

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

MENTOURI UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTINE  
FACULTY OF LETTERS & FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**INTEGRATIVE GRAMMAR IN TEACHING**

**ACADEMIC WRITING**

**Case Study: Algerian Students of Second Year LMD at  
the Department of English, University of Constantine**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE MAGISTER DEGREE IN READING AND WRITING  
CONVERGENCES**

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Year 2008

## *Dedication*

*To my family  
To my brother Mohamed  
To my friends*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my mentor and supervisor Pr. Abderrahim Farida who inspired me for this research work, and for her endless patience and precious advice.

I am thankful to Professor Saadi Hacène who has accepted to examine my research work and to chair the board of examiners.

I am grateful to Doctor Laraba Samir who has devoted his time and efforts to evaluate this research work.

I am indebted to Doctor Merrouche Sara who has accepted to examine this dissertation.

I would like to thank the teachers and the students of Second Year LMD for their help and seriousness in completing the questionnaires.

Dr. Dakhmouche Meghlaoui deserves a special word of thanks for his help and insight in the statistical part of this work.

My special thanks to my former teachers, my colleagues and all my friends who encouraged me to carry out this work.

## **ABSTRACT**

Learning academic writing is a staggering task as it requires from the students to demonstrate mastery of appropriate formats for the rhetorical presentation of ideas as well as mastery in all areas of language. It is also a time-consuming process regarding all what is expected from the teacher in the writing classroom.

The present work aims at demonstrating that grammar instruction can be made more effective if it is related to the teaching of writing, particularly to the genres students are required to write. It also shows that, despite the misconceptions and the misunderstandings about grammar, mainly in relation to the practices in teaching composition, it contributes not only in improving students' writing but also in fostering their capacity to create new language.

The study is based on two questionnaires addressed to the students and the teachers of Second Year LMD to elicit their opinions about integrative grammar teaching. The aim of the questionnaires is to get information about the role and the importance given to grammar by both the learners and the teachers in writing and their attitudes towards relating grammar instruction to the teaching of Written Expression.

The analysis of the questionnaires revealed that both students and teachers consider grammar as an important aspect to develop in learning to write and that relating grammar instruction to the teaching of writing will be particularly helpful, not only in achieving accuracy and clarity in expressing an idea, but also in giving the learners access to different structural variants to formulate this idea. On the basis of these results, we have suggested some guidelines that may help the learners improve their writing skills.

## RESUME

L'apprentissage de l'écrit est une tâche difficile puisque elle requiert des apprenants de montrer leur maîtrise aussi bien des formats pour la présentation rhétorique des idées que leur maîtrise de tous les aspects de la langue. C'est aussi un procédé qui exige beaucoup de temps en prenant en considération ce qui est attendu de l'enseignant dans la pratique de l'écrit en classe.

Cette étude a pour objectif de démontrer que l'enseignement de la grammaire anglaise peut être plus efficace s'il est relié à l'enseignement de l'Expression Ecrite, particulièrement aux types de textes que les étudiants sont requis d'apprendre. L'étude a aussi pour but de montrer que malgré les dissensions et les interprétations erronées de la grammaire, principalement en ce qui concerne les méthodes d'enseignement de l'Expression Ecrite, la grammaire contribue non seulement à améliorer l'écrit des apprenants mais aussi à renforcer leurs capacités à générer de nouvelles phrases.

L'étude actuelle est basée sur deux questionnaires, l'un adressé aux étudiants de deuxième année LMD Anglais, l'autre aux enseignants de l'Expression Ecrite et de Grammaire pour connaître leur opinion concernant le rôle et l'importance qu'ils attribuent à la grammaire dans le cadre de l'enseignement de la grammaire relié à celui de l'écrit.

L'analyse des questionnaires a révélé que les apprenants et les enseignants considèrent que la grammaire est un aspect important dans l'apprentissage de l'écrit, et que les relier, permettra aux apprenants à structurer leurs idées de différentes manières plus efficaces.

Dans cette perspective, nous avons suggéré quelques recommandations pour aider les étudiants à améliorer leur aptitude en expression écrite.

## ملخص

هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى تبيين أن تعليم النحو في اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يكون فعال في حالة ما إذا كان في الواجهة المقابلة تعليم كيفية تحرير بعض الأصناف من النصوص التي ينبغي على الطالب الجامعي التمكن من كتابتها.

من جهة أخرى، و على الرغم من وجود بعض الغموض في فهم معنى النحو، فإن هذه الدراسة تهدف كذلك إلى تبيين أن هذه المادة تمكن الطالب الجامعي من تحسين مستواه في تحرير النصوص و خلق صيغ جديدة.

اعتمدنا في دراستنا على استعمال استبيانين، الأول موجه لطلبة السنوات الثانية من نظام آل.آم.دي اختصاص لغة إنجليزية و الثاني إلى أساتذة التعبير الكتابي لقسم اللغة الإنجليزية لصبر آرائهم حول إدماج تعليم النحو في مادة التعبير الكتابي من جهة و من جهة أخرى لتوضيح مدى أهمية دراسة النحو بالنسبة للطلاب و كيفية ربط تعليم هذه المادة بتعليم التعبير الكتابي.

من خلال تحليل الاستبيانين، أظهرت النتائج أن الطلبة و الأساتذة يعتبرون مادة النحو قضية جد مهمة. فمن خلال ممارستها و التحكم منها فإنه من الطبيعي الوصول إلى مستوى جيد في كيفية تحرير النصوص و كذلك كيفية تجسيد الأفكار و التمكن من صيغة الجمل للتعبير عنها.

من خلال نتائج دراستنا هذه، يمكننا أن نقترح بعض التوجيهات التي يمكن أن تساعدنا في تمكين الطلبة من تحسين مستواهم في التعبير الكتابي و صيغة الجمل.

## **List of Abbreviations**

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

TL: Target Language

WE: Written Expression



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# **INTRODUCTION**

1-Statement of the Problem

2-Aim of the Study

3-Research Questions/ Hypothesis

4-Means of Research

5-Structure of the Study

## **1-Statement of the Problem**

The capacity of expressing oneself in a language other than one's native language through writing with adequate accuracy and coherence is an important achievement (Celce-Murcia 1991a: 233). Part of this ability consists in producing correct and well-formed sentences, which is a very complex task. It is well known that even if second language writers become proficient in a process approach, they nevertheless have linguistic problems, often related to sentence structure and grammar.

Grammar has always been one of the most controversial issues in the teaching of writing. Most of the misunderstandings about the nature and the meaning of grammar, and its role in language teaching in general, stem from "a narrowly defined view of 'grammatical instruction' as traditional, decontextualized grammar lessons with a focus on formal analysis of sentence-level syntax (e.g., types of clauses) and/or a preoccupation with correcting errors" (Frodesen 1991: 264). Grammar, perceived as accuracy, is a problematic area in writing for many non-native speakers who still struggle with elements like organisation and coherence after they have more or less mastered the more global features of written English. Frodesen (ibid.: 233) explains that teachers should teach learners to regard grammar as "an aid to shaping effective and appropriate messages", and that any teaching of writing should take into account the students' needs, their background, and the requirements of writing tasks.

In terms of teaching writing, Spack (1984: 649) affirms that "most composition textbooks for native English speakers and ESL [English as a Second Language] students present a straightforward, mechanical view of writing which does not acknowledge the complexity of the composing process. These texts have not shown students how meticulous and even painful writing can be, especially for non-native speakers." In

addition, even if current practices in the teaching of second language composition are based on a process approach, a focus on grammar is not irrelevant.

Linking grammar and writing can enhance students' writing skills. Zamel (1980 cited in Pack and Henrichsen 1981: 470) argues that language learning is "a cumulative and integrative process", i.e., a process of accumulating and integrating different bits of information about the target language into each other. Therefore, grammar must be regarded as an aid to language users in accurately communicating their ideas, not as some isolated body of knowledge that must be studied for its own sake. Grammar should be also regarded as "the raising to consciousness in the learner of the ways grammatical and discourse processes operate and interact in the target language" (Nunan 1988: 35).

In their First Year at the Department of English, Mentouri University of Constantine, regardless of prior language learning, Algerian students are progressively introduced to English grammar. In addition, they are gradually made acquainted with grammatical terminology and the major constituents of English grammar. Nevertheless, from informal discussions with students and teachers of English, when they write in content areas like Literature or Civilisation, especially in examination essays, most students appear to focus more on content (i.e. answering the question (s) and supplying the right information) rather than on grammar, mainly because of time constraints and other factors. This often causes them to fail to convey their ideas correctly and accurately, and consequently they get low scores. On the other hand, when they know that grammar will be taken into consideration during the correction of their papers, they pay attention to the grammar they use when they write. Sometimes, when paying attention to grammar, they show an inability to focus on their ideas, and sometimes, they fail to answer the question of the topic or the assignment. This means that the students

are able to focus on grammar alone, or to concentrate on content only. In other words, they are blocked when they attempt to focus on these two aspects at the same time. Another possibility is that the importance they give to grammar depends on the goals of writing. It also appears that most students may not make a connection between their grammatical knowledge (i.e. what they are being taught in grammar) and their own writing.

## **2-Aim of the Study**

The present study aims at demonstrating that grammar contributes to improve students' writing. It also aims at investigating the ways grammar teaching can be related to the genres of writing students are expected to produce. In addition, it aims at establishing to which extent students use their grammatical knowledge as well as the degree of importance they give to grammar in writing in general. Therefore, the study is concerned with demonstrating that grammar is one of the necessary components for good writing and that we can link grammar instruction to the teaching of composition through integrative teaching.

## **3-Research Questions/Hypothesis**

In attempting to investigate the ways grammar teaching can be related to the genres of writing students are required to produce, it is necessary to answer the following questions:

- 1-Is grammar an important aspect in writing?
- 2-Do students use what they learn in grammar in their own writing?
- 3-Do weaknesses in grammar affect students' writing?

Based on the assumption that grammar is a tool for conveying meaning and an aid to English learners in accurately formulating their ideas, we hypothesise that if grammar is

linked to the types of texts students are required to write, their writing is likely to improve.

#### **4-Means of Research**

The data is collected through Teachers' and Students' questionnaires. The Teachers' questionnaire, intended for the teachers of Written Expression and Grammar, aims at determining the place grammar has in the Written Expression classroom, and the degree of importance it is given. The Students' questionnaire, intended for Second Year LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorate) students, will provide their opinions about their preferences in learning grammar, the importance they give it in their writing, and whether they make any connection between what they learn in the Grammar module and in the Written Expression module. The analysis of the collected data aims at determining the elements that will provide the basis for the development of an integrative approach to grammar in the teaching of writing.

#### **5-Structure of the Study**

The present work is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters constitute the literature survey. Chapter One represents a review of the teaching of writing in English Language Teaching through a brief summary of the main approaches that have characterised the teaching of writing during the last decades. The main focus of this chapter concerns the product-process controversy. Chapter Two provides an overview about what grammar is, including some primary distinctions like pedagogical grammar and linguistic grammar, descriptive and prescriptive rules, and what place it has in language learning/teaching through a brief overview of language methods and approaches. Chapter Three mainly provides answers to the questions that are related to our study, as well as examples of integrative grammar teaching.

The last two chapters constitute the empirical part of the work. Chapter Four concerns the analysis of the data collected by means of the Teacher's and the Student's questionnaires. Chapter Five provides suggestions and pedagogical implications for the development of integrative grammar in the context of teaching writing in order to help the teachers develop strategies for improving students' writing.

# CHAPTER ONE

## TEACHING/LEARNING WRITING

Introduction

1.1. Writing in a Second Language

1.1.1. Defining Writing

1.1.2. Current Approaches to the Teaching of Second Language Writing

1.1.2.1. Controlled Composition

1.1.2.2. Current-Traditional Rhetoric

1.1.2.3. The Process Approach

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1.2. The Product Approach vs. the Process Approach

1.2.1. Principles of the Product Approach

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1.3. Teaching Writing Methodology

1.3.1. The Second Language

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1.3.3. The Writing Course

1.3.4. The Place of Grammar in the Writing Course

Conclusion

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **TEACHING/LEARNING WRITING**

### **Introduction**

The view that writing has no real place in teaching the target language prevailed for a long time. Writing was regarded as a support and a reinforcer of the other skills and proficiency was reflected in oral use of the language. This view generated several misconceptions about the nature of writing and speech and the differences that exist between them.

The reconsideration of the status of writing in language teaching/learning resulted from an important change in perception regarding the nature of what is to be taught. This perception resulted in the view that writing is a skill that can be learned and that can be developed. Research in composition reached its peak in the 1980s and this led to a change in the views about the nature of writing and strengthening its position in language teaching/learning.

### **1.1. Writing in a Second Language**

#### **1.1.1. Defining Writing**

The definition of the term “writing” as a concept, as an act and as a skill has changed in relation to the changes writing has known. The following definitions describe writing from a distinct perspective; they vary from broad assumptions to narrow descriptions related to the approaches that will be discussed further.

Writing in a broad sense means “not only putting one’s thoughts to paper as they occur, but actually using writing to create new knowledge” (Weigle 2002: 32-33). It is



“encoding internal representation (ideas) into written text” (Weigle, *ibid*: 36). Brookes and Grundy (1998: 11) consider writing as “composing (i.e. writing as a skill enabling us to say what we wish to for which some language knowledge is required”. Hyland (2003: 3) regards it as “marks on a page or a screen, a coherent arrangement of words, clauses, and sentences, structured according to a system of rules”. He also views writing as “composing skills and knowledge about texts, contexts, and readers” (*ibid*: xv). For Emig (1977: 124 cited in Tarantino 1988: 47), it is “a learned behaviour which in turn can become a source of learning”.

Writing in a narrow sense has several definitions. In the Product Approach, it is “a creative discovery procedure characterized by the dynamic interplay of content and language: the use of language to explore beyond the known content” (Taylor 1981: 6). In Current-traditional Rhetoric, it is “basically a matter of arrangement, of fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns. Learning to write, then, involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns” (Silva 1990: 14). In Current Discourse, it means “the ability to address diverse audiences in order to accomplish diverse purposes” (Odell and Cooper 1980: 40). Writing, in the Process Approach, is regarded as a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel 1983: 165 cited in Hyland 2003: 11), a discovery procedure based on a complex, recursive, and creative process (Flower and Hayes 1980, Taylor 1981, and Silva 1990). In English for Academic Purposes, it implies “the production of prose that will be acceptable at an American academic institution, and learning to write is part of becoming socialized to the academic community” (Silva 1990: 17), in addition to “the complex ability to write from other texts-to summarize, to disambiguate key notions and

useful facts and incorporate them in one's own writing, to react critically to prose" (Rose 1983: 119).

When taking into consideration these definitions, we notice that it is difficult to come to one single view of what writing is. As Weigle (2002: 3) states "this is not a simple task, since, as researchers in both first- and second-language writing have pointed out, the uses to which writing is put by different people in different situations are so varied that no single definition can cover all situations." However, the following statement can be considered as a general definition that is valid in any situation: writing is "an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose, and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience" (Hamp-Lyons and Kroll 1997: 8 quoted in Weigle 2002: 19).

### **1.1.2. Current Approaches to the Teaching of Second Language Writing**

The approaches to teaching writing are well covered elsewhere in the literature; therefore, we will only focus on the approaches relevant to our interests and which are according to Silva (1990) the four approaches which proved very influential in the development and teaching of second language (L2) writing: *Controlled Composition*, *Current-traditional Rhetoric*, *the Process Approach* (to be discussed in the next section) and *English for Academic Purposes (EAP)*.

### **1.1.2.1. Controlled Composition**

Controlled Composition, also known as ‘guided composition’, draws its principles from Audio-lingualism, i.e. habit formation and imitation, repetition and drills, correctness, and absence of errors (Doff 1988). Based on this premise, writing is perceived as reinforcement. In Controlled Composition, “the use of language means the manipulation of fixed patterns; that these patterns are learned by imitation; and that not until they have been learned can originality occur in the manipulation of patterns or in the choice of variables within the patterns” (Pincas 1962: 186 quoted in Silva 1990: 12). Practice in writing is essentially concerned with formal accuracy and correctness. Methodology consists in “the imitation and manipulation (substitutions, transformations, expansions, completions, etc.) of model passages carefully constructed and graded for vocabulary and sentence patterns” (Silva, *ibid.*).

Controlled Composition was criticised, according to Silva (*ibid.*: 13), for the following four aspects:

- Writing was regarded as “habit formation”, i.e., the student manipulates “previously learned language structures”.
- Readership was restricted to the teacher who focused solely on “formal linguistic features”, neglecting the quality of ideas and the organisation of content.
- The notions of audience and purpose were largely ignored, because of the restriction of writing to the classroom environment.
- More importantly, writing was used as “the handmaid of the other skills” (listening, speaking, and reading); writing was not considered as a skill on its own but a kind of “service activity”.

### **1.1.2.2.Current-Traditional Rhetoric**

Current-Traditional Rhetoric came as a response to the gaps of Controlled Composition, because “there was more to writing than building grammatical sentences; that what was needed was a bridge between controlled and free writing” (Silva 1990: 13-14). This approach was organised around the following three notions:

-contrastive principles based on the “theory of contrastive rhetoric” of Kaplan (1967: 15 cited in Silva, *ibid*: 13), which is defined as “the method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns”;

-a major concern with “the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms”, mainly the paragraph, in terms of “its elements (topic sentences, support sentences, concluding sentences, and transitions) and in terms of modes of development such as illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, partition, classification, definition, causal analysis, and so on”;

-concern with essay development which is “an extrapolation of paragraph principles to larger stretches of discourse”; essays were considered as “larger structural entities (introduction, body, and conclusion) and organizational patterns or modes (normally narration, description, exposition, and argumentation)”. Exposition was considered “the pattern most appropriate for use by university-level second language writers”.

Teaching composition based on Current-traditional Rhetoric focused primarily on form. According to Silva (*ibid*: 14), procedures in this approach consisted in asking students

to choose among alternative sentences within the context of a given paragraph or longer discourse ... reading and analyzing a model and then applying the structural knowledge gained to a parallel piece of original writing ... to list and group relevant facts, derive topic and supporting sentences from these facts, assemble an outline, and write their compositions from that outline.

However, according to Silva (ibid: 14-15), Current-traditional Rhetoric was criticised for regarding writing as a question of filling a format, i.e. “a preexisting form with provided or self-generated context”, and the written text as a straightforward production, i.e., “a collection of increasingly complex discourse structures (sentences, paragraphs, sections, etc.), each embedded in the next largest form”. The approach was also criticised on the grounds that the context of writing is principally academic, and the teacher’s response to students’ writing is supposed to reflect the judgement of “the community of educated native speakers”. In addition, this approach was regarded as having an elitist view of writing, but it was rapidly replaced by a process model (Miller 1983: 222).

### **1.1.2.3. The Process Approach**

The Process Approach benefited significantly from research in first language (L1) composition. Spack (1984: 650) provides a compilation of empirical studies on the composing processes of unskilled and skilled native English-speaking writers conducted by Perl (1979), Pianko (1979a), Flower and Hayes (1980), and Sommers (1980). They brought evidence that “the writing process is a series of overlapping and interacting processes.” In other words, writing is “a recursive rather than a linear process” because the nature of writing itself is “recursive, non-linear” (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 9). The process is composed of several stages that overlap: planning, drafting (including several drafts before the final draft), revising and editing; it allows the writer to go back and

forward without disturbing the flow of his ideas. Unlike Current-traditional Rhetoric, it has no “preconceived plan or model, ... the process of writing creates its own form and meaning” (Kroll 1990a: viii). In addition, insights from theories of cognitive psychology advanced by Flower and Hayes (1977 cited in Spack 1984: 650) showed that writing is a form of problem solving. Their study explored “the mental procedures writers use to process information to communicate intentions and ideas to others.” One of the assumptions of the Process Approach is that successful writing resides in approaching writing as a process. It implies three fundamental questions:

- 1-What should the writer write about?
- 2-How should the writer get started?
- 3-For whom is the writer going to write?

The Process Approach is regarded as a “way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, grammar)” (Applebbe 1986: 96 quoted in Kroll 1991: 247). Moreover, writers “develop what they want to say *during* rather than *before* the process of writing” (Kroll 1991: 247). Silva (1990: 15-16) summarises the Process Approach in the following six points:

- 1-Writing is a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process”
- 2-Concerns with “organizational patterns or syntactic or lexical constraints” are considered early and premature, and must be avoided during the process.
- 3-The form of the generated text is determined by content, ideas, and the need to communicate.
- 4-The product (the text) is of “a secondary, derivative concern”, i.e., “form is a function of its content and purpose.”

5-During the process, the teacher helps students develop useful strategies for “getting started (finding topics, generating ideas and information, focusing, and planning structure and procedure), drafting (encouraging multiple drafts), revising (adding, deleting, modifying, and rearranging ideas); editing (attending to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics).”

6-The writer’s task is mainly to discover and express meaning, while the reader’s task is to focus on “content, ideas, and the negotiating of meaning” rather than to focus on form, which is of secondary importance.

#### **1.1.2.4.English for Academic Purposes**

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) came mainly as “a reaction” to the Process Approach as Silva (ibid: 16-17) explains; it focused on “the academic discourse community” which is the centre of attention, in addition to a focus on “academic discourse genres and the range and nature of academic writing tasks, aimed at helping to socialize the student into the academic context”. It attempts to “ensure that student writing falls within ...[the] range ...of acceptable writing behaviors dictated by the academic community” (Horowitz 1986b: 789 quoted in Silva 1990: 17). It also “aims at recreating the conditions under which actual university writing tasks are done.” According to Silva (1990: 17), EAP involves:

- “the close examination and analysis of academic discourse formats and writing task specifications;
- the selection and intensive study of source materials appropriate for a given topic, question, or issue;

- the evaluation, screening, synthesis, and organization of relevant data from these sources;
- the presentation of these data in acceptable academic English form;
- the writer is primarily concerned with achieving academic success, and meeting standards and requirements of the academic context.
- the text is a more or less conventional response to a particular task type that falls into a recognizable genre;
- the context of writing is academic.”

In an academic context, Weigle (2002: 174) explains that, for example, writing in class “is used to test students’ ability to plan and write an essay or other extended text without the use of outside assistance or resources.” Therefore, the main goal of academic writing, especially at the university level, is to train students “to produce writing under timed conditions in their academic courses, and thus it is essential for them to be able to organize, write, and edit a composition in a relatively short amount of time” (Weigle, *ibid.*).

## **1.2.The Product Approach vs. the Process Approach**

The product-process debate has always been one of the most important issues in the teaching of writing. This debate concerns whether the teachers should focus on the writing process in the classroom or emphasise the importance of a correct final product. In this section, we will examine the principles of the Product Approach and the Process Approach in more details.



### **1.2.1.Principles of the Product Approach**

Writing in the mid-1960s was closely related to literary study, and writing meant “responding in writing to literary texts” (Kroll 1991: 245). At a more advanced level, very little time was devoted to teaching writing on its own. However, teaching writing at that time meant “correcting papers”, because the time allocated to writing was after students’ papers had been written. Kroll (ibid: 246) summarises the steps of this approach as follows:

- The students are taught to write according to “fairly rigidly defined principles of rhetoric and organization which are presented as “rules” for writing”.
- The teacher gives “a reading text for classroom discussion, analysis, and interpretation (preferably a work of literature)”.
- The teacher requires “a writing assignment (accompanied by an outline) based on the text”.
- The teacher reads, makes comments, and criticises the papers of the students before beginning the next lecture.

