: ... Watching television is bad for children.

A written paragraph on the topic:

3 *grammatical errors* childhood is the most important
 4 *cohesion and coherence* stage of one's life because it affects in
 4 *social and cultural problems* one way or another the future personality
 of the person; therefore to know how to
 deal with the children during the stage,
 take a huge importance by researchers
 or psychologist so that they give
 a list of advices and instruction for child's
 parents to deal well with them like preventing
 child from watching television or using
 internet.
 foremost, psychologist build their
 instruction or advices on several studies
 and researches and to prevent child from
 watching television for instance it may
 just in specific cases and in another
 cases it may or would better to do, for
 example for the child who has a big
 curiosity to know everything around
 around him it had better to prevent them
 from watching TV because it may affect

2

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Smoking should be banned from public places.

A written paragraph on the topic:

3 grammatical mistakes
 3 they are in, Even smokers have to respect public places. They have to stop smoking their. Their smoking will effect negatively on their health and on the other people. First, smoking damages the smoker's lungs. And it effects the blood circulation. In addition, it do not effect only the person who smokes but more over the persons who are near him if he is in a public place. Others who are near him they breathe the air which is polluted. The result is a damage bigger than the first. See what will happen if a pregnant woman smells that air, it will have an effect on her and her baby. So smoking does not hurt only the smoker but also people who are near him. "Protect yourself and others"

2 cohesion and coherence
 2 social cultural problems

5

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: ...Is internet beneficial for University student?

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors

2

cohesion coherence

1

social cultural problems

1

Internet seems important for many student of University. Nowadays, many students use it... they consider it as a source of information... they use it in their studies and for other reasons... we can consider it beneficial for them in many ways: such as bringing from it some articles, documents which they don't find in books. Internet shows moral and immoral things which make the student concentration breaks down. They use it for communication for example they send their works to their teacher in order to correct them.

I argue that if the student relies on the internet to get information they will miss something very interesting in "reading books". Internet is not only a way informs us of with correct information. University student should rely on reading books which is beneficial for them... they bring information which is correct and enjoy them selves with reading.

2

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Watching television is bad for children

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
3
cohesion and coherence
4
social and cultural
3

Nowadays, the television becomes the most important part in our lives, in order to follow what happening by watching news, movies, programmes, sports and so on.

But, is it watching television bad for the children?

When children watching television, they didn't get or understand what they watching, at the contrary, watching television may confuse them and complicate their ideas because they are not ready yet to mentally to understand what they watching such as news reports, political debates and so on.

But parents should select what is useful for their children, like programmes for the children.

Finally, we can say that watching tv is bad for the children if we let our children alone with tv programmes without any control or guidance, but if we control and guide them it will be a positive results.

517

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: ... Smoking should be banned from public places ...

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
2
cohesion and coherence
2
social cultural problems
2

Societies, anywhere, are suffering from bad behaviours and vices, which are performed by human. One of the most observable one is smoking in public places, which have bad impacts on human health as well as on the beauty of nature. Thus smoking should be banned in public places.

Smokers should be aware and informed about the disadvantages of smoking in public places as one cigarette can kill many people per one minute. So, the smoker should think about the problems that will face him and the others around him. Another impact of smoking is damaging the beauty of nature and causing air pollution.

All in all, the smoker should not be selfish and stop smoking in public places, because it is a kind of educational and civilized personality as to convey in healthy way.

S
30

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: Is the internet beneficial to university students?.....

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
cohesion and coherence
social cultural problems

Nowadays, the internet can be considered as a beneficial tool for university students. Many electronic resources are available ^{on the internet} and this can help students to save time and money. In addition to the educational websites particularly those give the chance to comment on what is published. Through the internet, students can exchange ideas, research, essays and experiences with both students and teachers from different places in the world. It also facilitates communication by using email. For students who want to continue their studies abroad, the internet is so helpful to look for the suitable university and contact it and in the case of e-learning, getting the courses will be easier. In short, university students have to use the internet to facilitate the process of research.

S12

ANSWER TO THE TEST

Topic: 4. Should the internet be censored?

A written paragraph on the topic:

grammatical errors
 1
 cohesion and coherence
 1
 social cultural problems
 1

Nowadays, the internet is widely used. It is so important and beneficial that wherever you go, you will find people using it. But this is not the end of the story. In fact, the internet can endanger people, or more than that, nations. Therefore, it should be censored.....

Governments should take into account that the internet comprises many negative things that may harm the country as a whole. For instance, there are several sites that contribute to the deconstruction of the social values and morals in a way or another in an attractive way... Moreover, the increasing amount of games on the net may make children lose their time, and therefore, instead of praying or studying, they spend all the day in front of the computer. Also, children may learn bad behaviours which will negatively affect their education as well as their personality.....

All in all, the internet can be considered as a coin with two sides. The first is positive while the other is negative. This latter should be controlled.....

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate problems that M1 students in Applied Linguistics and ESP at Ouargla University face in communicating effectively by means of writing. The study employed a survey design which involved administering a diagnostic test to 30 M1 students. Two methods of analysis were used to analyze the output of the test. The first method was holistic rating scale. This method was used to rate the problems that M1 students have in written communication skill. The second method was descriptive statistic. This method was employed to measure statistically the problems that M1 students face in communicating effectively by means of writing. The findings of this study revealed that M1 students have serious grammatical problems, cohesion and coherence related problems, and social and cultural problems which affect the communication of the intended meaning. These findings led to the following conclusion: “M1 students have problems in communicating effectively by means of writing.”

Keywords: Effective communication, writing, writing problems

Résumé

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner les problèmes de communication par écrit que rencontrent les étudiants de première année de Master en Linguistique Appliquée et Anglais sur objectif spécifique à l'université de Ouargla. Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'un test de diagnostic administré à un nombre total de 30 étudiants. Pour analyser les données recueillies, deux méthodes d'analyses ont été utilisées. La première méthode était échelle d'évaluation globale. Cette méthode a été utilisée pour évaluer les problèmes de compétences de communication par écrit qu'ont les étudiants de première année de Master. La deuxième méthode était statistique descriptive. Cette méthode a été utilisée pour mesurer statistiquement les problèmes de communication par écrit que rencontrent les dits étudiants. Les résultats de cette étude ont révélé que les étudiants du première année de Master ont de graves problèmes de grammaire, de graves problèmes liés à la cohésion et la cohérence du texte, et de problèmes socio-culturels, qui affectent la communication de ce qu'ils veulent exprimer par écrit. Ces conclusions ont conduit à la conclusion suivante: “Les étudiants de première année de Master ont des problèmes de communication par écrit.”

Mots-clés; Communication efficace, écriture, problèmes d'écriture