These practices had taken place under an approach called “the traditional paradigm” or the “traditional approach”; but it came to be widely known as the “Product Approach”, because it was concerned primarily with the finished written product, and not in the ways it was generated (Kroll 1991, Neman 1995). The Product Approach emerged from “the marriage of Structural Linguistics and the behaviourist learning theories of second language teaching” (Hyland 2003: 3), and was principally based on a controlled composition model.

Silva (1990: 20) explains that the principles of the Product Approach were derived from Controlled Composition which “focuses on the lexical and syntactic

features of a text”, and Current-traditional Rhetoric which “focuses on discourse-level text structures.” According to Hairston (1982), advocates of this approach believed that a writer knows what s/he is going to write before s/he writes, “and that the primary task of writers is to predetermine the form by which to organize their ideas”. Hyland (ibid: 3) summarises the principles of the Product Approach in the following points:

-It “encourages a focus on formal text units or grammatical features of texts”.

-It views writing as “a product constructed from the writer’s command of grammatical and lexical knowledge, and writing development is considered to be the result of imitating and manipulating models provided by the teacher.”

-Writing is viewed as “an extension of grammar- a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners’ ability to produce well-formed sentences. ...writing is an intricate structure that can only be learned by developing the ability to manipulate lexis and grammar.”

-The writer in the Product Approach is supposed to have a high degree of “linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices”, and to master “syntactic patterns” and “cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts.”

Young (1978: 31 cited in Pett 1987: 48) describes the Product model as traditional, stressing the product of writing rather than the process of composing. It also includes “the analysis of discourse into traditional rhetorical forms of description, exposition, argument etc.”. The main task of the writer is “organizing content and finding a suitable mode of expression. Writing is further seen as a linear process progressing from pre-writing to writing and re-writing” (Hairston 1982: 78 cited in Pett 1987: 48). Spack (1984: 649-650) explains that part of the approach was the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs. Another part consisted in classifying

discourse into descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative modes. But the most important characteristic of this model is the high priority it gives to correctness and style, usage, and grammatical accuracy (Young 1978, Spack 1984). Mitchell and Taylor (1979: 258) consider that, in the Product model, good writing means lack of comma splices and fragments, formal case-marking for pronouns, complicated sentence structure-or simple sentence structure, and more importantly, absence of errors. Therefore, the written product must correspond to these characteristics in order to be considered of a high quality.

The Product Approach was attacked on the basis that it was uncertain that “error correction and grammar teaching” could effectively help learners to improve their writing (Hyland 2003: 12) and that it “engenders complacency, fails to acknowledge the complexity of the writing process, and leaves no room for a critical examination of ideas” (Yarnoff 1980 cited in Spack 1984: 654). Sommers (1980 cited in Spack 1984: 654) adds that the Product Approach represents writing as a linear process, “proceeding from pre-writing to writing, and does not incorporate the concept that thinking occurs in every stage of the process”. One of the main (and perhaps most critical) weaknesses of the Product Approach was its ignorance of the “psychological implications” of the process of writing. Teachers were also criticized for “making correction and criticism the heart of their program” (Neman 1995: 5). Overall, the Product Approach was criticised for its principles derived from Audio-lingualism and its stress on grammar and habit formation. It concentrated on the development of the *grammatical competence*, and almost excluded other components like content information and thinking skills (Mohan 1979, Tarone and Yule 1989).

### **1.2.2.Principles of the Process Approach**

For a long time, teaching writing in the traditional paradigm focused solely on the final product, creating misconceptions and false impressions about how this product is generated. Taylor (1981) argues that writing is more complex than it seems; it is rather a process of discovery and a tool for making meaning. Therefore, according to Friedlander (1990: 110), “traditional approaches to writing, such as modes of discourse or grammar-based approaches” are seen mainly from process adherents as obstacles to learning writing. Such approaches tend to ‘shackle’ students’ minds through heavy emphasis on grammatical accuracy and imposed formats right from the beginning of the writing process, thus preventing the students from exploring fully their ideas and exploiting the various ways in which they can develop these ideas.

Significant studies started by the end of the 1970’s and the beginning of the 1980’s. Krapels (1990: 38) suggests studies by Zamel (1976) and Raimes (1979) who proposed “treating L2 writing as a process in the L2 classroom”, Perl (1978) “who developed a coding scheme for categorizing writing process behaviors”, and Faigley and Witte (1981) “who designed a system for studying the influence of revision on meaning”.

Writing is no longer considered the “straightforward plan-outline-write process that many believe it to be” (Taylor 1981: 5-6). This shift from the Product Approach to the Process Approach was mainly due to “a change in first language composition methodologies motivated by a shifting paradigm in L1 composition teaching” (Kroll 1991: 246). Initiators of this shift like Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer (1963 cited in Kroll: 1991: 246) urged for a re-examination of how to teach writing. By the end of the 1960s, many researchers emerged like Emig (1971 cited in Krapels 1990: 246) who was

considered as a pioneer, and who was distinguished by her “think aloud” procedure for collecting information about student writing processes. She was the first researcher to observe that a text is not produced in “a straightforward linear sequence that the traditional paradigm outlined”. The shift from product-oriented to process-oriented writing really began with her “*Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*” (1971).

At the beginning of the 1970s, “the nature of written discourse as well as the writing process itself have attracted renewed interest from educational researchers, linguists, applied linguists, and teachers” (Kroll 1990a: viii). This interest led many researchers to focus on “the composing processes of students writers instead of on the written products they produce” (Kroll *ibid*: 8). The shift from empirical studies conducted on the process of L1 writing encouraged composition teachers to follow the same path, and considered that L2 writing courses can benefit from these studies. Therefore, teachers of composition wanted their students to “experience writing as a creative process for exploring and communicating meaning” (Spack 1984: 651).

Research in process writing began with the assumption that “a writer’s product is presented in lines”, but “the process that produces it is not linear at all. Instead, it is recursive” (Raimes 1985: 229). Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacobs (1983: 28 quoted in Raimes 1985: 229-230) describe it as “a cyclical process which writers move back and forth on a continuum discovering, analyzing, and synthesizing ideas”.

The misconception that writing is “produced only by talent or by sudden inspiration” (Spack 1984: 657) prevailed for a long time in composition classrooms, creating an elitist view of writing. The Process Approach rejects this belief as Applebee (1986: 96 quoted in Kroll 1990a: 8) notes:

the process approach “provided a way to think about what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, grammar).

A central idea in this approach is that writing is “an organic process which does not depend on copying a model” (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 18). Another view describes writing as a means in itself, a tool for learning the target language (TL) (Raimes 1985, Spack 1984). The Process Approach acknowledges that writing is a complex process, in the sense that:

a writer must locate a subject, generate details, find a personal attitude toward the subject, define an intended audience, select appropriate organizing strategies, and revise for greater clarity, appropriateness to attitude, and impact on the audience (Gebhardt 1980: 71-72).

According to these assumptions, teachers seek “to teach students how to engage in the drafting of a text as a recursive process in which the linear order of the words constantly folds back upon itself to generate a non linear structure of ideas” (Huff 1983: 802). In addition, the Process Approach seeks to make students perceive problems in their own writing and make accurate decisions about revision (Rubin 1983: 373).

The Process Approach draws some of its aspects from other approaches. For example, it emphasises the importance of the reader drawn from the Interactive Approach which is based on the principle of “mutual collaboration”, i.e., “the text is being created by writer and reader” (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 9). Spack (1984: 651) summarises the features of the Process Approach in the following points:

- It views writing as a recursive process.
- It uses elements from other disciplines like cognitive psychology and linguistics.

-It takes into consideration the “rhetorical context” which is embodied in audience, purpose, and occasion.

-It is regarded as “a procedure for feedback”; it offers the teacher an occasion to intervene when students are involved during the process of writing.

-It is considered as “a method of evaluation which determines how well a written product adapts the goals of the writer to the needs of the reader.”

Accordingly, the ‘process model’ comprises *purpose, topic, audience*, a pre-phase preparing the writer for the process. The next phase of the process consists generally of three stages: *planning (or pre-drafting), drafting*, and *revising*; other divisions include *editing* (concerns with choices of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, structure of the sentences, etc.) as a fourth stage. However, this division is not straightforward or unidirectional, because, as the process itself is recursive, its phases do not come one after the other, but rather overlap. Moreover, planning and revising are considered the most important stages in the process. Therefore, attention will be devoted to planning and revising; drafting will be briefly mentioned.

Brookes and Grundy (1998: 15-16) describe purpose, topic and audience as follows:

**-Purpose:** There is always a reason underlying writing. For instance, students write “to fulfil institutional requirements, to develop language skills, or to produce a piece for continuous assessment”. Nevertheless, students may not understand what the purpose of writing is.

**-Topic or “main ideas”:** It involves what the students are going to write about. They may be required to write about a topic for which they can gather ideas from reading,

discussion, or experience, or from other ways like brainstorming and discussing ideas with peers.

**-Audience or “readership”:** Audience is a key-element in writing. Readership influences greatly what a writer will write and how he will write it. However, at early stages, student writers “may not naturally be conscious of their readership.” Their primary objective is to get down “something reasonably correct in another language.” In an academic context, students are more or less aware of why they write and for whom they write, but it can be helpful to draw their attention to these elements. However, this must not be done prematurely.

**-Planning:** planning or pre-drafting is one of the most important stages of writing. In practice, it is not always easy to establish a limit between planning and drafting. Even skilled writers have sometimes no clear idea about how to begin, and have only a vague idea about how their subject is going to be. They also go back to the planning stage while they are drafting a body of text, to work out certain concepts and make more investigations about their topic. This suggests that planning and drafting are in practice overlapping processes and that a separation of the stages is ‘artificial’, and intended only to help immature or unskilled writers. According to Zamel (1983 cited in Hyland 2003), “planning is not a unitary stage but a distinctive thinking process which writers use over and over during composition.” The planning phase offers the writer a battery of strategies like *brainstorming*, which helps the students “to make generalisations and to see connections and relationships among their observations, thoughts, and facts” (Taylor 1981: 10).

**-Drafting:** Drafting is not to be confused with editing. Drafting is the stage where the writer gathers the information he collected in the planning phase to shape his ideas.



Trimmer (1995: 54) provides that, in drafting, writers “determine whether the information ...discovered in planning can be shaped into successful writing”. Generally, the first draft is never the final version. It is “only a very preliminary attempt at producing a sustained piece of writing” (Trimmer 1995, *ibid.*). This procedure is one of the characteristics of experienced writers. It “enables them to experiment with possible arrangements of thoughts on a topic. They expect this experiment to lead to new discoveries, some of which emerge in the first draft but most of which will emerge in some subsequent draft. Experienced writers try several drafts. With each one, they come closer to what they want to say and how they want to say it” (Trimmer, *ibid.*). He also regards drafting as an “art of choice” where the writer evaluates his information, organises and reorganises it, until he constructs “a coherent draft” (*ibid.*: 55).

**-Revising:** Revision is considered the core of the writing process because it represents “a discovery procedure”. Taylor (1981: 7) writes:

Revision ... is that crucial point in the process when discovery and organization come together, when writers refine and recast what they have written and shape it into coherent written statement.

Murray (1978 cited in Flanigan and Menendez 1980: 256) explains that revision “leads to the discovery of what one has to say and how it can be said”. Unfortunately, in teaching revision, teachers realised that most students do not share this belief. Most students, when rewriting their drafts, only “cosmetically rework mechanics and minor matters of form” (Flanigan and Menendez *ibid.*: 256); revision has become to be “too often confused with cosmetic editing or proofreading”, whereas, in reality, it offers “writers unlimited opportunities to reshape their essays” (Taylor 1981: 6-7). In the revision stage, teachers are advised to provide their students with a list of guidelines that

will be formulated according to the functions of revision, which are, according to Flanigan and Menendez (ibid.: 256) to:

- “*discover* intention and meaning and their effects,
- describe* those discoveries for the writer (whether the self or peer),
- analyze* why and how the writing affects a reader,
- evaluate* the effectiveness in terms of the writer’s purpose and the written context,
- recommend* strategies for change.”

However, revision is not concerned with the surface features of the written product, which consist of grammar, punctuation, etc., because these are not important at the early stage of the draft. According to Flanigan and Menendez (ibid.), the Process Approach establishes a kind of “hierarchy of importance” for writers; “content, clarity, and the general coherence of the discourse precede concern with sentence structure, punctuation, transitional phrases, or intersentential coherence” (p.259). Murray (1978) makes a further distinction at the level of revision:

1-*internal revision*, which is concerned with exploring what has been discovered on the draft, then, follows a reworking of the topic, the information, the arguments, and the arrangement of ideas until the meaning is successfully conveyed.

2-*external revision*, which is a brief process where the written product is prepared for an external audience, and where revision deals with style, tone, language and mechanics.

In the Process Approach, the teacher acts as a guide throughout the writing process. His/her main task is to help the students “develop strategies for generating, drafting, and refining ideas” rather than to emphasise form (Hyland 2003: 12). This confirms that concerns with form, amongst grammar, are left at the very end of the continuum of the process. Keh (1991: 18) explains that attention to grammar right from

the beginning is considered as “premature”, because it interrupts the flow of ideas, and is delayed until the product stage (editing). Students’ attention must be rather focused on expressing their ideas and developing the content of their writing. She adds that “writing itself by nature is a messy process-there may be great overlapping of the attention to each area of concern...from the first to the final draft.”

The Process Approach is very inclined towards learner-centred teaching. The students are involved actively all along the process. Johns (1990: 26) argues that the students are involved actively in:

- preparing writing through invention and other prewriting activities,
- revising their papers at the macro levels, generally through group work,
- postponing concerns with error correction of the sentence-level until the final stage (editing).

Grabe and Kaplan (1996 cited in Brookes and Grundy 1998: 9-10) consider that, generally speaking, the Process Approach is characterised by

- self-discovery,
- meaningful writing on topics of importance to the writer,
- writing as a goal-oriented and contextualised activity,
- invention and planning strategies,
- multiple drafting with feedback between drafts,
- a variety of feedback alternatives provided by peers, the teacher, or through evaluation strategies like conferencing,
- content information and personal expression as more important than final grammar and usage,

-the ability to move forward or backward in the stages of the process as often as necessary,

-the development of students' awareness of the process of writing and the concepts of audience, purpose, and making plans.

As any approach, the Process Approach has some weaknesses. Harmer (2001: 258) explains that it is time consuming, and time is rather limited in the classroom. Therefore, the students are unlikely to be able to “brainstorm ideas or collect them in some other way; ... to draft a piece of writing and then, with the teacher’s help perhaps, review it and edit it in various ways before, perhaps, changing the focus, generating more ideas, redrafting, re-editing and so on” (Harmer, *ibid.*). It is sometimes difficult to teach students stages like revision (Rubin 1983). Students have often no clear idea about what to revise, because of the abstract nature of the revision stage. Generally, students tend to revise at concrete levels, mainly at the word level. Bridwell (1980: 211 quoted in Rubin 1983: 375) notes that students devote a great portion of time “trying to find the words to express their thoughts”. Sommers (1980 cited in Spack 1984: 660) affirms that students consider revision not as “an activity in which they modify their perspectives and ideas” but as a “rewording activity”. They also “concentrate on surface features rather than on more global concepts”. Brookes and Grundy (1998) assert that it is very important to take into consideration that there is no single writing process but many writing processes. The problem is that there is no agreed list of writing processes among researchers and even less agreement about exactly what a writing curriculum based on a process should consist of. For instance, Brookes and Grundy identified three pre-writing processes (planning, targeting and organising) and four in-writing processes (drafting, evaluating, editing and rewriting). They also provide that “even where the official policy

is to teach process writing (which is increasingly the case), the coursebooks themselves give very little guidance on how to do this” (p.11).

The most important criticism of the Process Approach stems from proponents of English for Academic Purposes. According to Silva (1990: 16), they assert that it “neglects to seriously consider variations in writing processes due to differences in individuals, writing tasks, and situations; the development of schemata for academic discourse; language proficiency; level of cognitive development; and insights from the study of contrastive rhetoric.” They also doubt “whether the process approach realistically prepares students for academic work”. Horowitz (1986a quoted in Silva: 1990: 16) argues that it “creates a classroom situation that bears little resemblance to the situations in which [students’ writing] will eventually be exercised” (p.144). Horowitz adds further that “a process orientation ignores certain types of important academic writing tasks (particularly essay exams)”, and it “gives students a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated” (p.143). Swales (1990: 220 quoted in Hyland 2003: 13) considers that the Process Approach overemphasises “the cognitive relationship between the writer and the writer’s internal world”. Consequently, it highlights only one aspect of writing. Hyland (2003: 13) affirms that, generally speaking, the Process Approach is criticised for being based on “small-scale, often contradictory studies”, “the difficulties of getting inside writers’ heads to report unconscious processing”, the researchers’ inability to explain the reasons for the choices that writers make and to show “whether the process is the same for all learners.”

### **1.3. Teaching Writing Methodology**

Some factors should be taken into account before teaching any kind of writing to a given group of learners. These factors influence the kind of approach to be followed and the amount of teaching students need. They are related to the language itself and to the learner. These factors often cause problems to the writing teacher, and therefore, should not be neglected.

#### **1.3.1. The Second Language**

The difficulty of writing is mainly due to several constraints that the writer must satisfy simultaneously. Collins and Gentner (1980: 67 quoted in Kroll 1990b: 140) explain that “in expressing an idea the writer must consider at least four structural levels: overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure (syntax), and word structure ... Clearly the attempt to coordinate all these requirements is a staggering job.” Silva (1993: 669 cited in Hyland 2003: 31) examined a review of seventy-two studies that compared research into L1 writing and L2 writing. He concluded that L2 writing is different from L1 writing in:

- linguistic proficiencies and intuitions about language,
- learning experiences and classroom expectations,
- sense of audience and writer,
- preferences for ways of organising texts,
- writing processes,
- understandings of text uses and the social value of different text types.

Another factor influencing L2 writing is extensive writing. Taylor (1981: 9) explains that extensive writing is only possible in certain occasions where the writer

needs to persuade, inform, complain, or express an opinion. Flower and Hayes (1977) suggest that extensive writing is mainly “goal-oriented” or “purposeful” in the sense that it is intended either for “achieving a specific objective, solving a particular problem, or fulfilling a particular function”. If we compare writing to the other skills, opportunities to use it outside its usual setting (the university in our case) are rather rare. Weigle (2002) explains that “extensive public writing (that is, writing beyond the sentence or paragraph level and intended for an audience other than oneself or one’s close associates) is reserved for those employed in specialized careers such as education” (p.4).

Another problem in L2 writing is that students often expect to reach native speaker proficiency when they start learning to write, and this expectation may cause them frustrations. This expectation may also be nurtured by some of their teachers. For this reason, the students must know that they are not expected to reach native speaker proficiency because it is not easily defined, i.e., there is no ‘ideal’ written product in English or a ‘model’ to follow (Kroll 1990b: 141). Therefore, what students should know is that they are required to produce an acceptable, clear and interesting piece of writing in accordance with the requirements of the writing situation.

### **1.3.2.The Students**

Many researchers and proponents of the Process Approach distinguish two types of writers: skilled and unskilled. This distinction is provided in relation to the Product Approach. In some cases, the terms ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ are replaced by ‘expert’ and ‘novice’ respectively. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987 cited in Hyland 2003: 12) consider novice writers as writers who “plan less than experts, revise less often, and less

extensively, have limited goals, and are mainly concerned with generating content” (p.12). Expert or skilled writers, on the other hand, are seen to “use the writing task to analyze problems, reflect on the task, and set goals to actively rework thoughts to change both their text and ideas” (p.12). This distinction is sometimes made at the level of the process itself. At the level of revision, unskilled or “immature” writers revise at the word-level and the sentence-level (Pianko 1979b, Flower and Hayes 1980). Skilled or expert writers, on the other hand, consider specific variables such as “the writer’s stance, the audience, the conceptualization of the topic, and the organization of the text” (Huff 1983: 800).

Raimes (1985) recognises many factors that distinguish skilled and unskilled writers amongst language proficiency, the quality of written products, self-evaluation of L1 and L2 writing, knowledge of writing in L1 and L2, and writing behaviour. Globally, skilled (or expert) writers are viewed to carry out self-evaluation and feedback during the writing process (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 19), to work out their writing for a very long time, focusing mainly on planning and revising, and to give more importance to content and organisation of ideas than on surface aspects like punctuation. More importantly, they recognise the importance of the reader in terms of his background knowledge about the topic and the amount of explanations and arguments to be provided (Huff 1983, Raimes 1985, Weigle 2002). On the other hand, unskilled writers have many characteristics. They spend a short time in planning (Pianko 1979a), use rigid and fixed plans that do not allow change in ideas, while flexibility is one feature of good writers (Rose 1980 cited in Raimes 1985: 230), and confuse revision with editing, i.e., when they revise, they favour form over content (Perl 1979, Sommers 1980, Faigley and Witte 1981, Flower and Hayes 1981). They ignore the essential role of revision in



writing and its impact on the final product. Consequently, they often submit papers in the form of “rough drafts than finished essays” (Taylor 1981: 7). On the whole, unskilled writers are considered poor writers because they are primarily and prematurely concerned with accuracy as they make rigid attempts from the onset to control surface features and to correct and edit their writing (Perl 1979, Spack 1984). In attempting to write a perfect essay from the outset, “they slow down, trying to put down exactly the right word, to put the right word into the right phrase, to put the right phrase into the right sentence, and so on” (Spack 1984: 656). They also seldom go beyond one draft, which often becomes the final one. Most of the time, they give not enough importance to the reader because they “find it difficult to move from their “writer-based prose” to prose that conveys a message-unequivocally to the reader” (Flower 1979). In other words, they have no sense of audience, because they assume the reader will undoubtedly understand what they have written.

At the core of the product-process debate, two issues emerge. The first is that, because the Product Approach is mainly concerned with form and formats, it therefore produces poor writers. The Process Approach, on the other hand, produces good writers because it is primarily concerned with the process that generates the text, the audience and the situation where writing takes place. The second issue is that “primary concerns with correctness of spelling, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and the linear progression of one sentence after another” are *obstacles* to the development of students’ writing (Huff 1983: 805).

The Process Approach proved its efficiency in handling problems generated from the Product Approach; however, the Process Approach may not be the best approach to all the writing situations (Harris 1983). Swales (1990) and Hyland (2003) provided

earlier that the Process Approach does not consider all the aspects involved in writing; it focuses exclusively on the process of writing, compared to the Product Approach, which emphasises the final product. Moreover, teaching non-native speakers of English to write is subject to several constraints mainly the difference between L1 writing and L2 writing.

Among the findings of L2 composition studies, Eldelsky (1982 cited in Krapels 1990: 45) noted that, when writing in an L2, the writers rely on their knowledge about L1 writing as a basis to make hypotheses about L2 writing. However, relying on L1 may cause the student writers to make false hypotheses about L2 writing. According to Buckingham (1979: 250), L1 interference manifests itself especially in selecting and expressing ideas. Generally, the students tend to use patterns used in their L1 to write in English mainly because of their lack of knowledge about English cultural aspects. They ignore that what is logical in a language is not necessarily the case in another one. Hyland (2003: 46) cites Kaplan's (1966) study of six hundred L2 student essays. Hyland provides that "compared with what he saw as the essentially linear pattern of English paragraphs, he suggested that Arabic speakers produced texts based on a series of parallel coordinate clauses" (Arabic is referred to as standard language). Therefore, most of the time, students end up with "non-English discourse." Their writing is either "disrupted by the need for lengthy searches for appropriate lexical and syntactic choices" or "the written product may not match the writer's original intention" (Weigle 2002: 36). Brookes and Grundy (1998) suggest that when writing in an L2, the writer has to modify his ideas to suit that language.

When the learners write in an L2, they have various information to manage at the same time. Weigle (2002) explains that "a writer must devote a considerable amount of

cognitive energy simultaneously managing several different kinds of information: information about the writing topic, information about the audience, and information about acceptable forms of written texts” (p.18). Accordingly, if the learners have problems in one of these aspects, this may affect the other aspects.

As mentioned earlier in this section, “writer-based” writing is one of the characteristics of unsuccessful writing. According to Flower (1979), the problem that prevent students to succeed in writing stems from “their failure to move cognitively from ‘writer-based’ to ‘reader-based’ prose”. Unless students come to consider their readers’ needs and interests, they will unlikely to become mature writers. Moreover, “writer-based” writing can cause the writer to be unfairly judged poor because “the text...is incomplete or inaccurate and cannot provide the appropriate memory cues to the writer” (Weigle 2002: 36). In addition to that, “writers may be disadvantaged by social and cultural factors: they may not have awareness of the social and cultural uses of writing in the second language, the appropriate ways in which various functions can be expressed in writing, or the expectations of readers from a different culture.”

### **1.3.3. The Writing Course**

The writing classroom described here represents a general description of what a writing classroom consists of and how it should be used to maximise learning. It is defined in terms of goals, the writing course, practice, error treatment and feedback, and testing.

Students may not understand why they are learning to write; thus, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make the students aware of the goals of writing and understand that, for example, learning to write will help them for “other classes or after

graduation” (Holzman 1983: 293). In general, teaching students to write has the goal of enhancing their skills to produce a single sentence of any complexity, and developing additional skills required to produce units longer than a single sentence (Buckingham 1979). These skills will help the students become less controlled by the text and the teacher, develop the use of syntactic patterns, write longer units of discourse, and use awareness of cultural differences in writing. Another goal consists in moving the students to the level of advanced composition in which they will be provided with enough opportunity to write for their own purposes and to make them independent writers making their own choices of structure, content and purpose (Buckingham, *ibid.*).

One of the functions of a writing course in the first steps of learning to write is teaching students the distinction between the “physical paragraph” which is rather mechanical, and the “conceptual paragraph” which is more difficult, because it includes aspects as selection of ideas (Buckingham 1979: 249-250). Another function is to help the students acquire the ability to synthesise “knowledge and skills to produce extended arguments, descriptions, narrations, and explications”, among this knowledge grammatical knowledge about sentence- and discourse-level (Buckingham *ibid.*: 245). The writing course can be used particularly to the “development of expression/creativity, as a diagnostic check to see how the students do when there is no control, for language development if there is a suitable correction feedback process” (Bruton 1981: 144).

In general, the teacher has a large choice of techniques to practice writing. These include for instance controlled, guided, or free (open) composition (Bruton 1981: 143). These techniques can be further divided into language and content/organisation, as follows:

1-controlled composition having controlled language and controlled content/organisation.

2-guided composition having controlled content/organization and less controlled language.

3-free composition is less controlled in both language and content/organisation.

Usually, the topics students respond to are assigned by the teacher. The teacher must take into consideration the extent to which “the presentation of a topic can affect student performance” (Kroll 1990a: 106). It often happens that the students face difficulties in responding to a topic because they have not understood in what form to produce the required text. Some topics seem to suggest particular paragraph developments, and in turn, some types of paragraph development seem to elicit certain structures, i.e. they “are nearly always connected to specific modes of discourse (temporal sequencing seems to be the favoured pattern used in narrative writing, for example)” (Buckingham 1979: 250). These considerations can greatly help the teacher to find solutions to some of the students writing problems.

Correction of students’ products is an important element in the writing classroom because it can be used as a way to draw their attention to their mistakes, especially if it is done in context and in the classroom. An essential aspect is that, when teachers come to treat learners’ errors, they must not analyse the errors themselves, but look for their possible causes (Shaugnessy 1977 cited in Rouse 1979). Correction must be seen in itself as an occasion to learn where the teacher makes students pay attention to their mistakes and makes them think about them (Bruton 1981: 145).

Evaluating students’ writing is one of the most important tasks of a teacher. Gere (1980: 44) explains that

teachers and researchers alike acknowledge that pronouncing judgement on a piece of writing is both important and difficult. Important because teaching students for placement or admission, and research in composition all depend upon ability to discriminate levels of quality in writing. Difficult because the theoretical basis of evaluation remains unarticulated.

Therefore, because of the inherent difficulty in evaluating students' writing, a clear definition of what is considered important in their writing and what the teacher will mainly focus on can be a good strategy. For instance, telling students that their writing will be mainly evaluated for content organisation can facilitate the job of the teacher and provide the learners with a clear picture of what they are going to be evaluated for.

#### **1.3.4. The Place of Grammar in the Writing Course**

It was mentioned earlier that, in the Process Approach, concerns with grammar occur at the final-product stage. On the other hand, in the Product Approach, these concerns are taken into account right from the beginning. Concerns with grammar do not constitute an obstacle to the flow of composing in themselves, but problems in these areas may cause difficulties to the student writers. It is crucial, then, to find appropriate methods to teach students to write, because both researchers and teachers acknowledge that the final goal of any approach is to make students produce a good piece of writing as Brookes and Grundy (1998: 15) write:

The final product in writing is important. All of us (and this includes our students) would like to produce final products that are imaginative and accurate, personal and public, fluent and correct.

The main belief of the present work is that, as long as the student writers have problems with grammar, punctuation and so on, they can hardly give any kind of consideration to important matters such as planning and revising. What is important then

is to enquire about the areas that cause them most problems and to find ways to help the students meet the requirements of academic writing. Celce-Murcia (1988 cited in Keh 1991: 18) suggests that “focus on grammar can be appropriate at the pre-writing stage. Certain types of writing elicit certain types of structures, and these can be taught as preparation for the particular writing task”. In addition, grammatical knowledge can be necessary to learn conventional punctuation. From a general perspective, the place of grammar in the teaching of writing is dependent upon the importance it is given by the teachers and the students, and to the kind of texts students are required to produce. Greenbaum (1988: 29) writes:

My own experience as a teacher and a writer convinces me that learning about grammatical structures, word order, and cohesion devices can improve written style.

## **Conclusion**

The mastery of writing is a complex and long process, and often, the teachers have not sufficient guidance in the selection of an approach to teach writing appropriately. An effective teacher of writing needs to understand what is involved in writing research including mainly information about what the approaches are and what they are not, and that thinking that a single approach can solve the problems of the students and prepare them to become good writers is a mistake.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **TEACHING GRAMMAR**

#### **Introduction**

Since the introduction of modern languages in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, grammar began to be distinguished as a separate field of study, and became the basic organising principle for teaching/learning languages. The word ‘grammar’ has come to mean different things, sometimes associated with morphology (the forms of words) and syntax (the relationships of words in larger units), and sometimes with syntax only. It is popularly identified with style, and sometimes with the study of punctuation, spelling and vocabulary, but the most common definition of the word ‘grammar’ is *do*s and *don*'ts. Grammar has become a subject of confusion, misconception, and difficulty, mainly for teachers and students.

#### **2.1. Definition of Grammar**

The term ‘grammar’ is defined from different perspectives in numerous works about English grammar. In this section, grammar is defined in general and in relation to terms as operational/analytical, formal/functional, pedagogic/linguistic, and descriptive/prescriptive.

##### **2.1.1. General Grammar**

The word ‘grammar’ has been given different definitions that created several misconceptions. To make things clearer, Greenbaum (1988: 20-23) proposes six technical senses that describe grammar from a broad perspective. In the first sense,

grammar is defined in terms of how it is combined with certain terms like ‘*transformational grammar*’, which refers to “a set of related theories...that share basic assumptions about the nature of language-what constitutes a language for the purposes of description-and they agree on appropriate methods of argumentation and formulation.” In sense two, grammar is referred to as “a theory for describing one language”. In sense three, it is a book about English grammar. In sense four, it refers to the contents of books about grammar. In this view of the term, “we can compare two grammars for their accuracy, comprehensiveness, or insights.” Greenbaum (1991: 2) explains that these books may differ in the aspects of grammar they cover, in the way they present the rules, and in “the categorization and terminology they use”, but usually, there is a general agreement on the categorization and terminology used in most grammar books. English grammar in sense five means “an ideally complete description of the language”, as distinguished from a grammar of English as “an actual description” of the language. To make things easier to understand, Greenbaum makes an analogy with dictionaries. We expect an ideal dictionary to contain “all the words in use at anyone time” and perfect definitions for these words. However, such a dictionary does not exist, because actual dictionaries “do not contain the latest meanings” or “the absence of words or meanings does not prove their absence from the language”, and therefore, actual dictionaries can be regarded as “defective”. Similarly, “grammar books vary in their coverage, and we would similarly expect larger grammars to be more comprehensive than smaller ones, and some formulations of rules to be more accurate than others. And like dictionaries, no grammar book is complete. To sum it up, we cannot expect to find an ideal complete book that covers all the rules of the English language. The sixth sense emphasises the difference between “a description and what is

being described.” Considering this point, Greenbaum (1988) gives another definition to the word grammar which is “the properties and processes that underlie the use of the language-that underlie the ability of speakers to speak and understand the language” (p.23).

In a more restricted outlook, grammar is traditionally referred to as some idealised set of principles to master (Hinkel and Fotos 2002) or “a description of the rules that govern how a language’s sentences are formed” (Thornbury 1999: 1). Grammatical study is intended to provide “a relatively complete catalogue of the forms in a language and a description of the rules for combining forms” (Biber, Conrad and Reppen 1998: 55). Ur (1988) defines grammar roughly as “the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning” (p.4). Grammar studies partly what forms and what combinations of words are possible or not. Greenbaum (1991) uses the word ‘grammar’ to refer to “the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units” (p.1), Thornbury (1999) provides that “the study of grammar consists, in part, of looking at the way...forms are arranged and patterned” (p.1). On the whole, grammatical study seeks to understand language structures. Harmer (2001: 12) includes in this understanding morphology- the structure of words or “the ways in which words can change their forms”, and syntax –how words are combined into sentences. It includes also “other properties of words, such their grammatical classes (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives).” Rutherford (1987:189 cited in Keh 1991: 17) views grammar as “a part of a larger interrelated whole”. This whole includes “discourse (e.g., ordering of propositions between sentences), semantics (which includes collocations, lexical properties, and

cohesion), and “grammaticization”- the process of achieving linguistic expression through recourse to grammatical rules”.

As it can be noticed, grammar has different interpretations which vary, of course, according to the views of what language is. Nevertheless, what interests us is how teachers and students (i.e. the non-specialists) regard it. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 10) considers that “probably the most common association that language teachers and their students make with the word ‘grammar’ is the word ‘rule’”. The word ‘rule’ “will consist of a general statement, covering the majority of cases, followed by a number of cases, or ‘exceptions’, where the generalization does not apply” (Tarone and Yule 1989: 14). According to Larsen-Freeman (ibid.: 10), rules “offer materials developers ‘right-sized’ chunks of language to present, they confer authority upon teachers, and they provide a modicum of security for language learners.” However, these rules “are not always very precise, nor systematic” (Abderrahim 1996: 41). This represents the main problem of pedagogical rules. They are arbitrary, and thus, have no fixed principles; they change as the language changes, and therefore actual usage changes constantly (Odlin 1994). This constitutes a major obstacle in language learning, because there are no fixed rules to what is good or bad.

With regard to the previous definitions, Thornbury (1999: 13) suggests that grammar is “a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey” and that it “adds meanings that are not easily inferable from the immediate context”. This definition is probably the most representative description of what grammar is.

### **2.1.2.Operational and Analytical Grammar**

Further distinctions concerning what grammar is include the distinction between *operational grammar* and *analytic grammar* (Greenbaum 1991). *Operational grammar* means the rules we use whenever we speak or write (i.e. putting words in the right position), and whenever we interpret the speech of others. For example, “Susan likes Tom” is different from “Tom likes Susan”. Therefore, operational grammar does not equate with the ability “to say what the rules are” (Greenbaum *ibid.*: 1). On the other hand, *analytic grammar* means to study grammar to be able to analyse the language in question. It “makes explicit the knowledge of the rules with which you operate when you use the language” (Greenbaum *ibid.*: 1).

### **2.1.3.Formal and Functional Grammar**

Grammar is also defined in terms of *formal* and *functional*. According to Lock (1996: 1), *formal* grammar is “a set of rules which specify all the possible grammatical structures of the language.” The concern here is with “the forms of grammatical structures and their relationship to one another, rather than with their meanings or their uses in different contexts” (*ibid.*: 1). *Functional* grammar, on the other hand, “considers language primarily as a system of communication and analyzes grammar to discover how it is organized to allow speakers and writers to make and exchange meanings.” It focuses on “the appropriateness of a form for a particular communicative purpose in a particular context.” Such an approach is concerned with “the functions of structures and their constituents and with their meanings in context” (Lock *ibid.*: 1).

However, for practical considerations, we are going to refer to grammar as a collection of rules that allow the language user to form accurate and meaningful sentences.

#### **2.1.4. Pedagogic Grammar and Linguistic Grammar**

An important issue for the language teacher is “the value and function of language rules that are formally taught” (Seliger 1979: 360). Here, we are talking about pedagogical rules as distinguished from linguistic rules. Tomlin (1994: 143) states that “traditionally, pedagogical grammars are defined in taxonomic opposition to linguistic grammars. Linguistic grammars are descriptions of language forms, and in some cases functions, cast in coherent, constrained, and self-contained metalanguage”. Harmer (2001: 15) considers that linguistic rules “may attempt to describe everything there is”, whereas pedagogic grammars are “designed specifically to be of help to teachers and students of the language who need, as far as possible, clear and easily-digestible summaries of what is and what is not correct”.

Linguistic grammar is meant to give a complete description of the language and it is used for reference purposes (Seliger 1979, Willis 1996). It “is on the whole inaccessible (i.e. not understandable or particularly interesting) to the average language teaching professional” (Morrissey 1983: 196). According to Greenbaum (1988: 24-25), linguistic rules are characterised by criteria such as simplicity and economy, they are dependent on the linguists’ theoretical beliefs, and are inherently descriptive. Linguistic rules sometimes do not “coincide with the ways in which people store language information in the brain or with the processes that they use in producing and understanding utterances” (Greenbaum 1988: *ibid.*).

Pedagogic grammar is “a special type of people grammar, namely one adapted to the needs of a particular group of people (learners)” (Morrissey 1983: 196). It is intended for teaching purposes (Odlin 1994, Willis 1996), and tries to provide the learners “the knowledge that native speakers unconsciously have in their mind” (Seliger 1979: 360). Pedagogical rules are broad formulations characterised by simplicity and generality, and sometimes carrying exceptions (Westney 1994, Willis 1996). They are prescriptive by nature, because their aim is “to tell students what to say or write” (Greenbaum 1988: 34). Pedagogical rules are facilitators for language learning, for manipulating that language effectively, i.e., nearly how language is really used, and for helping the learner to avoid “inefficient testing of false hypotheses” (Seliger 1979: 360). Pedagogical rules “are mostly not in dispute, such as the general rules for subject-verb concord or for cases of pronouns” (Greenbaum 1988: 34). They are formulated to be comprehensive for the learners and to give them “the means and confidence to generate language with a reasonable chance of success” (Thornbury 1999: 12). However, pedagogical grammar may often be unsatisfactory because of “the difficulty (which is considerable) of integrating linguistic considerations with all the psychological and social factors that must be taken into account in approaching a given group of learners” (Morrissey 1983: *ibid.*).

Although pedagogical rules and linguistic rules are seemingly different, they are both “conscious verbalizations of some abstract linguistic rule” (Seliger 1979: 365). However, as Seliger explains, even if linguistic rules were closer than the pedagogical rules to represent the actual knowledge we have in our minds, no teacher would venture to use them because of their complexity. Linguistic rules are rarely consulted for decision-making about what to teach. What is actually taught is based on the teachers’



“own conscious verbalizations of the language concept they wish to teach” (Seliger, *ibid.*: 365). These verbalisations are based on the teachers’ intuition, their knowledge from grammar books, their knowledge of what they have been previously taught, and their knowledge about their students.

### **2.1.5.Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammar**

In the previous section, we provided that linguistic grammar is exclusively descriptive while pedagogic grammar is inherently prescriptive. Huddleston (1988: 18) differentiates between them in terms of goals. Linguistic grammar aims “to present the grammar that underlies actual usage”, whereas pedagogic grammar “tells us how we ought to speak and write.”

Descriptive rules are “generalizations based on observations of the data”, and are “accurate or inaccurate, depending on whether they accurately reflect the data” (Greenbaum 1988: 26). They describe how people use their language based on evidence from the knowledge English speakers have about their language as well as from samples of their actual use of the language (Greenbaum 1991). They “provide a much more detailed look at languages than most prescriptive grammars do”, i.e., “information about the wide range of structures in a language” (Odlin 1994: 3-4).

Prescriptive rules specify which usage to adopt or avoid based on evaluations of what is correct or incorrect, for instance “avoid splitting an infinitive”, “do not begin a sentence with *and*” or “it is wrong to say *between you and I*” (Greenbaum 1988, 1991). They are observed especially in formal writing, and “may range from fairly accepted ones like ‘you must use –s on third person singular present tense verbs’ to ones like ‘you must not end a sentence with a preposition’ ” (Tarone and Yule 1989: 15). They “usually

cover selected features of syntax and morphology and perhaps also of vocabulary” (Greenbaum 1988: 25-26). They do not provide only “rules for disputed usages in Standard English” but also include “all grammar instruction that stipulates what language should be used, what avoided, and what preferred” (Greenbaum *ibid.*: 30).

## **2.2. Teaching/Learning Grammar**

Grammar represents the central component of the language system; without knowing how the grammar of the TL works, it is not possible to use that language. Grammar also represents the first principle around which most language teaching methods/approaches are developed.

### **2.2.1. The Necessity of Grammar in Language Teaching/Learning**

Grammar is a necessary component of language learning/teaching. According to Greenbaum (1991: 7), this necessity is justified by several reasons. Grammatical knowledge is necessary for recognition of grammatical structures which is often essential for punctuation, and is helpful in the interpretation of literary and non-literary texts, since the interpretation of a passage sometimes depends crucially on grammatical analysis. A study of the grammatical resources of English is useful in composition, particularly in helping the writer to evaluate the choices available to him when he comes to revise an earlier written draft.

Greenbaum (1991) notes that studying grammar is rather based on a practical consideration. He explains that learning how to use a dictionary (for the pronunciation of words, for example) is less difficult for students than to refer to a grammar book. The ability to use a grammar book requires a certain amount of grammatical knowledge, which is provided by instruction; this instruction includes learning different word

categories and acquaintance with grammar rules. However, Keh (1991) points out that “rules-based grammar handbooks and reference books specially designed to help student writers have been criticized because the rules in the texts are clear only if known” (p.17). Accordingly, if the students do not understand the rules, they may not be able to use them “to gain the grammatical accuracy required of final-product papers” (Keh, *ibid.*: 17)

Other reasons will be given about the necessity of grammar in relation to teaching/learning of the writing skill, but before reaching this point, it is necessary to examine the place of grammar in the different approaches/methods in language teaching/learning.

### **2.2.2. Grammar in the Approaches/Methods in Language Teaching**

The change in the teaching methods is justified by the changes in learners’ needs, and concerns about how best to help the students learn the TL. These concerns can be regarded as the major drive for the need and inclination towards other ways of teaching as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 1) write:

Changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners needs, such as a move toward oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the goal of language study; they have also reflected changes in theories of the nature of language and of language learning.

This section will deal with a brief overview of the most common approaches/methods to language teaching. We will devote space for the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-lingual Approach, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Learning; The Natural Approach and the Direct Method will be briefly mentioned.

### **2.2.2.1. The Grammar-Translation Method**

Commonly known as “the traditional approach” to teaching grammar, the Grammar-Translation Method became the common way of teaching foreign languages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 2-3). Grammar was the basis of instruction, i.e., “courses followed a grammar syllabus” (Thornbury 1999: 21). The curriculum was organised solely around the study of grammar points. It followed this procedure:

- a grammar point was selected from a list of grammar points and presented,
- the rule of its use was explained and illustrated by model sentences,
- students had to memorize the grammar rule(s),
- the rules were, then, worked out through written exercises presented in the form of isolated sentences.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), and Thornbury (1999), the method was characterized by a thorough study of grammatical rules, and practice in the translation of sentences and texts. It followed a deductive model, i.e., an explicit statement of grammar rules. Accuracy was the most important aspect in language learning; it was strongly emphasised and considered a prerequisite to succeed in examinations. Unfortunately, the sentences used as a basis for practice did not take into consideration the way language was used in real communication. The Grammar-Translation Method was principally criticised for making learning “a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose” (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 4).

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a change began to be felt in language teaching, reflected in an increase in the need for oral proficiency. Consequently,

speaking was favoured on the other skills and on grammar. This change was called the “Reform Movement”, which emphasised the importance of spoken language over written language, and an inductive approach to teaching grammar (Richards and Rodgers *ibid*: 7).

#### **2.2.2.2.The Direct Method**

The Direct Method appeared towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and called into question the practices of the Grammar-Translation Method and its heavy emphasis on written language (Thornbury 1999). Speaking was primary to writing, and explicit grammar teaching was discarded. Students learnt grammar unconsciously, i.e., “the same way as children pick up the grammar of their mother tongue, simply by being immersed in language” (Thornbury *ibid*: 21). In other words, writing and grammar had no real place in language learning.

#### **2.2.2.3.The Audio-lingual Approach**

The theory of the Audio-lingual Approach was based on the behaviourist psychology, that language was learnt through habit formation (Thornbury 1999). It focused primarily on the sentence-level (drills), and did not take into consideration how language functions at the text-level. This mere repetition of drills prevented students from making mistakes that are part of language learning. As a result, the drills prevented students from testing their ability to use the language by themselves (Harmer 2001). In the Audio-lingual Approach, the language spoken form takes precedence over the written form, and grammar teaching followed an inductive model, i.e., “the rules of grammar should be taught only after the students have practiced the grammar points in context” (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 51). Thornbury (1999) agrees with this claim and

adds that Audio-lingualism “was even more strict in its rejection of grammar teaching” (p.21). Nevertheless, Harmer (ibid.: 80) explains that in the Audio-lingual Approach, “the language is decontextualised and carries little communicative function”, because the main purpose was to eliminate mistakes and ensure correctness. The approach denied also the belief that “making (and learning) from errors is a key part of the process of acquisition”. In sum, “Audio-lingual methodology seems to banish all forms of language processing that help students sort out new language information in their own minds” (Harmer 2001: ibid.).

#### **2.2.2.4. The Natural Approach**

Based on the acquisition/learning theory of Krashen, the Natural Approach is built on the principle that learners acquire the grammar of the TL in the same way they acquire the grammar of their mother tongue (Thornbury 1999). The Natural Approach rejects grammar instruction which it considers irrelevant, and regards explicit grammar teaching ineffective because “there is a natural order of acquisition of grammatical items, irrespective of the order in which they are taught” (Thornbury, ibid.: 19). Richards and Rodgers (1986) explain that the Natural Approach emphasizes “direct and spontaneous use” of the language by the learners and prefers an inductive approach to get the rules of the TL. Therefore, the focus is moved from grammar rules to communication.

### 2.2.2.5. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) appeared in the 1970s, and derives its theory from developments in Sociolinguistics. It believes that “communicative competence consists of more than simply the knowledge of the rules of grammar” (Thornbury 1999: 22). According to Thornbury, many researchers argued that “grammatical knowledge (linguistic competence) is merely one component of what they call **communicative competence**. Communicative competence involves knowing how to use the grammar and vocabulary of the language to achieve communicative goals, and how to do this in a socially appropriate way” (Thornbury *ibid*: 18-19).

CLT has two different versions. In the first version, the “shallow-end approach”, the language is learnt in order to be used. Grammar instruction was not rejected in this version because “explicit attention to grammar rules was not incompatible with communicative practice” (Thorbury, *ibid.*: 22). Grammar teaching was organised along “functional labels” to become compatible with communicative practices. In the second version, the “deep-end approach” and the more radical, the language is used in order to be learnt. This version “rejected both grammar-based syllabuses and grammar instruction.” Proponents of CLT argue that when students are engaged in activities that involve them in realistic and authentic communication, they will acquire the grammar of the TL unconsciously.

Nunan (1988) explains that since the beginning of the 1970s, language teaching practices began to incorporate more and more principles of CLT. Such a shift in syllabus design emerged under the question of “what does the learner want/need to do with the target language” instead of “what are the linguistic elements which the learner needs to master” (Nunan, *ibid.* : 11). Henceforth, syllabus content was specified in terms of “the

grammatical elements which the learners were expected to master”, and in terms of “the functional skills they would need to master in order to communicate successfully” (Nunan, *ibid.*). Harmer (2001: 84-85) summarises the principles of CLT in the following points:

-Language functions are more important and significant than a focus on grammar and vocabulary.

-It principally seeks “to train students to use these language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes.”

-It offers the learners a lot exposure to the TL and enough opportunities to use it, which are crucial for students’ language development.

-It stresses life-like communication.

-Accuracy is not a priority; communication is more important than grammar. Communication (spoken or written) is focused on content rather than on form.

-It encourages students to use a variety of language structures, and the teacher neither intervenes nor predetermines the language forms students will use.

So, in CLT, communication of meaning is the most important aspect in the tasks, fluency is more important than accuracy, and grammar is acquired unconsciously through communication rather than through explicit teaching of the rules.

#### **2.2.2.6.Task-Based Learning**

Task-Based Learning (TBL) emerged from the Bangalore Project of N. S. Prabhu, an advocate of the second version of CLT (the ‘deep-end approach’). In this project, Prabhu “attempted to replicate natural acquisition processes by having students work through a syllabus of **tasks** for which no formal grammar instruction was



supposedly needed nor provided” (Thorbury 1999: 22). It is composed of three basic stages: the Pre-task, the Task cycle, and the Language focus. According to Harmer (2001), TBL is characterised by the roles students fulfil which are more important than the teacher roles in the tasks.

During the language focus phase, the students observe and deal with “specific features of any listening or reading text which they have looked at for the task or the text and/or the teacher may conduct some form of practice of specific language features which the task has provoked...the emphasis on language study will decrease in proportion to the amount of time spent on the tasks themselves” (Harmer, *ibid*: 87). However, TBL was criticised mainly for two things. First, there are not enough arguments for using a syllabus composed only of tasks. Seedhouse (1999: 156 cited in Harmer 2001: 86) argues that “it would be ‘unsound’ to make tasks the basis for an entire pedagogical methodology”. Second, grading tasks in a syllabus is problematic (Harmer 2001: 88). Despite this criticism, TBL “has more recently relaxed its approach to grammar, largely through recognition of the value of a **focus on form**” (Thornbury 1999: 22).

From a general perspective, the shift in language teaching from “audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods” to the teaching of ‘real-language’ embodied in communicative language teaching represents an orientation towards “global and integrative tasks” (Sysoyev 1999). This orientation led to a gradual disinterest in discrete structures. Isolated grammar instruction was gradually abandoned and was absorbed by the different tasks students had to carry out. According to this view, grammar instruction is to be provided only when it is necessary. We can summarise the degree of emphasis on teaching grammar in the approaches/methods discussed so far as follows:

<b>Approach/Method</b>	<b>Deductive model (explicit teaching)</b>	<b>Inductive model (implicit teaching)</b>	<b>Zero grammar (no teaching)</b>
<b>The Grammar-Translation Method</b>	✓ (heavy emphasis)		
<b>The Direct Method</b>		✓	
<b>The Audio-lingual Approach</b>		✓	
<b>The Natural Approach</b>			✓
<b>CLT (shallow-end)</b>		✓ (rather a functional grammar)	
<b>CLT (deep-end)</b>			✓
<b>Task-based Learning</b>	✓ (only if necessary)		✓

**Table 2.1.: Types of Grammar Teaching in Language Approaches/Methods**

According to this overview of approaches/methods, two issues emerge. The first one is related to the types of grammar teaching (deductive vs. inductive); the second one to language learning as opposed to language acquisition, in addition to concerns with meaning and context.

### **2.2.3. New Methods for Teaching Grammar**

In the last decades, grammar was criticised for several reasons as it was explained earlier. Yet, grammar still has an important value in language teaching, and language teachers continue to believe in its potential benefits.

### **2.2.3.1. Attempts for Changing Grammar Teaching Methods**

The methods used to teach grammar have been criticised because of the procedures they used. Several researchers like Celce-Murcia 1991b, Ellis 1993, Odlin 1994, and Bygate, Tonkyn, and Williams 1994 (cited in Lock 1996: 265) contributed to “a noticeable revival of interest in grammar teaching”. As a result, grammar teaching has received more and more support from researchers and has come back into favour due to the discarding of some practices (Lock *ibid.*: 265). In order to keep an important place in language teaching, grammar instruction “needs to be informed by descriptions of grammar which accurately reflect authentic language and show how grammar is a resource for making and exchanging meanings in context” (Lock *ibid.*: 276). He also recommends to *bound grammar teaching to the other skills* like writing. In other words, “grammar should be seen as facilitating communication in all modes, not as an isolated area of study exemplified by ‘the grammar lesson’” (*ibid.*: 277). Neman (1995) suggests also that the teachers should explain to the learners how grammar allows the language user to express his ideas and to link them together in diverse ways. For example, the teachers can explain that “the first and second major classes of words (nouns, verbs) express the ideas; the third and fourth major classes (adjectives and adverbs) describe these ideas; and the fifth class (various conjunctions, including prepositions) joins everything together” (Neman *ibid.*: 249).

According to Thornbury (1999: 23), grammar teaching was gradually abandoned because of “a tendency to equate grammar with accuracy”, a view that came from CLT. Moreover, “CLT has tended to place more weight on being intelligible than on being correct” (*ibid.*: 23). For Thornbury, the revival of grammar was due to the influence of

two theoretical concepts: focus on form and consciousness-raising. Concerning rules, Larsen-Freeman (2000: 10) explains that

Contrary to the impression they give, rules are not always arbitrary. There are reasons for the generalizations they capture. And if our students understand the reasons, they will understand a great number of syntactic phenomena beyond the instances which the rule attempts to account for.

On the other hand, Close (1981: 18) insists that rules should not be “learnt in the abstract but that the learner should acquire the habit of applying them automatically in real acts of communication”. This applies to writing, for example, and can be considered one kind of consciousness-raising activity. In addition, Doff (1988: 41) provides two key-elements related particularly to rule explanation:

-“Well-chosen examples are the clearest way to show how a structure is used....Only knowing rules will not help students to use language.

-Explanations should always be as clear and simple as possible.”

Moreover, Doff points out that “rules and explanations can be useful by providing a kind of ‘shortcut’ for the student, but they should be seen as an *aid* in learning, as something ‘extra’” (ibid.:41), and that giving explanations should always be in the students’ own language, i.e. using simple terms and simple language, to maximise their understanding.

Recently, new methods for teaching grammar have been adopted. These methods have been either derived from previous methods or represent an ameliorated version. This is the case of the PPP (**P**resentation, **P**ractice, **P**roduction) model which represented the most common way of teaching grammar. Harmer (2001) characterises the PPP model as a variation of Audio-lingualism. In the presentation phase, “the teacher introduces a situation which contextualises the language to be taught” (p.80); in the

practice phase, the students use “accurate reproduction techniques such as choral repetition..., individual repetition...and cue-response drills” (ibid.). In the production phase, “the students, using the new language, make sentences of their own” (p.80). According to Carter, Hughes, and McCarthy (2000), most traditional grammar books follow a “presentation-practice-production approach”. The PPP model was criticized for being teacher-centered, and assuming that “students learn ‘in straight lines’-...starting from no knowledge, through highly restricted sentence-based utterances and so on to immediate production” (Harmer ibid.: 82), and was “inadequate because it reflected neither the nature of language nor the nature of learning” (Lewis 1993 cited in Harmer 2001: 82). However, alternatives or variations to the PPP model were developed. Harmer (2001) suggests four models: the ‘Deep-end Strategy’, the ARC model, the OHE/III model, and the ESA model.

### **2.2.3.2.The ‘Deep-end Strategy’**

Keith Johnson (1982 cited in Harmer 2001) proposed this variation of the PPP model. Though it is not as recent as the three other models, it is quite different from the original model; it is characterised by the flexibility and ease it offers to the teachers. It consists in starting by the production phase instead of the presentation phase, and therefore, the learners are directly thrown into immediate production. This procedure enables the teacher to “see if and where students are having problems during this production phase and return to either presentation or practice as and when necessary after the production phase is over” (Harmer ibid: 82-83). Some years later, Donn Byrne (1986 cited in Harmer 2001) adhered to the model and improved it by “joining the three phases in a circle”.

### **2.2.3.3. The Authentic Restricted Clarification Model**

The **ARC** Model stands for “**A**uthentic use, **R**estricted use, and **C**larification and focus.” Proposed by Jim Scrivener (1994 cited in Harmer 2001), it is based on the principle that “most language in the classroom can be described as either A, R, or C”. For instance, “a communicative activity will demonstrate ‘authentic’ use, whereas a drill, ... elicited dialogue or guided writing, for example, will provoke restricted use of language by students. Finally Clarification language is that which the teacher and students use to explain grammar, give examples, analyze errors, elicit or repeat things” (Harmer *ibid*: 83). What is interesting in this model is that it is flexible enough to allow several variations. For instance, a typical PPP lesson can become CRA, whereas a task-based lesson can be described as CACACR (Harmer, *ibid.*). Here, the teacher is offered many possibilities to adjust his grammar lesson according to what s/he wants his students to achieve.

### **2.2.3.4. The Observe Hypothesise Experiment Model**

The **OHE** Model (**O**bserve, **H**ypothesise, **E**xperiment) was developed by Michael Lewis (1993 cited in Harmer 2001: 83). In this model, the teacher makes learners examine (**O**bserve) the language through reading or listening. This observation will make the learners think (**H**ypothesise) about how the language works. Shortly afterwards, the learners test (**E**xperiment) their hypothesis, i.e. produce language based on this hypothesis.

### **2.2.3.5. The Engage Study Activate Model**

The **ESA Model** proposed by Harmer (1998 cited in Harmer 2001: 84) refers to **Engage, Study, Activate**. *Engage* means involving students ‘emotionally’ for effective learning. *Study* “describes any teaching and learning element where the focus is on how something is constructed” like for instance relative clauses (Harmer 2001: 84). *Activate* stands for “any stage at which students are encouraged to use all and/or any of the language they know” (ibid.). Like the ARC Model, it is flexible enough to allow other variations, like EAS, which is “a more task-based or deep-and approach”.

### **2.2.4. Aspects Influencing Grammar Teaching/Learning**

Many aspects influence grammar, and contribute significantly in determining the role it has in language teaching/learning. These are mainly language acquisition, rule presentation/explanation, pragmatics and discourse.

#### **2.2.4.1. Language Acquisition**

The issue of language acquisition is one of the strongest arguments against grammar teaching. This issue emerged from Krashen’s distinction between language learning, which is the outcome of “formal instruction, typically in grammar, and is of limited use for real communication”, and language acquisition which “is a natural process... by which the first language is picked up, and by which other languages are picked up solely through contact with speakers of those languages” (Harmer 2001: 71). Acquisition “occurs ...when the learner is exposed to the right input in a stress-free environment so that innate learning capacities are triggered. Success in using the TL language is due to acquisition, not learning...learnt knowledge can never become acquired knowledge” (Thornbury 1999: 19). Studying grammar has no significant

impact on communication, because the language the students learn “is not available for spontaneous use” but serves only “to monitor” communication. However, attempts to control what we say results in artificial language (Harmer 2001, *ibid.*).

The issue of language acquisition led to a de-emphasis of grammar teaching because instruction does not lead to the acquisition of grammar rules and results only in confusing the learners. Odlin (1994: 18) argues that it is crucial for the teacher to take into account the “readiness” of students to learn certain grammatical structures before introducing any grammar point. Nunan (1994: 255) explains that

subsequent research has provided substantial evidence that certain grammatical items appear in a predetermined sequence, and that this sequence does not appear to be alterable by instruction.

He illustrates his view by the case of negation. He considers that “all learners, regardless of whether they are learning English in a second or foreign language context, and regardless of whether or not they are receiving instruction, appear to progress through four stages on the acquisition of negation” (Nunan *ibid.*: 255) as the table below shows:

	Structure	Example
Stage 1	no + verb	“No work”, “No understand”.
Stage 2	don’t + verb	“I don’t like”, “He don’t can swim”.
Stage 3	aux + neg	“She can’t go”, “He don’t stay”.
Stage 4	analysed don’t	“He didn’t stay”.

**Table 2.2.: The Stages of the Acquisition of Negation**

Nunan adds that it is ineffective to teach students grammatical points that are “developmentally beyond their current stage of development”. Pienemann (1985 cited in Nunan 1994: 257) corroborates this view arguing that “instruction can only promote



language acquisition if the interlanguage is close to the point when the structure to be taught is acquired in the natural setting (so that sufficient processing prerequisites are developed)". Teaching grammar appears then to be significantly influenced by language acquisition. Taking into account the sequence in which grammatical items are acquired is an aspect teachers are required to consider salient in grammar instruction. In addition to that, Harmer (2001) affirms that grammar teaching was heavily attacked for the use of drills and controlled practice (considered to be "traditional forms of language teaching"). Many studies have shown that the use of drills and controlled practice do not lead to the acquisition of grammatical items, or at least, "it is impossible to show a direct connection between drilling of any particular grammatical item, for example, and the acquisition of that item" (Harmer, *ibid.*: 71).

#### **2.2.4.2.Rule Presentation/Explanation**

In the presentation phase of the grammatical rules, the teacher has several options: he can present the rule inductively or deductively, and can also make it explicit or not (Larsen-Freeman 1991: 286). During the 1960s, many studies and research were centred on the issue of how to present grammar rules to learners. The results concluded that a deductive approach to grammar (i.e. explicit teaching) has no extra merits than the other approaches (Crookes and Chaudron 1991: 49). According to this affirmation, more and more CLT methods stressed that a deductive approach is not necessary to rule presentation, and rather showed an inclination towards an inductive model. A further aspect related to grammar teaching/learning is that, when students are exposed to a grammatical form for the first time, they nevertheless need explanations. Close (1981: 17) argues that, because of their abstract nature, these explanations "must be accurate,

strictly in accordance with genuine acceptable usage, and as clear as possible.” Crookes and Chaudron (1991) stress that the teacher has to take into consideration several factors. These include the necessity for explicit description, whether a rule is isolated or not, deductive or inductive presentation, the person who provides the explanation, whether the language is abstract or not, and whether the explanation is provided orally or written. They also emphasise that “teachers should pay attention to the clarity and sufficiency of their explanations, especially to the extent of student comprehension ...[they] should never assume that their explanations are understood or “learned”. Students need to be given the opportunity to demonstrate comprehension, and preferably not merely by solicitation of a “yes” or a nod” (Crookes and Chaudron, *ibid.*: 50). This demonstration can be manifested through activities, tests, or tasks. Nevertheless, Willis (1996: 6) draws attention to the fact that “explanation of rules only helps if the learner has sufficient experience of the TL to make sense of it, in which case there may be no need for the explanation at all.”

#### **2.2.4.3. Pragmatics and Discourse**

Contrary to what is commonly thought, grammar represents more than combining words in the right order. Grammatical knowledge extends to the knowledge of selecting the right form for the right context to express a particular meaning. In other words, grammar is form, meaning and context; context is identified with pragmatics. According to Larsen-Freeman (1991), pragmatics is linked to the ability “to select the right structure or form of a structure for a particular context”. She writes:

working on pragmatics will also involve the type of learning known as multiple discrimination; i.e., students will have to select, from among the repertoire of exponents that they control, the one which best suits the pragmatic conditions of a given context (p.288-289) .

Larsen-Freeman asserts that it would be very productive and profitable for the students to work within the pragmatic dimension, where “the changes in the social variables affect the choice of form they make.” Practice “will provide students with an opportunity to choose from two or more forms the one most suitable for the context. Students would receive feedback on the appropriateness of their choice” (ibid: 289). Keh (1991) shares this belief, and insists on making students work with grammar beyond the sentence level. She explains that the “grammatical decisions student analysts make may depend on consideration of more than two sentences. They may have to consider a paragraph or the entire essay to make their decision concerning word choice, phrases, tense, and structure” (ibid.: 17). In other words, grammar does not only operate at the sentence level but also at the discourse-level where the decisions and the choices the writer makes are more significant.

## **2.3. Grammar and the Language Learner**

### **2.3.1. Grammar Difficulties**

The doubts about the utility and efficiency of grammar in language teaching/learning were mainly due to the identification of grammar with rules (pedagogical rules), a misconception about what really grammar is and what rules are, and this view prevailed for a long time. According to Odlin (1994: 16), the use of pedagogical rules presents three major problems: establishing the nature and the extent of the regularity or generalisation, finding an appropriate formulation for the

generalisation, and finding a safe generalisation. Larsen-Freeman (2000) regards these rules as static. She explains that “they don’t allow for change, yet language is changing all the time, the generalizations that rules capture are rarely broad enough. There are always exceptions” (p.10). On the other hand, grammar “is exquisitely flexible, allowing for the expression of new meanings” (ibid.: 10). Larsen-Freeman (ibid: 10) gives the following example “*I am loving every minute of my class*”. The rule in English says that “the –ing of the progressive aspect cannot be attached to a stative verb such as *love*.” However, native speakers would agree on that, arguing that it has “the special effect of intensifying the emotion expressed by the verb.” It is “conversationally acceptable and meaningful in English.” Accordingly, Lock (1996: 3) views grammar from a functional perspective. He considers that

to be of real use to language learners and teachers...a description of the grammar of a language needs to do more than simply lay out the forms and structures of the language. It needs to show what they are for and how they are used.

Regarding grammar as being “a prescriptive enterprise” represents another difficulty. According to Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998), it is a common belief to view grammar as a matter of listing and specifying the grammatical rules required for ‘correct’ speech. They explain that “rules such as ‘don’t end a sentence with a preposition’ and ‘be consistent in the use of tense throughout a sentence’ are prescriptive rules that many students associate with English grammar” (p.55). In addition, many teachers and students often oppose descriptive grammar to prescriptive grammar. This opposition is not appropriate because, as it was explained previously, both are conscious verbalisations. For Larsen-Freeman (2000: 10), prescriptive grammars “prescribe how

people are supposed to speak or write according to the rules of grammar”, whereas descriptive grammars “describe how people actually do speak and write.”

Concerning terminology, most grammarians agree that it is one of the major difficulties teachers and students encounter in grammar instruction. The difficulty lies in the fact that “there is no standard terminology for grammar” (Greenbaum 1988: 42). Richards (1981: 398) suggests the example of tenses. In some grammar books, the term “tense” refers to all types of English tenses including aspect, like the progressive, while in others the term “tense” is often distinguished from “aspect”. For instance, the present simple is a tense, whereas the present continuous is an aspect of the present. The explanations they give often confuse both the students and the teachers. Berry (1998) explains that, since the rules written by applied linguists are principally intended for teachers and learners, the choice of what terms are to be used to formulate the rules can become problematic mainly because of the users’ repertoire. Berry recommends that “new terminology should be introduced sparingly and complex/opaque terms from scientific grammar should be avoided” (ibid.: 32).

Another problem with grammar rules pertains to their easiness or difficulty and the degree of explanation they necessitate. Harmer (2001: 15) gives the example of the rule of the use of –s third person singular. He explains that

one of the easiest rules to explain is the use of the s morpheme on the third person of the present simple... We always add it with the pronouns *he*, *she* and *it*. This is a straightforward rule, but it needs qualifying immediately. We can restate it by saying that we add s to all verbs for the third person singular of the present simple unless they are modal verbs (must, can, will, should, etc.), thus ruling out \*he musts. So a simple rule has become slightly less simple.

The apparent easiness or difficulty of a rule is not a criterion that determines the degree of explanation it needs. This is often a difficult task for the teacher, especially for certain grammar points. Aitken (1995: 5) considers the case of tenses because many teachers find them difficult to teach. She considers that

some of the mistakes ... are undoubtedly caused by the teacher, sometimes by his failure to understand fully the nature of the tense he is teaching, where the pitfalls are, how it differs from the mother tongue, why an English speaker selects one tense rather than another, and how to choose examples and illustrations which help, rather than hinder, understanding.

She adds that a teacher has to understand “the ‘subconscious’ contexts of different verb tenses” in order to be able to understand them and to explain them to his students.

Close (1981: 19-21) gives two examples about the difficulties with rule presentation and explanation: the present continuous and the definite article. A simple rule for the use of the present continuous says that it is used “for an action performed at the time of speaking”. Close illustrates the rule as follows: “*Now we are going to the University*, if the statement were made while we were actually on our way there.” However, the previous rule does not apply for this example: “*John is already eighteen: he is going to the University now*, when that information was imparted at a moment when John was at home oversleeping after a late night.” Another problem with the present continuous is related to the unnatural examples some teachers give to their learners, such as “I’m opening my book, now I’m closing it, I’m switching on the light, I’m putting my pen on the desk” which he considers as unnatural illustrations of what is happening now; they are just brief and “could only be seen in a progressive state if performed very slowly”. Close proposes that, to explain the present progressive, “it would be more realistic to choose a verb referring to an activity having duration as in

*please be quiet for a minute or two, I'm writing an important letter*, or a verb referring to a series of momentary acts, as in *hurry up or we'll be shut in. The caretaker is locking all the door*" (ibid: 21).

For the definite article "the", Close gives the following rule: "the definite article is used to indicate a solitary example." However, this is also the rule for the indefinite article like in the following example: "*This is a table* when there is only one table to be seen." Another use of the definite article is "to indicate an object of which there are many examples present" as he proposes in the following example: "I see a street full of houses and myself wearily walking from one to another, looking for the one to which I have been invited, and wondering, *Which is the house?*" Close considers this example "a distinction between 'the Shakespeare we study' and 'the Shakespeare his mother knew'", and supposes how students are going to react if they come across it in a textbook. He affirms that the students will try to apply the rule of "the" to indicate "an object of which there are many examples present", but the problem is that Shakespeare is a person and not an object, and there is only one we all know unless there is another one existing somewhere. The students will be confused, and then, will become conscious about the limitations of the rule they have been given. For this example, other distinctions will intervene. Close (ibid.: 19) explains

the definite article in English helps...to isolate the identified object or objects from another or from others. In English, we do not feel the need for such a device with a proper noun: we feel that the name itself is enough to identify the object we have in mind. It is only when we begin to form more than one image of the object bearing that name, and wish to distinguish one of those images from another, that we use the article as a signal that we are making such a distinction.

Consequently, explaining such distinctions to the students may be difficult if they have not yet reached a certain degree in comprehending how English works, especially if they

still consider it as equivalent to their mother tongue, and if they learn such distinctions in the abstract without enough realistic examples. Tarone and Yule (1989: 16) argue that the problem in rule explanation is not that the teacher does not know the rule or does not illustrate how language works, but the difficulty arises “when the learner asks *why* a particular form is used.” The problem occurs when the rule presented is ‘too simplistic’ and does not account for the different contexts where a particular form is used. Therefore, if the learner meets a sentence such as “Eric said that Susan is ill”, but previously was taught the ‘tense harmony’ rule in reported speech, the learner will likely be confused as it is illustrated in the following example (from Tarone and Yule 1989: 15):

(0) Eric: ‘Susan is ill’

What did Eric say?

(0) Eric said that Susan was ill

Tarone and Yule (ibid.: 15) explain that such explanations present at least two ‘dangers’:  
-“language teachers do not always have an explanatory rule to offer. They may not have heard of a rule to explain a particular phenomenon, or they may not even be sure that an accurate description of a rule exists to cover a particular case;  
-if the rule is probabilistic, but is stated as categorical, then the teacher is providing the learner with a solid basis for future confusion, or even error.”

Over-simplification is another problem related to rule presentation/explanation. Close (1981) stresses that some rules are difficult to teach because of the ‘teachability’ aspect, as the case of tenses which use is sometimes difficult to explain to the students. Therefore, teachers resort to over-simplified rules that are “easily teachable but are only a part of the truth” (Close, ibid.: 18). Consequently, such rules are only ‘half-truth’ and



their validity does not last very long. Harmer (2001) agrees with this claim and gives the example of *some* and *any*. An over-simplified rule of ‘some’ and ‘any’ is that “*some* is used with affirmative sentences whilst *any* is used with question and negative sentences” (p.15). Close (ibid: 24) affirms that such rules are of limited help. They temporarily help the students and may have the following consequences:

-“Hours are wasted not only on lessons teaching half-truths as if they were the whole truth, but also on doing exercise which require the student to choose between two constructions, both of which can be perfectly acceptable, though one of the two is falsely supposed to be “wrong”.

-Over-simplified rules will often remain firmly imbedded in the learner’s mind,

-an inadequate basic rule will sooner or later have to be modified by a series of sub-rules and exceptions which may cause far more trouble in the end than a basic rule that is more accurate though less temptingly teachable.”

However, oversimplification must not be confused with accuracy (going straightforward to the use) and clarity (formulation in simple terms that can be understood, thus avoiding technical or scientific terminology), two important criteria according to Westney (1994: 76).

The problems in learning English grammar extend to other concerns. Larsen-Freeman (1991: 289) considers that, for example, “it is neither the form nor the meaning of the English tenses that presents the greatest long-term challenge to ESL/EFL students; rather it is when/why to use one tense and not the other. In other words, it is the pragmatic usage of the tenses that is the major obstacle to their mastery.” She suggests making students practise two tenses in a situation that contrasts them to draw their

attention to the difference in using them, like for example when to use the present perfect versus when to use the past tense.

Other problems pertain the difference between the TL and the native language. According to Allison (1983), this difference often results in contradictions in the explanations the teachers provide particularly in grammar. Sometimes, the teacher fails to present correctly grammatical forms/structures supplied with adequate examples and sufficient practice.

### **2.3.2.Learner Difficulties**

Native language (L1) interference represents the principal difficulty learners face in grammar learning. Aitken (1995: 9) argues that “some errors are caused by ‘mother tongue interference’; the native language behaves in ways which are not applicable to English, but the learner treats them as equivalents.” This often happens in areas such as grammar and writing. L1 interference is related to the rhetorical and grammatical differences between the L1 of the learners and the TL. Yorkey (1974 cited in Peck 1991: 367) gives the example of Arabic (without any distinction ). He writes

In Arabic, there is use of coordination, not subordination, in written paragraphs. A tightly organized English paragraph, with its topic sentence, controlling idea, and supporting ideas, is a manner of expression which is foreign to Arabic-speaking students, and one which they often interpret as “cold and calculating.

To overcome these difficulties, Yorkey suggests to make students practise subordinate clauses (particularly adverb clauses of time and place, result, concession, cause, purpose, and condition) through writing, and identifying the various constituents of the paragraph like the topic sentence and other components (Peck 1991: 368). Others like Yorkey worked on the grammatical problems Arabic-speaking learners face in English (here,

Arabic is referred to as a standard language). For example, Scott and Tucker (1974 cited in Peck 1991: 368) consider that the most problematic areas of grammar for Arabic-speaking students are verbs, prepositions, articles, and relative clauses.

Students' expectations represent another problem in grammar learning. Though they are not the most problematic aspect in learning, they may increase difficulties. According to Aitken (1995), learning an L2 is something very demanding from the learners, because they have to remember many things at the same time. Sometimes, students expect the TL to be similar to their mother tongue, but when they engage in the learning process, their expectations turn to be false. For example, Richards (1981: 401) explains that "contrary to what is often presented in popular grammar books, the progressive is not a tense (a grammatical form which depicts time) but an aspect (a grammatical form which depicts how an action unfolds)." Such distinctions then may not find their place in the classroom because of the complexity of explaining such grammatical systems to the students as it was mentioned earlier.

Avoidance is another problem. It is not a problem in itself but a result of difficulty. Berry (1998: 33) highlights that the difficulty of learning certain grammatical forms not only produces errors but also avoidance of certain of these forms in the structures learners produce. This avoidance, which may stem from learners' noticing of precedent errors, in turn, results in the use (and sometimes overuse) of simple structures.

Berry (ibid.: 33) summarises the major causes of difficulty in learning English grammar in the three following points:

**-Contrastive Factors:** Because most European languages are similar in construction to English, learners of these languages have no serious difficulties in learning English.

However, other languages, which have different constructions like Arabic, may provoke interference and false hypotheses.

**-Misconceptions:** They are erroneous beliefs about certain grammatical items like for instance *any/some*. Many advanced learners still believe that *any* is just an alternative of *some* in negative and interrogative sentences . Therefore, one of the important points to be taken into consideration by the teachers is the knowledge of their learners in grammar, i.e., what they have been taught previously.

**-Inherent Difficulties in English:** English has some characteristics that are unique to it. This fact may cause difficulties both for the teacher (if he/she is not a native speaker or a specialist) and the learners, as it is the case for the difference between *few* and *a few*, *little* and *a little*.

#### **2.4. Grammar and the Writing Skill**

It was explained in the previous sections that language acquisition and authentic language use have been the principal arguments that justified the ineffectiveness of grammar learning/teaching in general and in teaching writing in particular. In the view of relating grammar to writing, the issues of whether grammar is a prerequisite for good writing, whether a focus on grammar is irrelevant within the Process Approach, whether grammar instruction has a negative or a positive impact on students' writing, and the way to relate grammar instruction to the teaching of writing are central.

### **2.4.1. Grammar and Good Writing**

The question of whether grammar is a prerequisite for good writing has been subject to many debates. The answer to this question depends partly on the context in which writing occurs. In an academic context, writing implies the use of standard English and a high concern with accuracy, but from a general perspective, contrary to speaking, accuracy in writing is very important, and effective writing depends primarily on clarity and accuracy (Taylor 1981, Greenbaum 1988, Weigle 2002, Hyland 2003). The importance of grammar depends also on the distance or closeness between the writer and the reader as “a feeling of distance will make the use of well-formed sentences in writing a priority” (Harmer 2001: 248).

Another feature of writing is that it is more demanding from the learner than speaking “since written interaction lacks immediate feedback as a guide” (Olshtain 1991: 235). Olshtain adds that when a writer produces a text, it must adhere to Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle according to which “the writer is obligated (by mutual cooperation) to try to write a clear, relevant, truthful, informative, interesting, and memorable text. The reader, on the other hand, will interpret the text with due regard to the writer’s presumed intention if the necessary clues are available in the text” (Olshtain 1991, *ibid.*). Accordingly, “linguistic accuracy, clarity of presentation, organization of ideas are all crucial in the efficacy of the communicative act, since they supply the clues for interpretation” (Olshtain *ibid.*). Moreover, at an advanced level, the students are required to increase language quantity which is partly achieved through “more sentence structure to communicate more concepts” (Buckingham 1979: 247). For that reason, it is necessary to provide students with strategies that will help them vary their sentences and

to shape their ideas particularly by the exploitation of the creative potential of grammar.

Harmer (2001: 69) writes

The mind...contains 'blueprints for grammatical rules'... Once these rules have been activated, the potential for creativity follows... It is not enough just to teach students 'good' habits: they also need to be given input which will allow their 'processors' to work. They should also be given opportunities for creative language use both in language production and in the processing of written and spoken text.

#### **2.4.2. Grammar and the Process Approach**

For a long time, many process adherents believed that focus on grammar affected negatively students' writing, and was in contradiction with the Process Approach. This belief was due to several misconceptions. First, grammar was associated with rules and drills; grammatical rules were most of the time "half-truths" and provided no help for how to use structures meaningfully in context (Lock 1996, Larsen-Freeman 2000). Second, grammar was seen as 'a surface skill', "something ... that can be polished up once learners have managed to communicate their meanings" (Lock *ibid.*: 267). In addition, with its heavy emphasis on fluency, CLT contributed greatly to this belief (Harmer 2001). Another misconception viewed grammar as "a collection of meaningless forms"; and may have appeared because of the identification of grammar with "verb paradigms and rules about linguistic form" (Larsen-Freeman 2003). Larsen-Freeman (*ibid.*) explains that grammar is not 'unidimensional', but has rather three dimensions: morphosyntax (form), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (use). These dimensions are interdependent, and "a change in one results in change in another" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, it is possible to focus on one dimension at a time because "they each offer a unique perspective on grammar." Larsen-Freeman believes that equating "the teaching of grammar with the teaching of explicit linguistic rules ... is really irrelevant to what it

means to teach grammar” (1991: 280). Moreover, she argues that “communicative competence should be seen to subsume linguistic competence not to replace it” (1991, *ibid.*).

Even if actual teaching practices follow a process approach, a focus on grammar is not irrelevant within composition courses and does not negatively affect the content of writing (Fathman and Whalley 1990, Hyland 2003). Grammar is *one* of the important aspects of good writing, which is a combination of elements that include the writer himself, the product, and the writing situation. Nevertheless, teachers must be cautious about what aspect to consider important for a particular group of student writers, and how it is relevant to the type of writing they are required to write. Hyland (2003: 5-6) argues that

few L2 writing teachers now see writing *only* as surface forms. But it is equally unhelpful to see language as irrelevant to learning to write. Control over surface features is crucial, and students need an understanding of how words, sentences, and larger discourse structures can shape and express the meanings they want to convey. Most teachers, therefore include formal elements in their courses, but they also look beyond language structures to ensure that students don't just know how to write grammatically correct texts, but also how to apply this knowledge for particular purposes and contexts.

Another important point to be considered is that a minimum level of language competence (from the learners) is required before using a process approach (Zamel 1984: 198 cited in Raimes 1985: 250). She regards this as caution because the students may not cope with the requirements of a process-based writing. Moreover, focus on process is not sufficient to learn how to write and to cover all the demands of writing and must not be done at the expense of the product. Raimes (1985) considers that the students need more time and more opportunities to write, and need “more emphasis on

editing for linguistic form and style” (p.250). She suggests devoting enough time to the teaching of devices dealing with rhetorical and linguistic features because it is equally important “to present a product which does not suffer from illegible handwriting, heavy spelling errors, faulty punctuation, or inaccurate structure, any of which may render the message unintelligible” (Olshtain 1991: 235-236).

Solid arguments reject the idea that grammar affects negatively students’ writing. Many learners of English seek to develop their grammatical competence, i.e. to use the language accurately, and, according to Tarone and Yule (1989), language proficiency (aptitude) cannot be achieved without a certain level of grammatical competence. They claim that “there are no serious and solid grounds to object the role of grammatical competence in proficiency”, and that “it has never really been seriously suggested that any language learner can become proficient in a language without developing a certain level of grammatical competence” (ibid.: 17-18). In addition, Weigle (2002) points out that we simply need a minimum of grammatical knowledge to be able to write in English. Keh (1991: 18) confirms this claim and stresses that grammar has “an appropriate if not an essential place” in writing. This importance is related to the context where writing takes place, like writing examination essays which grades depend partly on students’ accuracy. Celce-Murcia (1988 cited in Keh 1991: 18) stresses that “accuracy of grammaticization (or lack of it) does in fact play a significant role in instructors’ overall impression and their subsequent grade assigned to a student’s paper.”

There is no doubt that grammar is not the most salient aspect in writing; yet, weaknesses in this aspect may affect students’ writing. Herrington (1981) explains that, in content courses (like in literature), the students’ writing will be generally evaluated for content only, and that “grammatical and structural excellence” will not be of much



concern for the teacher. However, she stresses that “failures of form” may lower the students’ grades, and cannot be ignored on pretext that students are writing for content. In other words, content matters only to the extent that formal expectations have been met.

Grammar as a whole has several advantages. It allows students to vary the ways for expressing their ideas, and this cannot be achieved without a direct grammatical instruction, particularly to non-native speakers of English who may not possess in their linguistic repertoire the possible combinations of the TL (Zamel 1980 cited in Pack and Henrichsen 1981: 468). Moreover, thinking that, “if students somehow learn to communicate, mastery of the forms will take care of itself” is a mistake and that “form does *not* take care of itself, at least not for so many learners and not in the most efficacious manner” (Eskey 1983: 319 quoted in Larsen-Freeman 1991: 279-280). Without sufficient attention being paid to grammatical accuracy, the learners develop fluency at the expense of accuracy (Higgs and Clifford 1982 cited in Tarone and Yule 1989, Richards 1984, Tarone and Yule 1989, and Willis 1996). This will provoke the production of ungrammatical forms which do not improve or change even with a long period of instruction, and which become fossilized because students are placed “in situations where the demands on their performance soon outpace their grammatical competence” (Richards 1984: 19). More importantly, grammar is necessary for writing because “communicative language use is only possible...by virtue of the grammatical system and its creative potential” (Littlewood 1985:40 quoted in Lock 1996: 266), and “a proper understanding of the concept of communicative competence would have revealed that it gives no endorsement for the neglect of grammar” (Widdowson 1990:40 quoted in Lock *ibid.*: 266). Nevertheless, Odlin (1994: 12) suggests that “students must

have more than just a superficial acquaintance with grammar.” They need to know and to see how grammar works in context, and how it helps to generate language and to make meaning.

### **2.4.3. The Impact of Grammar on Students’ Writing**

In recent years, it has been demonstrated that grammar instruction has many benefits. In addition to preventing the fossilization of the linguistic competence, it helps in noticing grammatical items which is a prerequisite for acquisition (Thornbury 1999). Grammar instruction implies also a focus on form, which is related to consciousness-raising which means “pointing out features of the grammatical system” (Thornbury 1999: 24). He gives two arguments. First, the learner’s role in the process of language acquisition is possibly less passive than Krashen suggested in its description of acquisition (an unconscious process), and that attention is one of the essential processes of language acquisition. Second, “[consciousness-raising] may not lead directly and instantly to the acquisition of the item in question. But it may nevertheless trigger a train of mental processes that in time will result in accurate and appropriate production” (ibid.). Grammar has an endless linguistic creativity due to its meaning-making potential, and fosters the capacity for communication. Instruction allows the students benefit from these advantages (Wilkins 1976, Thornbury 1999).

Grammar instruction influences students’ performance in helping them “learn more rapidly and... reach higher levels of ultimate achievement” (Ellis 1990: 171 quoted in Odlin 1994: 13). Moreover, even if students’ attention is directed towards communicative activities, it is necessary not to neglect accuracy because it “helps them to consolidate and improve their language” (Willis 1996: 8). Thornbury (1999) suggests

that students should learn what forms express their particular meanings, offering them a variety of choices. For Larsen-Freeman (2000), “grammar is much more than form. Forms have meanings and uses as well.... By changing the form, new meanings or new uses are created” (p.10). An additional particularity of grammar instruction is that it is one of the elements that allow students to develop their language ability which consists of two components: the first one is “language knowledge” which involves knowledge about “the vocabulary, grammar, sound system and spelling of the target language”, and the second one is “strategic competence” which consists in the ability “to draw on that knowledge effectively for communicative purposes under normal time constraints” (Bachman 1990 cited in Read 2000: 5). Broadly speaking, grammar instruction makes grammatical knowledge available when writing, enriches the choices available during the initial acts of writing as well as during rewriting, in addition, instruction (understanding of grammatical categories and acquaintance with basic grammatical terminology like subject, verb, noun, tense etc.) helps students identify problems/errors in their writing (Greenbaum 1988).

The question whether grammar instruction improves students’ writing has always been an important issue and several studies were carried out in this field like a study by McQuade (1980) which consisted in reviewing parts of speech and basic sentence structure in grammar courses for improving composition skills. The results were insignificant because the courses led only to a reduction in relatively simple errors (mainly capitalisation) and still by just a few of the students. Other studies on improving students’ writing through grammar courses concluded that grammar has a very little or no place at all in the teaching of writing. In addition, “while space is often provided for the writing of essays, little opportunity for student writing is available for the practice of

grammar” (Friedmann 1983: 397). When there are opportunities to include the teaching of grammar in a writing course, the procedure turns to be teacher-centred, and while in practice or testing, “the student is again prevented from writing too much.” Moreover, Friedmann explains that “one of the ironies of traditional exercises is that while paragraphs are frequently used in teaching organization and language, they are rarely utilized to teach grammar” (ibid., 398). Grammar as a method of teaching writing has no solid grounds from research in the field of composition; however, this may be due to the fact that grammar has been often *inappropriately* taught and that the lessons “have traditionally ended up with exercises in workbooks, which, by highlighting the feature being studied, rob the student of any practice in seeing that feature in more natural places” (Shaughnessy 1977: 155 cited in Rouse 1979: 3). Kolln (1981 cited in Weaver 1996) claims that the study of McQuade was ineffective because it was carried out in isolation from a writing course (i.e., out of the context of writing), and affirms that “teaching grammar in the context of writing might be much more effective than teaching grammar as a separate subject.” (ibid.: 142). According to this view, if grammar is to improve students’ writing, it must be first done in the context of writing, and second there must be a change in the method and the objectives of grammar teaching.

#### **2.4.4. Relating Grammar to the Teaching of Writing**

An important question is to which extent and when to focus on grammar in writing? According to Hyland (2003: 122), teachers can provide students with “the linguistic ... resources they need to express themselves at the point they need them: when they are beginning to draft.” In a process approach, grammatical concerns are postponed until editing in order to “allow learners to focus on formulating their ideas”

(Hyland 2003, *ibid.*); however, “it denies them systematic understanding of the ways language is patterned in particular domains” (*ibid.*), and does not predict areas of need. Accordingly, he suggests relating grammar to the kinds of texts learners are required to produce. He writes:

teachers should guard against the real danger that their language support will just present grammar as an end itself, rather than as a resource for making meanings. The grammar we teach and the ways that we teach it need to be clearly related to the kinds of writing students are expected to do in their target contexts. Language tasks should have the goal of contributing to the writer’s ultimate independent production of a well-written target genre and so should closely relate to that genre (*ibid.*).

Relating grammar Instruction to the teaching of writing is dependent on the way grammar is perceived by the teachers and the learners. To be of real help, grammar should meet to the following requirements:

-Balancing between language and content to help the students maximise language learning, especially in writing (Nott 1985). This practice, if undertaken with a certain methodology and not ‘every minute’, can benefit both the students and the teacher; it offers the chance to work both on content and form. For instance, the teacher can show the students how certain topics elicit specific structures.

-Taking into consideration certain instructional variables related to writing. According to Frodesen (1991: 265), grammar instruction is mainly influenced by register. For instance, a formal register requires a “greater need for focus on form. In most types of academic writing, conformity to Standard English conventions of grammar and mechanics is assumed”. It is also influenced by objectives of writing of a specific class in “the ways in which grammar will be integrated with writing.”

In addition to these requirements, Keh (1991: 18) explains that focus on grammar must be “context-bound”, i.e. “a context of coherent discourse where students analyze the phrases/structures in a text”. Moreover, an overall recommendation about grammar is that, whatever grammar is taught, it must not “present obstacles to the flow of ideas in composing” (Keh, *ibid.*).

**Conclusion:**

It is a difficult task to give an accurate definition of grammar because of the various ways in which it is perceived by learners and teachers, and the several aspects to be taken into consideration. The question of whether grammar improves or not students’ writing has always been a controversial issue due to several problems pertaining to grammar instruction mainly rule presentation (inductive/deductive), the relation of grammar with meaning and context, and its impact on language learning in general. Even if the teacher is provided with various teaching methods, s/he lacks sufficient guidance for how to teach a contextualised and meaningful grammar.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **INTEGRATIVE GRAMMAR IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING**

Introduction

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## CHAPTER THREE

# INTEGRATIVE GRAMMAR IN THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC WRITING

### **Introduction**

Successful writing is regarded as a multifaceted task which makes writing difficult for the learners, particularly in balancing between grammatical knowledge and using this knowledge to shape ideas.

Most of the criticism about grammar teaching stemmed from its association with the Structural Approach, which involved the successive teaching/learning of a series of isolated grammatical items and the presentation of rules and example sentences followed by intensive practice and repetition of the grammatical items. Attempts in using grammar as a method for improving students' writing skills were ineffective because grammar teaching was not related to writing instruction and did not take into account the context and the needs of the students.

Relating grammar instruction to the teaching of composition involves the definition of specific goals that may arise from everyday classroom observation or from specific problems in students' writing, and a clear definition of what is expected from them.



### 3.1. Definition of Integrative Grammar Teaching

The most problematic aspect in grammar teaching has always been the selection of an appropriate method mainly in terms of whether to follow an inductive or a deductive model, and what type of practice students need (Tarone and Yule 1989). This is mainly due to the existing approaches/methods that often confuse the teacher rather than help him (Richards and Rodgers 1986). Weaver (1996) explains that, sometimes, teaching grammar is carried with no conviction, or in some cases, teachers would be tempted to abandon grammar teaching at all. Yet, she claims that neither extreme is the best option, because the problem does not lie in grammar itself but in *the way it has been taught*. Moreover, several studies have been undertaken to prove that grammar instruction has *no effect* on improving students' writing, and contributes only in wasting the valuable time that can be invested in teaching writing (Greenbaum 1988). However, Greenbaum argues that there are good grounds which prove that the previous claims about the ineffectiveness of grammar instruction stem either from defective research or misinterpreted results.

As explained earlier, writing is a complex and difficult task for the learners because of the different elements they have to manage simultaneously, and for the teacher because, in teaching writing to non-native speakers, they sometimes face situations for which there are no prescribed solutions. On one hand, the teachers cannot ignore current practices in teaching writing; on the other hand, they cannot deny the students' needs and the requirements of the writing situation. Obviously, no clear answer is provided. Nevertheless, Celce-Murcia (1991a: 8-9) considers that the existing approaches "are not necessarily in conflict or totally incompatible since it is not impossible to conceive of an integrated approach which would include attention to rule

formation, affect, comprehension, and communication and which would view the learner as someone who thinks, feels, understands, and has something to say.”

At an advanced level, the types of texts students are required to write become more complex. Accordingly, students will be expected to increase the quantity of their language and to have the ability to express an idea in different ways (Schleppegrell 2003). Many teachers know from experience that, even if students succeed in learning the concepts of audience, purpose and process, they always have problems with grammar both at the sentence-level and the discourse-level (Frodesen 1991). Therefore, students should be provided with strategies and linguistic choices that would help them write different texts. Integrative teaching intervenes in this case; its basic aim is to make “a synergy” between grammar and writing, i.e., to balance between learning grammar and using grammatical knowledge in writing (Larsen-Freeman 1991: 280). This attempt will “help students edit errors in their writing, provide them with a variety of syntactic strategies for effective communication” and, “help them understand how grammar contributes to meaning” (Frodesen 1991: 266). Integrative grammar teaching is inherently selective, i.e., it deals with the grammatical aspects related to the kinds of texts students need to write (Hyland 2003). According to Schleppegrell (2003: 4), “language varies according to use, so looking at what is expected when students write different kinds of assignments can help us understand what kind of awareness of language would be beneficial to students’ academic language development.” The notion of integrative teaching means then identifying specific grammatical features related to a particular genre, and teaching students how to use these features in writing the specified genre.

This kind of teaching is partly influenced by the teacher's beliefs which often inspire them about how a language is learnt; most of the time, they are based on their experience as former learners and as teachers (Willis 1996). Another influencing assumption is that practice is more useful and concrete than theory. Friedmann (1983: 397) considers that "one learns to write by writing". In other words, in order to learn how to apply their grammatical knowledge in writing, students have to experience it through composition. In addition, developing writing skills does not mean only writing correct forms, but also creating meaning. In integrative grammar teaching, testing students means testing writing ability, testing grammatical knowledge, and the extent of students' progress in both. It will enable the teacher "to see both where students already have control of English grammar and where they still need work, and allows [them] to identify key areas for attention to language choices and grammar development" (Schleppegrell 2003: 24).

Relating grammar instruction to the teaching of writing offers many advantages on condition that students regard grammar as a resource to help them shape their ideas rather than an end in itself and will likely benefit from their grammatical knowledge (Krest 1988 cited in Keh 1991, Thornbury 1999, Hyland 2003, Schleppegrell 2003). English grammar is very resourceful and is largely a question of choice. It "contains numerous structural variants that are nearly equivalent in meaning" (Biber, Conrad and Reppen 1998: 76). One of the tasks of the teacher, then, is to explain to the learners that grammar gives them access to these variants during the process of writing, and that these choices are mainly perceived at the discourse level, and "are seen as significant in the staging and organization of the discourse as a whole" (McCarthy 1991: 39). For instance, students can learn how to use different verb tenses in an essay. Schleppegrell

explains that “narrative texts... typically use past tense, but also include other verb forms to place events before the main time line or to present timeless generalizations” (2003: 20).

The selection of grammatical elements needs first an understanding of what the types of texts consist of. Brookes and Grundy (1998: 11) suggest that “each genre has its own conventions concerned with the type of information to include and the order to put in. Discussing such conventions helps to provide a clear framework within which students can write effectively”. It can also be helped by the notion that each type of writing has its own organisation (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 17). For instance, certain pieces of writing are organised chronologically, from general to particular, or from most important to least important. However, the teacher cannot focus on all the grammatical aspects of writing genres. He needs good reasons as Hyland (2003: 6) points out:

If language structures are to be part of a writing course, then we need principled reasons for choosing which patterns to teach and how they can be used effectively. An important principle here is to relate structures to meanings, making language *use* a criteria for teaching materials. This introduces the idea “that particular language *forms* perform certain communicative *functions* and that students can be taught the functions most relevant to their needs.

Teaching grammar in the context of writing is also related to the fact that rule explanation sometimes needs the discourse level. Larsen-Freeman (2000, 2003) argues that certain grammar rules are less difficult to explain at the text level than at the sentence level, for instance, why in certain situations the present perfect tense is preferred over the past tense. She explains that, at the sentence level, “the reason is difficult to perceive”, however, at a discourse-level, “the present perfect serves as a bridge between the present and past” (2000: 12).

As mentioned previously, the main criterion of integrative grammar teaching is selection. Knoblauch and Brannon (1983) affirm that, if the teachers want to use grammar as a means to improve students' writing, they need to examine the areas where they mostly need help. Many grammatical aspects deserve considerable attention. For example, prepositions, articles, tenses are very important because they are problematic to many learners (Morrissey 1983). Schleppegrell (2003) proposes to focus on "the use of verbs, noun phrases, and clause-linking strategies" because they are "language features that are functional for constructing the genre" (p.14-15).

Integrative grammar teaching can be carried out with different types of texts and different grammatical items. In teaching narratives, Schleppegrell (2003) gives two examples: **pronoun alternation and expanding noun phrases**. Certain items like pronoun alternation (or tracking participants) need the context of writing rather than isolated sentences to be well understood. She explains that "the renaming and tracking of a participant in a noun phrase is a linguistic skill that developing writers need lots of practice with" (ibid., 21). **Expanding noun phrases** is related to the inclusion of details which is an important skill in writing narratives. Students "need to learn to expand noun phrases to include more information in order to construct the more condensed texts of academic literacy." She suggests three ways of expanding noun phrases: with adjectives, with prepositional phrases, and with relative clauses (adjective clauses) (p.22). Zamel (1980 cited in Pack and Henrichsen 1981: 468) proposes to include punctuation because it can be dealt with in all genres of writing, and whenever necessary, i.e. as a response to an immediate need. Neman (1995: 258-57) suggests making the students discover "the limits of the simple sentence", and showing them how to add descriptive background through prepositional phrases that can serve as adjectives like "the child *with the*

*ribbon*”, participial phrases which “act as adjectives because they modify nouns (the ship, *sailing swiftly, managed by its crew*)”.

The most important thing in relating grammar to writing instruction is that it requires an extensive view of what grammar is, as well as a clear definition of the role grammar has to play in the writing classroom (Larsen-Freeman 1991). It also involves a long-term view of grammar as “one of the means of acquiring a thorough mastery of the language as a whole, not as an end in itself” (Ur (1988: 5). Linking grammar to the teaching of writing depends principally on the goals and needs of students (Richards and Rodgers 1986, Sysoyev 1999), in addition to the objectives of writing instruction, the preferences of the teachers, and the requirements of the educational institution.

### **3.2. Principles of Integrative Grammar Teaching**

The application of integrative grammar teaching requires first assessing both the learner and the instructional variables (Frodesen 1991). These include students’ needs, objectives and the course/materials.

#### **3.2.1. Students Needs**

Students’ needs is a key-element because they justify and validate the need for change. Current practices place students’ needs at a high position, and recommend organising all sorts of teaching and activities around them. According to Tarone and Yule (1989: 3), teachers “must constantly adjust their methods and materials on the basis of their identification of the *local needs of their students*.” This helps the teachers identify “specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content in a language program” (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 156). It allows the teachers to focus on “what the learner’s present level of proficiency is and on what the

learner will be required to use the language for on completion of the program.” This needs analysis procedure is considered the major part of successful teaching. It “acknowledges that the goals of learners vary and must be determined before decisions about content and method can be made” (Richards and Rodgers 1986: *ibid.*).

In needs analysis, the teacher collects data that “reflects the perceptions and priorities of the learner on what should be taught and how it should be taught. Such information often reveals learning-style preferences by the learner” (Nunan 1988: 78). Consecutively, the information gathered allows the teacher “to modify the syllabus and methodology so they are more acceptable to the learners, or to alert the teacher to areas of possible conflict” (Nunan *ibid.*: 18). The teacher has several means to gather data about student needs. Richards (1984: 17) proposes the use of diagnostic tests, interviews with learners and teachers, observation, and self-reports; Peck (1991: 364) suggests class discussions, individual talks with students, and assigned essays or questionnaires. Tarone and Yule (1989) provide that the teacher can also use integrative exercises and tests like cloze procedures which will offer “great potential benefits for discovering what aspects of the grammar of the target language learners know” (*ibid.*: 72). In addition, some situations determine the kind of student needs. At the university level, for example, students are writing for examinations and for classroom assignments (Hyland 2003). For this purpose, “an integrative grammar teaching approach creates optimal conditions for learning for everyone in the classroom” (Sysoyev 1999). In general, students’ needs are influenced by factors like age, learning style, and previous instruction in English.

### 3.2.2.Objectives

In general, the most important goal of grammar instruction is to make students remember the grammar they learn and to use this knowledge while they are writing to avoid be blocked (Keh 1991). Therefore, when the students are writing, they must be provided with opportunities to focus on grammar, because “a learner will remember a grammatical item if he is involved actively in using that item in writing” (Keh *ibid.*: 17)

Any kind of writing instruction that incorporates some language aspects necessitates the development of a detailed set of specifications. These specifications will help the teachers and the learners understand the overall mechanism and objectives of the tasks (Olshtain 1991: 239-240). They include:

- Task Description*, i.e., defining the goal of the task.
- Content Description*, i.e., what kind of content is relevant to the task.
- Audience Description*, i.e., a thorough understanding of the reader in terms of his background, needs, and expectations.
- Format Cues*, i.e., how to organise the general structure of the written text.
- Linguistic Cues*, i.e., the particular grammatical structures to be used.

The teacher has also to make several decisions about the writing lesson. This means principally to decide about the length of the texts students are going to produce, which can be developed “from a series of sentences to a short full composition and then of qualitative improvement at paragraph level, leading to extended full compositions”, the types of writing to be covered depending on the requirements of the academic context or the institution, and which particular aspects of the text type to highlight (Bruton 1981: 141). All these specifications are necessary to facilitate the work of both the students and teachers. Hyland (2003: 69-70) affirms that



If [learners] know what the course will offer them, how it is relevant to their needs, and what they have to do to meet course requirements, then students are more likely to be involved in the course and to appreciate and accept the learning experience in which they will engage

Other specifications concern the discrimination between objectives and goals. According to Buckingham (1979: 242), goals are “statements of intent which are broad and general, conceptually stated”; objectives are “statements which are specific and restricted, written in terms of student activity”, i.e. “what a student should be able to do at the end of a successful lesson” (Fontana 1995: 157), or “in terms of what the learner should be able to do as a result of instruction.” (Nunan 1988: 63). Establishing specific learning objectives is very important because they will help the teacher “to structure the learning experience and evaluate its success” (Fontana *ibid.*: 162), and “ensure the modification of general methods in specific situations” (Prator 1991: 18). Moreover, the roles of objectives are “to act as a guide to the selection of the other elements in the curriculum, to provide a sharper focus for teachers, to give learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a language programme, and to help in developing means of assessment and evaluation” (Nunan *ibid.*: 61). A further essential step in the definition of objectives is to make the distinction between a “real-world objective” and a “pedagogic objective”. Nunan (*ibid.*: 70) explains that a real-world objective “describes a task which learners might wish to carry out outside the classroom”, whereas a pedagogic objective “describes a task, which the learner might be required to carry out inside the classroom.”

Integrative grammar teaching seeks mainly to make students become self-reliant writers. Harmer (2001) exhorts teachers to encourage their learners to be more

autonomous which he considers a key-goal. Becoming an independent writer implies two things:

-Being an independent analyst: Odlin (1994: 316) argues that “any teaching of grammar should help learners to become independent analysts”. The reason for such an initiative is that, because “instruction is so often incomplete, students will have to become independent analysts of the target language if they are to deal with all the problems that their instructors lack time to cover in much detail” (Odlin *ibid.*: 12).

-Being a problem-solver: Keh (1991) considers that students should be encouraged to use grammar as a strategy or tool to discover solutions for their writing problems. This will make them become progressively more “aware of and responsible for correcting their own errors” (*ibid.*: 18).

The two major goals of integrative grammar teaching are to develop students’ grammatical knowledge and awareness about grammar in their writing, and to show grammar at work across the boundaries of the sentence. Developing the students’ awareness about the language will help them pay attention to what they write because, as Rubin (1983) notes, “the students’ papers do not always reflect the extent of their learning because many students are not yet able to apply what they have learned in class to their own writing situations” (p.373). Furthermore, increasing the grammatical resources of the students, as Schleppegrell (2003: 20) suggests, will help students write effectively the required genres, in addition, to helping students develop their linguistic sense as part of improving their writing skills. Close (1981: 16) provides that developing the linguistic sense of the students will help them know whether a form or a structure is possible within the TL or not; this ability can be reinforced through the regular practice of writing.

Working with grammar at the text-level makes students use complex language by identifying challenging grammar structures. Tarantino (1988) suggests to encourage students to ‘take risks’, i.e. to overcome the fear of using complex structures like using coordination and subordination. In turn, this risk-taking can positively influence students’ performance in writing, because a tendency to use simple structures (sometimes with poor grammar) may disadvantage them, especially where such aspects are highly valued. Accordingly, the teacher should look for the challenging aspect of any grammatical item. For instance, learning when to use the passive can be more challenging than learning the passive “as a transformed version of the active” (Larsen-Freeman 1991: 290). Students will therefore understand that “writing is largely a matter of options among which the writer is relatively free to choose” (Held and Rosenberg 1983: 819). Practicing different genres will contribute in helping students vary their grammar and structures when their level increases (Harmer 2001: 248).

Explaining to the students the aspects of grammar that will be addressed in class will help them understand the idea of integrative grammar teaching. Therefore, they should be provided with a full picture of any course of writing in terms of what is expected from them and what they are required to do.

### **3.2.3.The Course**

A course in integrative grammar teaching is dependent on four elements: the teaching materials, time allocation, gradual building-up, and feedback. The selection of the teaching materials is an essential task and influences greatly the whole teaching/learning process. Materials have often been “at odds with the skills they seek to teach”, for instance, in “intending to teach mechanics that apply throughout essays, they

offer practice with fill-ins or unrelated, single sentences” (Friedmann 1983: 398). Materials must provide appropriate context in order to be used adequately for language teaching. Selecting appropriately a material to what is going to be taught should be done according to some criteria (Willis 1996: 70-71), as shown in the following table:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description of the criterion</b>
<b>Exploitability</b>	Selecting a material that is adequate “to classroom exploitation, i.e. to an engaging task, or series of tasks, that will probably sustain students’ interest over a length of time.”
<b>Topic</b>	Varying the topics as much as possible and include “an element of surprise or originality”.
<b>Length/chunk-ability</b>	Choosing a text or a piece of writing that “can be split into sections” to construct activities around each section.
<b>Linguistic complexity</b>	Looking for “occasional items where the language itself seems difficult but the general message is predictable and the genre is familiar.”

**Table 3.1.: Criteria for the Selection of Teaching Materials**

The main source of materials is the textbook (Crookes and Chaudron 1991), however, the most valuable source of materials is the students’ own writing (Nott 1985, Raimes 1985). Utilising student-generated material for devising classroom tasks is very productive and beneficial, and offers useful data. For instance, taking points of grammar from students’ writing is particularly helpful because it will allow the teacher to select

what grammar points deserve most attention. Students' writing represents authentic language, and therefore, it will not only help the teacher, but also motivate the learners.

One of the most problematic aspects of teaching writing is the lack of time. Raimes (1985: 248) argues that language has an "extraordinary generative power", and therefore, writing can serve to generate language even for learners with a low level of language proficiency. This can be made possible if students are given enough time to write, even if this time is taken from the time to complete a syllabus or cover the course material. Moreover, Ur (1988) explains that "time has to be organized for optimum efficiency", because the time available for learning particularly in the writing classroom is short. This means promoting quality rather than quantity, or preferring more practice and avoiding unnecessary explanations. Ur adds that this also means "preparing an organized, balanced plan of classroom teaching/learning procedures through which the learners will be enabled to spend some of their time concentrating on mastering one or more of the components of the target language in their way to acquiring it as a whole" (ibid., 5).

Integrative grammar teaching is essentially meaning-based; however, when it is necessary, the teacher can elaborate a combination of form-based and meaning-based activities using a gradual building-up where the students "need to develop from more controlled and mechanical to more free and communicative behaviour", i.e., going from an initial mechanical stage to a far more communicative one (Crookes and Chaudron 1991: 51). This building-up can be used to practise certain grammatical points through drills to more communicative activities as free composition.

Teacher's feedback is very important, and his attitudes towards students' writing are influential in many respects. First, the teachers "affect the degree to which students

perceive writing as a means of learning” (Herrington 1981: 385). Second, if the teacher regards students’ writings as “burdens, keep them unread, goes through them hastily making limited comments, and returns them with no further discussion” (Herrington, *ibid.*), the students will understand that their works are of little value, and may develop negative attitudes towards writing. Therefore, the teacher has to make students feel that their works are important and valuable; consequently, the students will develop a positive attitude towards future assignments.

Pointing out errors is one of the important functions of the teacher. Harmer (2001: 105) explains that “when students are involved in accuracy work, it is part of the teacher’s function to point out and correct the mistakes the students are making.” This will develop the students’ awareness about what they write and avoid repeating the same errors. However, the teacher cannot provide feedback on every grammatical aspect in writing. Fathman and Whalley (1990: 186) suggest that using focused or located feedback, which means restricting feedback to specific aspects, can be beneficial. They cite the studies of Lalande (1982) and Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986) in L2 on focused feedback where they found that giving feedback on ‘located’ errors increases students’ accuracy in writing, and Fathman and Whalley (1985) who found that “students who received feedback on form do make more improvement on writing tasks than those who do not”. As selection is one of the characteristics of integrative grammar teaching, focused feedback is “a way of avoiding the over-correction of scripts, which also has the advantage of helping students to concentrate on particular features of written English... In this mode we restrict feedback to a particular aspect of language” (Harmer 2001: 112).

Focused feedback is particularly helpful when students are revising their drafts because they lack “native-like intuitions about vocabulary, syntax, tone, style, formality, and organizational patterns” (Taylor 1981: 11-12). Therefore, during revision, students will “rely extensively on positive, constructive feedback”, because it is not enough to present the students with common grammatical and organisational problems. What will be more helpful to students is “to learn the elements of writing experientially through useful, productive feedback on their own writing.” (Taylor 1981, *ibid.*).

### **3.3.Main Variables of Integrative Grammar Teaching**

The teacher and the learner are two influential elements in the implementation of integrative grammar teaching. Any teaching modification is greatly affected by the teacher’s roles and attitudes, the students’ learning preferences, and the classroom organisation.

#### **3.3.1.The Teacher**

The work of the writing teacher is very demanding because instruction expects many things from him/her. Integrative grammar teaching is more demanding because, on one hand, it requires from the teacher to be “a facilitator and fellow writer rather than a knowledgeable expert” (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 18), and on the other hand, to be a “competent analyst himself” since grammar instruction depends largely on the teacher because, “although students are capable of independent work, the complexity of the grammatical system of any language makes an expert guide highly desirable” (Odlin 1994: 14).

The teacher has many roles to play in the writing classroom, but according to Harmer (2001), s/he has mainly to be a motivator, a resource, and a feedback provider.

These three roles are particularly necessary in integrative grammar teaching. Harmer (ibid.: 261-262) describes them as follows:

-motivator, which involves “creating the right conditions for the generation of ideas, persuading [the students] of the usefulness of the activity, and encouraging them to make as much effort as possible for maximum benefit.” (p.261)

-resource, particularly in extended writing, where the teacher “should be ready to supply information and language where necessary”. This role is important since the teacher will monitor the progress of students’ work during which s/he will give “advice and suggestions in a constructive and tactful way.” (p.261)

-Feedback provider, which is an important role because “giving feedback on writing tasks demands special care”. It requires from the teacher to “respond positively and encouragingly to the content of what the students have written.” It also requires focused feedback during correction “based on what students need at this particular stage of their studies, and on the tasks they have undertaken.” (p.262).

In addition to the previous roles, the teacher has to be a collaborator, particularly in the practice phase where s/he will assist the students to produce correct structures not to assess them, and help them make their own choices not impose on them his/her own preferences. All these roles will make the students feel that the relation student-teacher is collaborative.

The teacher’s attitudes are related to three elements: the learner, language learning/teaching, and the teacher himself. Towards the learners, the teacher should enhance their chances of learning successfully through the promotion of a productive working atmosphere in the classroom, the recognition of students’ different needs and problems, and the demonstration of a positive attitude towards students’ errors as they



are a “natural and unavoidable part” of the learning process and “a very useful way of showing what [students] have and have not learnt” (Doff 1988: 187-188). Teachers attitudes towards language learning/teaching are mostly guided by their assumptions (Kroll 1990a). However, effective teaching is based on “informed choices about the methods, materials, and procedures to use in the classroom based on a clear understanding of the current attitudes and practices in his or her profession” (Hyland 2003: xv). In addition, the teacher must know how to relate classroom activities to relevant research and theory. Broadly speaking, good methodology, specification of objectives and data analysis are “part of the quality control and product improvement aspect of the teacher’s role” (Fontana 1995: 170). Accepting self-evaluation is one of the features a good teacher should have. It consists in the ability of teachers “to judge their own teaching honestly and to see clearly how much learning is taking place in the class” (Doff 1988: 278). S/he should also have “self-awareness- the ability to reflect on one’s own teaching and so gradually improve and develop one’s skill as a teacher.” In other words, the teachers should be critical concerning what happens in their classroom and their teaching practices for further improvement.

### **3.3.2. The Learner**

The most important variable in any kind of teaching is the learner because most actual teaching is learner-centred. In integrative grammar teaching, the most influential students’ characteristics are age, learners’ level, and learner types.

Generally, the teacher works with learners of “different motivations, proficiencies, language backgrounds, and needs” (Hyland 2003: xvi). These factors are very important because, on one hand, motivation, proficiency and language background

affect the efficiency of integrative grammar teaching, on the other hand, learners' needs determine what type of grammar is appropriate for their situation. Students' age affects greatly the teacher's decisions about what to teach and how to teach it, particularly the necessity for teaching rules or giving explanations. For instance, old students tend to want generalizations and explanations and are helped by them (Greenbaum 1988), but generally speaking, adults tend to use a lot of "abstract thought" because they evolve with abstract matters and often have a clear idea about their purpose in learning a language (Harmer 2001). In addition, they "usually learn faster ... because they use more cognitive and metacognitive strategies" (Willis 1996: 9). However, they may criticise new teaching methods because they may have been used to a particular method, reject to work according to methods already familiar to them, and have problems of "anxiety" due to past experiences of failure or criticism.

The teaching of any kind of grammar is dependent upon the students' level. Broadly speaking, learners are classified in terms of elementary or beginners, intermediate and advanced. However, these levels are also divided into other sub-levels. According to Murphy (1997), elementary students are learners "with very little English", whereas lower intermediate learners "whose grammar is weaker than other aspects of their English or who have problems with particular areas of "elementary" grammar" (ibid.: 7). Regardless of these levels, Harmer (2001: 157) describes each individual student as having some degree of linguistic knowledge and ability in English, different speeds and ways in learning. This often represents a difficulty in designing lessons and activities that are appropriate to the level and abilities of all the students.

On the whole, even if a classroom is more or less homogeneous, students are different in terms of the way they learn a language, and this can influence grammar instruction. Skehan (1989: 36-37) divides students into three types:

-An even-profiled learner without particular strengths or weaknesses.

-An analytic learner, “older, fairly average in memory, but much higher in grammatical sensitivity”. These learners have “impressive language-analytic abilities and the capacity to organize and structure material” that help them to succeed and “to compensate for memory shortcomings.”

-A memory-based learner, “young, having good memories, but with grammatical sensitivity only slightly above average”. They rely greatly on “memory... to assimilate large amounts of material without much analysis” to succeed.

Willis (1996: 10), on the other hand, prefers to divide learners into analytic learners who prefer a deductive approach, and holistic learners who prefer an inductive approach.

On the basis of the previous characteristics, some parameters are to be taken into account before applying integrative grammar teaching. These involve principally knowledge about the learners’ level, account of motivation, learning strategies, and risk-taking.

Knowledge about the level of the students is essential in order ‘to tailor’ our teaching methods. This knowledge can be obtained from students’ scores on different tests, and the monitoring of “their progress through both formal and informal observation” (Harmer 2001: 48). Taking into account that a single class consists of different students is highly important in order to teach them appropriately and to provide them with appropriate activities. To do so, the teacher has “to balance the interests of individuals against what is good for the group and to be aware of certain individual traits

when putting students into pairs and groups,” and “to recognise which students need more personal attention than others, and which need different kinds of explanations and practice of language.” (Harmer *ibid.*: 43).

In teaching writing, it is crucial to take into consideration the “level of linguistic and discourse proficiency” which the students have actually reached (Olshtain 1991: 236). Proficiency level is important in determining and selecting what actual points of difficulty are to be tackled and what kinds of activities and materials are to be selected in accordance with the students’ level, particularly in introducing grammar in the teaching of writing. As mentioned earlier, students are generally described in three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. However, determining the actual level of the students is not always easy because of the difficulty to qualify these levels. According to Harmer (2001: 44), the difficulty lies in the fact that “they mean different things to different people. What one school or education system calls advanced may be more like intermediate to some other teachers”.

Motivation is an important aspect in any kind of teaching, and particularly in learning writing and grammar. According to Hayes (1996 cited in Weigle 2002: 25), “a writer’s goals, predispositions, beliefs and attitudes and cost/benefit estimates may influence the way a writer goes about the task of writing and the effort that will be put into the writing task.” Dweck (1986) and Palmquist and Young (1992) (cited in Weigle 2002: 25), for instance, consider that “students’ beliefs about the causes of successful performance influence the amount of effort they are willing to exert.” However, motivation can be difficult to achieve because, in addition to the inherent difficulties of writing, students may be discouraged from investing their efforts in an approach that integrates the teaching of grammar into writing instruction. The lack of motivation

represents the main factor that prevents students from learning any language aspect because, as time passes, students' motivation decreases or "drops" because they were either unsatisfied with previous instruction or because, even after a certain period of instruction, they still make mistakes (Willis 1996: 5).

Motivation has many sources (Skehan 1989: 49-50, 70). Some of these is the activity itself, but the main sources of motivation are the teaching materials used in the classroom, the teacher, and the student. The motivation derived from materials is partly embedded in the choice of the writing assignments. Working with new topics and texts is often more appealing than certain recurring ones that may create boredom in the students. Intrinsically interesting materials like individual points of view or personal anecdotes are preferable to general or sociological topics. In addition, lively materials, either recorded or written, are likely to stimulate students' efforts.

The commitment of the teacher to the writing tasks and his seriousness and care about the courses and the students are very important, because this "makes a difference". For instance, if the teacher emphasises that writing is a means of discovering new language and stressing the "value of making meaning", this can influence students' motivation (Knoblauch and Brannon 1983). In addition, enjoyment of learning to write is an aspect that contributes in sustaining the students' motivation. When given "a really enjoyable activity", students will invest themselves. What teachers can eventually do is to include in the activities "an element of intellectual challenge, personal involvement, even sometimes humour" (Brookes and Grundy 1998: 14). From a general perspective, the attitudes of the writing teacher towards grammar affect positively or negatively the students will to deal with grammar in the writing classroom.

Engaging the students actively in practice is sometimes insufficient if they are not personally interested, i.e., not intrinsically motivated (Ur 1988). We have all as teachers or as former learners experienced situations where “learners who are bored find it difficult to concentrate” on the activity. Students’ intrinsic interest in the forms and in language practice is particularly influential in learning grammar. According to Yip (1994), “the more one is interested and concerned about the form in question, hence paying attention to what is presented, the more easily one can internalize the knowledge” (p.136).

Other factors can influence positively students’ motivation in linking grammar with writing like the objectives of the course. Students would be more confident if they know beforehand what the objectives of an integrative course are which can be defined in terms of topics (assignments), activities and skills to be developed. However, Wilkins (1976) provides that there is a risk that students will lose their motivation because, although they are aware that they are investing their time and effort in learning a language which benefits will be perceived in the future, they more likely need to perceive those benefits immediately. An integrative approach can offer students opportunities to test themselves and perceive improvement in their writing and grammatical knowledge, especially in examination essays.

When talking about learning strategies, we are concerned with “the choices that the learner makes, and with the possibility that the efficiency with which the learner’s capacities are used can be changed” (Skehan 1989: 73). Using learning strategies means that the students are responsible for their own learning. Integrative grammar teaching seeks to offer the students strategies that will help them in “decision-making and autonomy” when writing. The use of learning strategies is influenced mainly by age and

proficiency level. According to Willis (1996: 10), good learners tend to use more strategies than weak ones do. A good learner will “be able to analyse, categorise and remember language forms and monitor errors, be prepared to experiment with language and be willing to take risks, be flexible and capable of adapting to different learning conditions.”

Language learning is highly influenced by human behaviour and personality according. It “requires investment of the whole person and positive attitudes to it are important” (Willis 1996: 9). The teacher has to encourage students “to adopt beneficial risk-taking learning strategies.” Learners who take risks (“medium-risk tasks”) will likely to be successful learners, and this risk-taking will lead to “longer-term success” (Skehan 1989: 106). Emphasising risk-taking will make the students become less reliant on certain strategies like learning by heart irregular past tense forms. Some students think they can learn by heart all the forms of the TL while language learning “involves understanding and producing an infinite variety of sentences” (Doff 1988: 183-184).

### **3.3.3.The Classroom**

The success of integrative grammar teaching is dependent upon a well-organised lesson and a good classroom organisation. In integrative grammar teaching, a well-organised lesson should combine two elements: simplicity and effectiveness. This involves the following guidelines as described by Child (2004: 413-414):

- Using grammatically simple presentation.
- Using a language that can be understood by the students, and eventually defining the technical terms.

-Using “brevity, appeal and coverage”. Because students learn many things the same day, “if every description consisted of weaving webs of words around learner, they could end up ... mentally inactive.”

-Presenting the main points of the lesson before starting it, “unless it is a gradual build-up lesson.”

A good classroom organisation is based on an efficient teaching framework. For Skehan (1989: 121), “*classroom organization* ...subsumes the degree of structuring of teaching, the explicitness of instruction, and the participant organization of the classroom”. Harmer (2001) explains that mixed ability classrooms create a problem to the teacher for the study of language forms. Most of the time, it is “impossible to know whether such forms are new or not for the individual students in a class.” (p.15). Previous experience of the language is not an indication about the ability of the students to use language forms. When we are not certain about “whether or not our students know the language we are about to ask them to study, we will need to find this information out. If we do not, we risk teaching them things they already know, or assuming knowledge they do not have” (Harmer *ibid.*: 157).

A classroom in integrative grammar teaching should be organised on the basis of the following principles:

-Favour a learner-centred classroom as much as possible. According to Crookes and Chaudron (1991: 57), this implies a “greater individualization of learning objectives”, increasing the opportunities for students to write, increasing students’ personal participation to the presentation of the lesson, increasing interaction between learners because “students often will pay more attention and learn better from one another, since



their performances and processes of negotiation of meaning are more closely adapted to one another's, level of ability.”

-Favour flexibility. Brookes and Grundy (1998) stress that it is one of the key-components of classroom management. Flexibility means balancing between groupwork, pairwork and personal work. Doff (1988: 137-138) explains that “pairwork and groupwork are not teaching ‘methods’, but ways of organizing the class. They can be used for many different kinds of activity, and are naturally more suitable for some activities than for others.” The best way to use them is to balance between pairwork and groupwork. In groupwork, students work in small groups (generally four to five students) at the same time. According to Crookes and Chaudron (ibid.: 58), groupwork particularly offers a good management of class time, more risk-taking through the use of new language (i.e. complex language), a quick introduction of new ideas. In pairwork, the whole class is divided into pairs. Every student works with his or her partner, and all the pairs work *at the same time*, i.e. simultaneously (Doff, ibid.). Pairwork and groupwork have in common the same advantages and problems. Doff (1988: 141-142) summarises them in the following table:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More language practice, i.e. students will have more opportunities to use English.</li>   <li>-Students are more involved in the work.</li>   <li>-Students feel secure, i.e. they are less anxious in a group or with a partner than alone.</li>   <li>-Students help each other by exploring meaning, discussing a topic and exchanging ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The teacher has no control on students' language, and therefore, cannot prevent them from making mistakes.</li>   <li>-The teacher may face difficulties to control what the students are doing.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.2.: Advantages and Disadvantages of Pairwork and Groupwork**

In order to solve these problems, the teacher must “give clear instructions about when to start, what to do, and when to stop” and should train students to work in pairs or groups in order to “set up a routine” (Doff 1988: *ibid.*).

## **Conclusion**

Integrative grammar teaching seeks to help students to regard grammar as a help for editing, a means to broaden their repertoire of syntactic strategies and a set of choices to express a variety of meanings according to their particular purposes. Moreover, it appears that if integrative grammar teaching is to be conceived, it will be rather eclectic, working with what is relevant to students' needs and teachers' preferences.

The most important thing in relating grammar to writing instruction is that it requires an extensive view of what grammar is, as well as a clear definition of the role grammar has to play in the writing classroom. Linking grammar to the teaching of writing depends principally on the goals and needs of students, the objectives of writing instruction, the preferences of the teachers, and the requirements of the educational institution.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **INTEGRATIVE GRAMMAR**

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTEGRATIVE GRAMMAR

#### **Introduction**

At the university level, students are required to produce extended pieces of writing such as essays and dissertations. The necessary writing skills to achieve this task are built during the first two years of the students' curriculum in which they learn many aspects of writing including how to write paragraphs and how to present their ideas using different types of development. However, the time devoted to teach Written Expression may be reduced due to many factors including the size of classes, the level of the students, and the availability of the teaching materials. But, the major factor that may influence the pace with which teachers can develop students' writing skills is students' linguistic abilities. When students have problems with the target language, particularly with its grammar, this may become an obstacle both for the teachers and the learners. Integrative grammar teaching aims at creating optimum conditions to maximise language learning in order to develop students' writing skills in terms of language level, the ability to write extended texts, and the ability to produce different genres of writing, the most important being the expository genre (as being the favoured genre at university).

Because of the nature of the present subject, it is indispensable to elicit teachers' and students' opinions about writing, grammar, and the way(s) to link them because the teachers and the learners are the main variables of the study. Their views are very important to establish guidelines and points of departure for integrative grammar

teaching. For this purpose, a questionnaire addressed to both teachers and students is the most appropriate way to elicit their opinions.

The students' questionnaire aims at finding out students' opinions about learning writing, learning grammar, and the importance they give to grammar in learning writing (i.e., whether they consider grammar as an important aspect to develop in learning to write). Getting students' opinions about integrative grammar teaching is crucial because it will determine their views about what grammar is, the type of grammar learning they prefer (inductive vs. deductive style), the importance they give to grammar, whether grammar has any influence on their writing, and the type(s) of writing genres they find the most difficult.

The teachers' questionnaire is intended to gather information about the teachers' views about teaching writing, teaching grammar and the importance they give to grammar in teaching writing. The questionnaire aims mainly at knowing the place teachers give to grammar in the writing classroom, the genre(s) students find the most difficult and compare it with students' views, whether the time appointed to teaching WE is sufficient, and whether they are in favour of integrative grammar teaching.

#### **4.1. The Students' Questionnaire**

##### **4.1.1. The Sample**

The students who responded to the questionnaire were chosen randomly among the total number of the Second Year LMD students' population (114 students), at Mentouri University, Constantine. The choice of Second Year students was based on the consideration that they have already been introduced to English grammar and to a certain amount of grammar terminology in the First Year. We also assume that they have

learned some basic skills of writing like producing different types of sentences and paragraphs according to the program of Second Year of WE. The questionnaire was handed in by the researcher. The interference of the researcher consisted in explaining the aim of the questionnaire after students read the introduction. 90 questionnaires were returned from the 114 initially planned and this represents our sample.

#### **4.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire involves 25 questions divided into four sections (see appendix I). The questions include close-ended questions, and open-ended questions where students have to explain their choice or suggest alternatives.

##### **-Section One: Learning Writing (Q1 to Q5)**

This section aims at getting the students' opinions about learning to write involving their views about the importance they give to grammar in writing compared to other aspects (Q1), their objectives in learning to write (Q2), and their level in writing (Q3). It also aims at knowing which genre of writing students find the most difficult (Q4) and their perceptions about the time they need to develop their writing skills (Q5).

##### **-Section Two: Learning Grammar (Q6 to Q14)**

The objective of this section is to get data about the students' conception of learning grammar, including how students define grammar, i.e., how they perceive it (Q6), and whether they are inclined towards deductive or inductive learning (Q7 and Q8). This section is also about students' attitudes towards English grammar in terms of whether grammar terminology is easy to remember and why (Q9 and Q10), whether English grammar is difficult and why (Q11 and Q12), and whether learning grammar is a waste of time and why (Q13 to Q14).

### **-Section Three: The Place of Grammar in Writing (Q15 to Q24)**

Section Three is about integrative grammar teaching and involves knowing whether the students expect that learning grammar will help them express clearly their ideas in writing (Q15), whether they like practising grammar within the WE course and if yes why (Q16 to Q17), whether linking grammar with the types of texts they are required to write helps them improve their writing (Q18), and whether applying grammar rules through the practice of composition helps them remember these rules (Q19). This section also involves learners' views about whether grammar has a positive impact on their writing and why (Q20 to Q21), and whether problems with grammar cause them to lose marks in examination essays of content areas (Q22). Q23 is about the place of grammar in the process of writing, i.e., at which stage of writing students take into account grammar. Q24 concerns the ability of the learners to focus on both writing their ideas and grammar.

### **-Section Four: Further Suggestions**

This section is a space devoted to students to give additional comments about the sections dealt with so far, or to make suggestions about teaching methodology, learning writing or learning grammar in general.

#### **4.1.3. Analysis of the Results**

##### **Section One: Learning Writing**

1. Classify the following items according to the importance you give them in writing using 1, 2, 3 or 4:

a-Organisation of ideas

b-Grammar



c-Vocabulary



d-Punctuation



<b>Rank</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	33	36.67
<b>2</b>	16	17.77
<b>3</b>	35	38.89
<b>4</b>	06	06.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.1.a : Rank of Organisation of Ideas**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	19	21.11
<b>2</b>	42	46.67
<b>3</b>	27	30
<b>4</b>	02	02.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.1.b : Rank of Grammar**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	38	42.22
<b>2</b>	29	32.22
<b>3</b>	14	15.56
<b>4</b>	09	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.1.c : Rank of Vocabulary**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1</b>	/	/
<b>2</b>	04	04.44
<b>3</b>	13	14.44
<b>4</b>	73	81.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.1.d : Rank of Punctuation**

The table below summarises the results (in percentages) obtained for the four options.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Rank 1</b>	<b>Rank 2</b>	<b>Rank 3</b>	<b>Rank 4</b>
<b>Organisation of Ideas</b>	36.67%	17.77%	38.89%	06.67%
<b>Grammar</b>	21.11%	46.67%	30%	02.22%
<b>Vocabulary</b>	42.22%	32.22%	15.56%	10%
<b>Punctuation</b>	/	04.44%	14.44%	81.12%

**Table 4.1.e : The Importance of Organisation of Ideas, Grammar, Vocabulary and Punctuation in Writing**

Table 4.1.e shows that, in rank 1, vocabulary is given a high importance (42.22%) by the students, followed by organisation of ideas (36.67%), grammar (21.11%), and punctuation (0%) respectively.

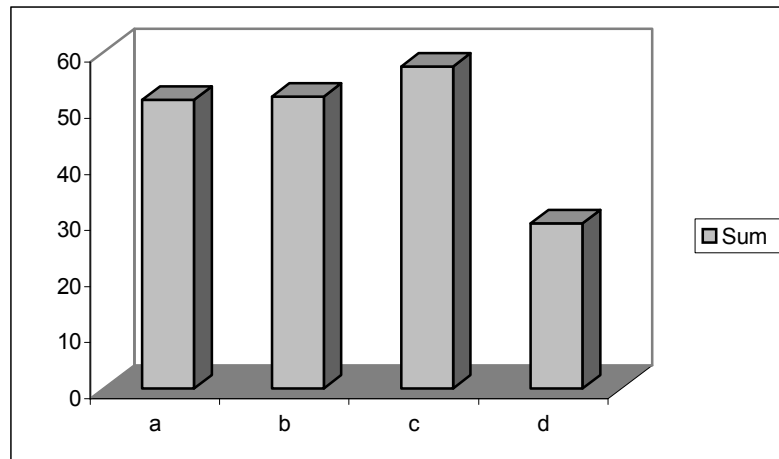
In order to make the comparison of the options provided above clearer, we resorted to the use of the sum of the ranks in which “the option with the least sum of the

ranks is the most important and so forth” (Clark 1977: 152). Therefore, we obtained the following table:

Option	Sum of the Ranks
Organisation of ideas	194
Grammar	192
Vocabulary	174
Punctuation	339

**Table 4.1.f : Sum of the Ranks**

Table 4.1.f shows that students give most importance to vocabulary, followed by grammar, then by organisation of ideas, and finally punctuation.



**Graph 4.1.f : Sum of the Ranks**

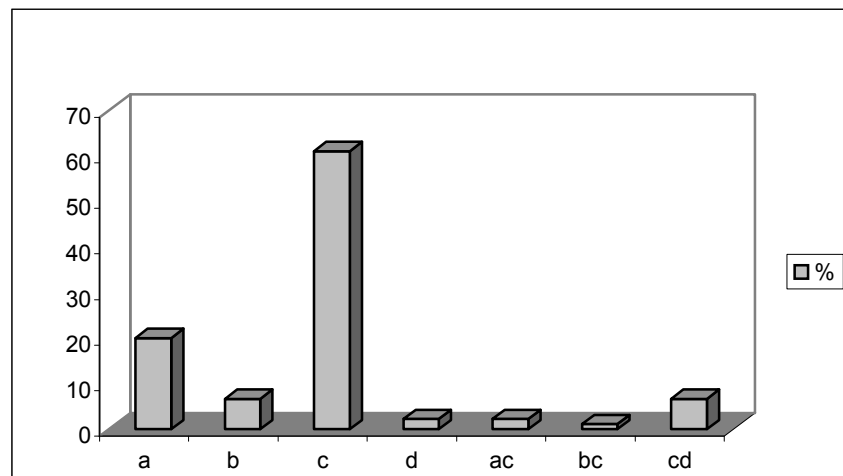
2. Learning to write enables you to:

- a-Write different types of texts.
- b-Have good marks in examination essays.
- c-Succeed in writing like native speakers.

d-Other: Please, specify:.....

Option	N	%
a	18	20
b	06	06.67
c	55	61.11
d	02	02.22
ac	02	02.22
bc	01	01.11
cd	06	06.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.2 : Students’ Objectives in Learning Writing**



**Graph 4.2 : Students’ Objectives in Learning Writing**

As seen in Table 4.2, 71.11% (61.11 “c” + 02.22 “ac” + 01.11 “bc” + 06.67 “cd”) of the students have as a writing objective to succeed in writing like native speakers.

The 08 students who opted for “Other” (d) specified that their objective in learning to write is:

-to learn more vocabulary (02 students)

-to improve their language level (01 student)

-to become skilled writers (04 students)

-to improve their writing skills to be able to express their ideas and to write reports (01 student).

3. Your actual level in writing is:

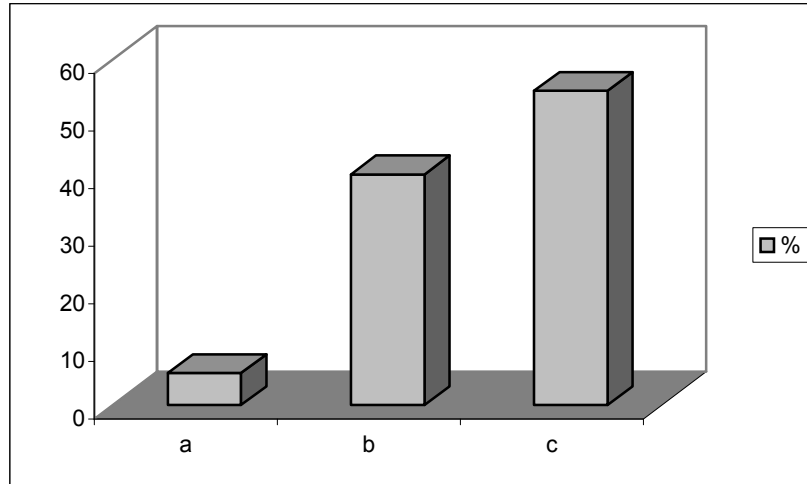
a-Beginner: still at the level of the sentence.

b-Intermediate: able to write beyond the sentence-level but not extended pieces of writing, like essays.

c-Advanced: able to write beyond the sentence-level and extended pieces of writing like essays.

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	05	05.56
<b>b</b>	36	40
<b>c</b>	49	54.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.3 : Levels of Student Writers**



**Graph 4.3 : Levels of Student Writers**

Here, 54.44% students consider that their writing skills extend to the ability of writing beyond the sentence- and the paragraph-level. Only 05.56% consider themselves as beginners.

4. What genre(s) of writing do you find the most difficult?

a-Exposition

b-Narration

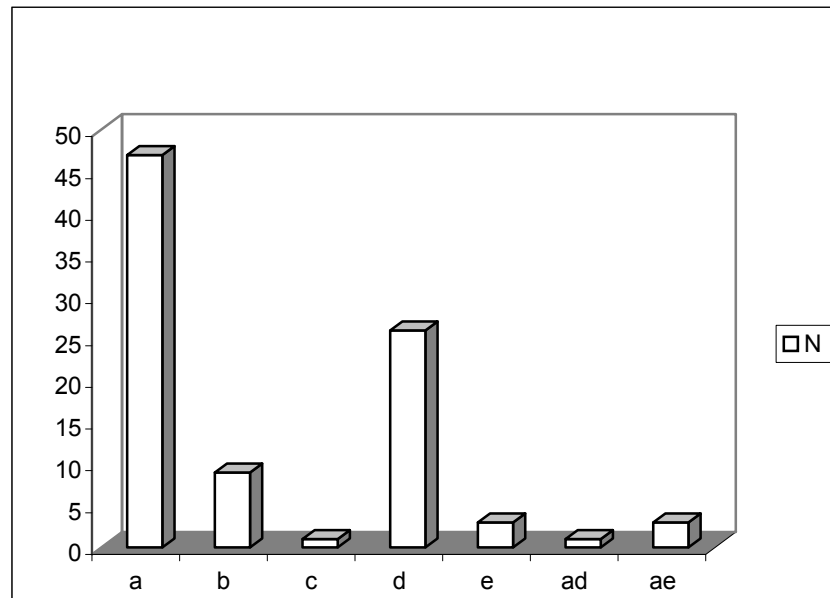
c-Description

d-Comparison and Contrast

e-Other: Please, specify:.....

Option	N	%
a	47	52.22
b	09	10
c	01	01.11
d	26	28.90
e	03	03.33
ad	01	01.11
ae	03	03.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.4: Writing Genre (s) Students find the Most Difficult**



**Graph 4.4 : Writing Genre(s) Students find the Most Difficult**

Table 4.4 shows that 56.66% (52.22 “a” + 01.11 “ad” + 03.33 “ae”) of the surveyed students consider exposition as the most difficult genre of writing.

The 06 students who opted for “Other” specified:

-the scientific genre because it requires the use of specific terminology (03 students)

-exemplification (02 students)

-One (01) student provided that s/he is able to write whatever kind of essay, especially narration and description.

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

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	18	20
<b>No</b>	70	77.78
<b>No answer</b>	02	02.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.5 : Students’ Opinion about Time Allocation to Teaching Writing**

77.78 % of the respondents consider that the time allocated to teach the WE course is insufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop their writing skills.

**Section Two: Learning Grammar**

6. Grammar is a set of rules about:

a-How we should speak and write a language.

b-All the possible grammatical structures of the language.

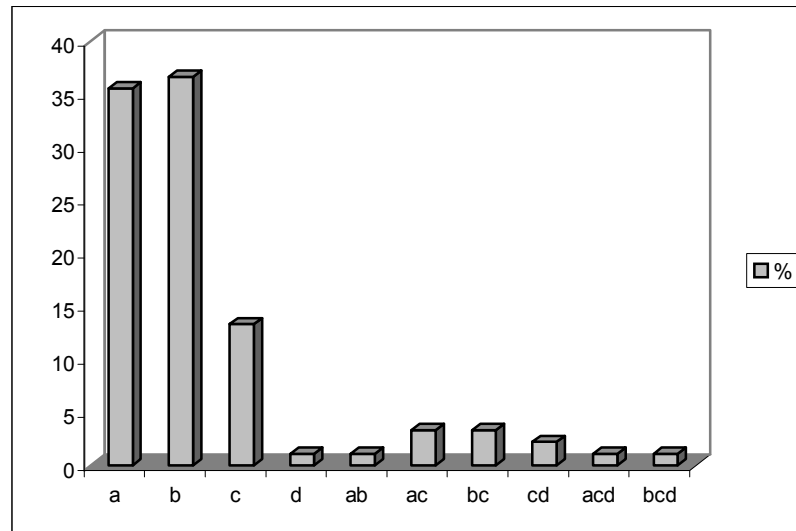
c- How the sentences of a language are formed.

d-Other: Please, specify:.....



Option	N	%
<b>a</b>	32	35.56
<b>b</b>	33	36.67
<b>c</b>	12	13.33
<b>d</b>	01	01.11
<b>ab</b>	01	01.11
<b>ac</b>	03	03.33
<b>bc</b>	03	03.33
<b>cd</b>	02	02.23
<b>acd</b>	01	01.11
<b>bcd</b>	01	01.11
<b>No answer</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.6 : Students' Definition of Grammar**



**Graph 4.6 : Students' Definition of Grammar**

According to Table 4.6., 41.11% (35.56 “a” + 01.11 “ab” + 03.33 “ac” + 01.11 “acd”) of the students view grammar as being prescriptive. For 42.22% (36.67 “b” + 01.11 “ab” + 03.33 “bc” + 01.11 “bcd”), it represents a complete catalogue of the forms

and structures in a language. Only 24.44% (13.33 “c” + 03.33 “ac” + 03.33 “bc” + 02.23 “cd” + 01.11 “acd” + 01.11 “bcd”) of the students identify grammar with syntax.

The 05 students who opted for “Other” specified that grammar is a set of rules about how to form:

-coherent sentences (01 student).

-well-structured sentences (01 sentences).

-sentences that are grammatically and semantically correct (01 student).

-only grammatical sentences (01 student).

-One (01) student identified grammar with pragmatics emphasising that, in learning grammar, it is not enough to be able to use correctly grammatical forms but also to use them appropriately.

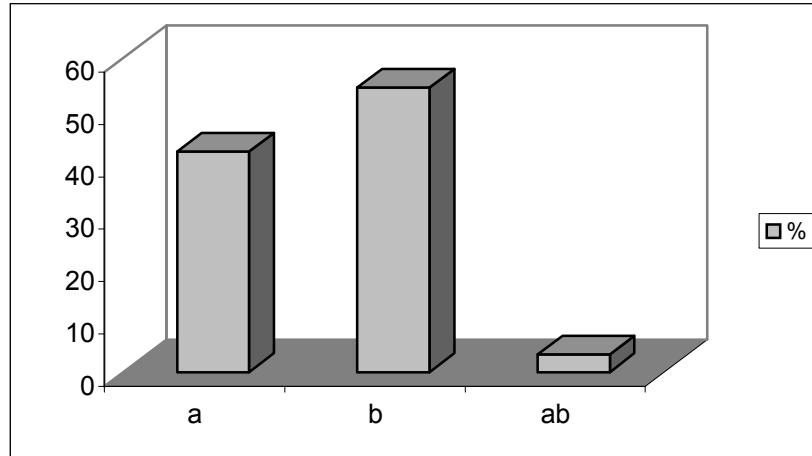
7. In learning grammar, you prefer:

a-To be given the rules directly by your teacher.

b-To find the rules by yourself.

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	38	42.22
<b>b</b>	49	54.45
<b>ab</b>	03	03.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.7 : Students’ Preferences in Learning Grammar**



**Graph 4.7 : Students' Preferences in Learning Grammar**

Table 4.7. shows that 57.78% (54.45 “b” + 03.33 “ab”) of the students prefer inductive learning of the rules, i.e., to find the rules by themselves. 42.22% prefer a deductive approach, i.e., a direct stating of the rules by the teacher.

8. If your answer is “b”, is it through:

- a-The teacher’s explanations?
- b-Practice?
- c-Both of them?

Option	N	%
a	07	13.46
b	04	07.69
c	41	78.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.8 : The Way Students Achieve Inductive Learning of Rules**

According to Table 4.8., 78.85% of the students who prefer inductive learning (Q7) achieve inductive learning of grammar through teacher’s explanations and practice in the classroom.

9. Grammar terminology is difficult to remember.

- Yes
- No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	22	24.44
<b>No</b>	68	75.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.9.: Students’ Attitudes towards Grammar Terminology**

As Table 4.9. shows, 75.56% of the respondents find that grammar terminology is easy. This may be due to the fact that they are already acquainted with grammatical terms.

10. If “Yes”, please, explain why.

.....

20 students explained that grammar terminology is difficult because:

- English grammar is full of exceptions (02 students).
- The complexity of certain terms makes it difficult to remember (04 students).
- English grammar has several rules. Therefore, it includes several terms to remember. Consequently, it is not possible to remember all of them, and in some cases, this engenders confusion (08 students).

-The terms used in grammar books are often different from the terms used in the classroom (01 student).

-Most of the time, they do not use grammar terminology, and if it is the case, it is only in few occasions (01 student).

-It necessitates a long time to be memorised (02 student).

-They do not always remember the but meaning of the grammatical terms (01 student).

-It is difficult to understand (01 student).

11. English grammar is difficult.

- Yes
- No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	39	43.33
<b>No</b>	51	56.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.10 : Students' Attitude towards English Grammar**

More than half of the surveyed students find English grammar rather easy.

12. Please, explain why.

.....

Among the 39 students who find English grammar difficult, 38 explained that it is because:

-It has a lot of exceptions (10 students).

-In some situations, they find no fixed rules (03 students).

-Certain items in English grammar are difficult like tenses (04 students) and phrasal verbs (02 students).

-English is not their native language (08 students).

-Some grammatical aspects are not part of their native language (01 student).

-Some rules are difficult to apply when writing long pieces of writing (i.e. in context) compared to applying them in single sentences (01 student).

-They do not know how to apply the grammatical rules in writing (01 student).

-English grammar has many rules. Therefore, it is difficult to remember them all while writing (08 students).

49 students remarked that they do not find English grammar difficult for the following reasons:

-They can master the principal rules, then acquire the exceptions (02 students).

-It is easier compared to Arabic or French grammar (09 students).

-English grammar has rules that are:

-simple and clear (10 students).

-logical and easy to understand (02 students).

-easy to remember and to retain if they are provided with a good explanation and sufficient practice (02 students).

-If they are able to remember the rules, they can apply them when they are writing (01 student).

-The difficulty of English grammar concerns only items like phrasal verbs (02 students).

-English grammar needs only practice because:

-practice makes it easier (08 students)

-the more they practise it, the more they develop good habits (01 student).

-the practice of writing paragraphs or essays allows them to know better the rules (02 students).

-Knowing the rules makes it easy (06 students).

-It is easy when the students are motivated:

-they are interested in learning English grammar (01 student).

-they like grammar (01 student).

-It is easy if they have a good teacher (02 students).

13. Learning English grammar is a waste of time:

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	/	/
<b>No</b>	89	98.89
<b>No answer</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.11: The Importance of Learning Grammar**

For this question, almost all the students (98.89%) do not consider learning English grammar as a waste of time.

14. Please, explain why.

.....

85 students explained that learning grammar is not a waste of time because:

1-It affects positively writing:

- grammar is not only form but also meaning, i.e., changing the structure of a sentence may change its meaning (01 student).
- it enables the students to well organize their sentences which is necessary to be understood by the reader (01 student).
- It helps them express their ideas clearly (01 student).
- It is a way to learn writing and to build up their language (06 students).
- It helps them develop good habits in writing (01 student).
- It helps them to write without mistakes (04 students).
- Through grammar, they learn to write a correct English (17 students).
- It improves their level in writing (11 students).
- Practice helps them to attain native-like proficiency (02 students).
- It is one of the elements of successful writing. (01 students).
- It develops their writing skills (05 students).

2- Grammar is necessary:

- to be able to write (02 students).
- to understand the language (12 students).
- to use appropriately the language (01 student).
- in formal writing (02 student)

3-It influences language learning:

- It is the basis of language learning and its most important aspects (11 students).
- It helps them in other modules like Literature and Linguistics (02 students).

4-Learning grammar helps them acquire the language (01 student).

5-They are motivated to learn grammar (02 students).



6-They must learn grammar because they intend to become teachers after their graduation (01 student).

7-A good learner should master grammar (01 student).

### Section Three: The Place of Grammar in Writing

15. Do you expect learning grammar will help you express clearly your ideas in writing?

-Yes

-No

Option	N	%
Yes	85	94.44
No	05	05.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.12.: Grammar as a Help to achieve Clarity of Ideas**

Table 4.12. shows that 94.44% of the students expect grammar to help them achieve clarity in writing.

16. Would you like to practise grammar within the Written Expression Course?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	72	80
<b>No</b>	18	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.13: The Students and Integrative Grammar Teaching**

According to Table 4.13., 80% of the surveyed students are in favour of practising grammar in the writing course.

17. Please, explain why.

.....

Out of 72 students, 66 would like to practise grammar in the WE course for the following reasons:

1-There is an obvious relationship between them:

-the students learn grammar rules to apply them in writing to express clearly their ideas (09 students).

-They complete each other (09 students).

-Grammar and WE have the same goal: helping the students become good writers (01 student).

2-Practising grammar in WE has several advantages. It will help the students:

-to remember the rules (12 students).

-to clarify their ideas and to be understood by the reader (their teachers) (03 students).

-to acquire grammatical knowledge through the practice of writing (02 students).

-to practice grammar and writing at the same time (07 students).

-It offers them choices to express their ideas (02 students).

3-WE is the only context:

- to apply what they study in grammar (01 student).
- to improve their grammatical knowledge (01 student).
- to evaluate their grammatical knowledge (03 students).

4-It will be challenging because:

- it is more difficult to practise grammar in context (the WE course) (02 student).
  - it makes them pay attention to their mistakes (01 student).
- 5-it will oblige the students to write correctly by respecting grammar rules like tenses and word order (09 students).
- 6-They consider grammar rules as good guides in writing (02 students)
- 7-Sometimes, grammar is more important than the ideas or vocabulary of the text (02 students).

17 students explained that they are against practising grammar in the Written Expression course because:

1-There is no need to link them; the students have already a Grammar course (02 students).

2-They want to keep them separated:

- They want to have enough time to practise each one on its own (02 students).
- In writing, they learn how to develop and organise their ideas, and in grammar how to develop their language and write correct sentences (04 students).
- “I prefer to study each module alone so that I can improve my level in each one of them.” (02 students)
- They want first to acquire enough grammatical knowledge in the Grammar course (01 student).

-They are not able to do so because they expect it will be too demanding. They prefer learning Written Expression step by step (gradual building up) like in the Grammar course (01 student).

-The Grammar course is devoted to learn grammar rules; these rules will be applied further in writing (02 student).

-It is important to take time in learning each one separately in order to be able to assimilate the grammatical rules, and what they learn in WE to avoid confusion (03 students).

18. Linking grammar with the types of texts you are required to write will help you improve your writing.

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	88	97.78
<b>No</b>	01	01.11
<b>No answer</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.14.: Students' Attitudes to Linking Grammar with Writing Genres**

The majority of the surveyed students (97.78%), as it is shown in Table 4.14., think that linking grammar with the genres they are required to produce will help them improve their writing skills.

19. Applying grammar rules in writing helps you to remember these rules.

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	89	98.89
<b>No</b>	/	/
<b>No answer</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.15.: Remembering Grammar Rules through Writing**

Table 4.15. reveals that, according to 98.89% of the students, applying grammar rules in writing helps them to remember these rules. The answer to this question was already provided by some students in the explanations they gave about why they would like to practise grammar in the WE course (p.174).

20. Improving your grammar will contribute to improve your writing.

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	87	96.67
<b>No</b>	03	03.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.16.: Improving Grammar improves Writing**

96.67% of the students believe that improving their grammar will contribute to improve their writing (as provided in Table 4.16.).

21. Please, explain why.

.....

Among the 87 students who answered “Yes” to Q.20, 68 students justified their views according to the following considerations:

1-Grammar influences students’ writing in the sense that:

- It helps them achieve clarity which is sometimes more important than the ideas (14 students).
- It contributes to make their writing effective (08 students).
- It helps them to write correctly (17 students).
- A good writing style come from a good grammar (01 student).
- They must learn grammar to be able to write (01 student).
- Good grammar means good writing (02 student).
- Grammar is a tool for linking their ideas and sentences together (01 student).

2-By achieving clarity, the students will achieve many things:

- they will make their writing meaningful and easy to understand (02 student).
- a good grammatical knowledge facilitates writing (01 student).
- part of good writing is the use of well-structured sentences (01 student).

3-Improving their grammar will reduce the stress they feel when they are writing:

- by reducing grammar mistakes (05 students).
- by reducing mistakes, they will reduce difficulties in writing (03 students).

-they will not worry another time when they are writing because they will reduce their problems of how to use grammar and will have the opportunity to focus more on their ideas (01 student).

4-Grammar is the basis of writing (08 students).

5-It is the basic skill in learning to write (02 student).

6-Grammar is the skeleton of language (01 student).

The 3 students who consider that improving their grammar will not improve their writing explained that:

-Grammar is not the only element of good writing (02 students).

-a good grammatical knowledge cannot always make of them good writers because the parameters of a good piece of writing are not always defined (01 student).

22. Problems with grammar will cause you to lose marks in examination essays like in Civilisation and Literature.

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	81	90
<b>No</b>	08	08.89
<b>No answer</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.17.: Grammar Problems influencing Grades of Examination Essays**

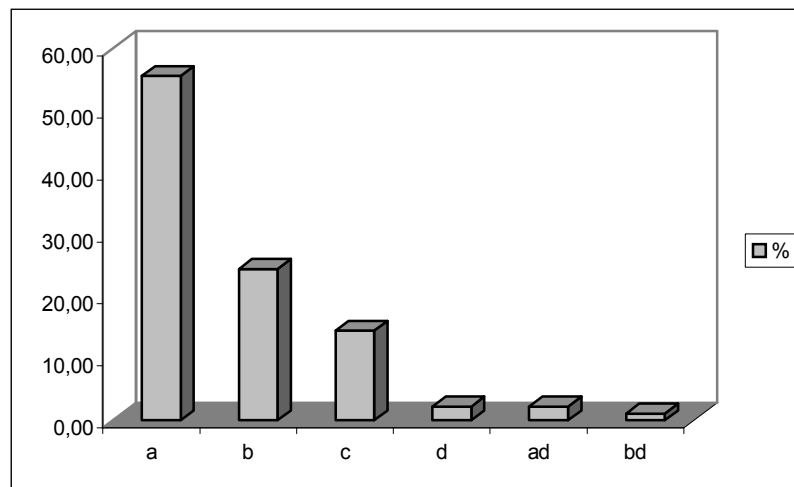
90% of the students consider that grammatical problems are responsible in lowering their grades in examination essays.

23. When you are writing, you take into consideration grammar, when you:

- a-Start writing your ideas on the rough paper.
- b-Have finished writing down your ideas on the rough paper.
- c-Start writing the final version.
- d-Are revising your final version.

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	50	55.56
<b>b</b>	22	24.45
<b>c</b>	13	14.44
<b>d</b>	02	02.22
<b>ad</b>	02	02.22
<b>bd</b>	01	01.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.18.: Students' Focus on Grammar during the Process of Writing**



**Graph 4.18.: Students' Focus on Grammar during the Process of Writing**



According to Table 4.18., 57.78 % (55.56 “a” + 02.22 “ad”) of the learners take into account the grammatical aspect when they begin to write down their ideas on the rough paper, 25.56 % (24.45 “b” + 01.11 “bd”) consider it when they have finished writing their ideas on the rough paper, and only 14.44% focus on grammar when editing their writing.

24. When you are writing, you are able to focus on:

- a-Grammar only.
- b-Writing down your ideas only.
- c-Both.

Option	N	%
a	/	/
b	05	05.55
c	85	94.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.19.: Students’ Ability to Focus on Writing and Grammar**

Table 4.19. shows that 94.45% of the surveyed students consider themselves as able to focus on both grammar and writing down their ideas during the process of writing.

#### **Section Four: Further Suggestions**

25. Please, add any further comment about the place of grammar in the teaching of writing.

Among the respondents, 60 students provided the following suggestions as summarised below:

### I-The place of grammar in teaching/learning writing:

- It has a central role (20 students).
- It makes them progress in writing (02 student).
- It is a necessary aspect in writing (04 students).
- The students consider it as the organising framework of their writing (02 students).
- It is a tool that helps them to express themselves better (03 students).
- A good control of grammar guarantees that the reader will understand the ideas and receive the message (05 students).
- It reinforces the students' linguistic abilities (03 students).
- It contributes to improve their level in learning English (05 students).
- Grammar must be taught at in any step of writing (01 student).
- Unlike speaking, they need more grammar to express their ideas (01 student).
- Good writing is partly due to a good grammar and a right use of its rules (01 student).

### II-Grammar and the teacher of writing:

- A good teacher of WE must first know the grammar rules, because it helps the teacher to give to his students a correct use of the language (01 student).
- They would like their teacher of writing to deal more with grammar in his/her classroom (01 student).

### III-Grammar and writing:

- Grammar must be linked to the teaching of WE to improve their level and to remember grammar rules (01 student).
- It must be given the principal place in writing (01 student).
- We must link grammar and writing by using text analysis and showing all the aspects of language in this text.” (01 student)

-Grammar is part of writing and each one completes the other (01 student).

-Through the practice of writing, they can see the majority of exceptions in grammar (02 student).

IV-Grammar and time allocation:

-Grammar is important in language learning, and therefore, it should be given more consideration by giving more hours to the grammar course (01 student).

V-Grammar and the programme of WE:

-In the programme of WE, they would like to have more grammar not only types of sentences (01 student).

VI-Goals of learning/teaching grammar:

-The primary goal of learning grammar is for improving their writing and speaking skills not for itself (01 student).

VII-Grammar and language learning in general:

-Grammar is essential in learning English; the more they practise it, the more language learning becomes easier (01 student).

-Grammar should be taught at any stage of writing or language learning, with the addition of practice in other modules such as Civilisation and Literature. The rules should also be simplified and concise (01 student).

#### **4.1.4. Interpretation of the Results**

In learning writing, the students' answers revealed that the learners place grammar at a secondary position after vocabulary. The results of Q1 are interesting because, at first glance, we expect that organisation of ideas represents the most important aspect for the students, but in fact, what is important for them is the amount of

vocabulary necessary to express their ideas. Concerning the objectives of the students in learning writing, 71.11% learn to write to reach the level of native speakers. These students do not measure the difficulty to establish norms or parameters about the level of native speakers. On the other hand, 22.22% (20 “a” + 02.22 “ac”) of the students learn writing to be able to produce different types of texts. These students are pragmatic and show an ability to distinguish what is feasible in the writing classroom. Accordingly, the teacher should provide the learners with a set of objectives that will give them a clear idea about what is expected from them in the WE courses. Concerning the students’ writing abilities, they are not homogeneous. In fact, according the learners, 54.44% regard themselves as being able to write extended texts, whereas 40% can only write at the level of the paragraph. Even if the students have different writing abilities, it is not discouraging because integrative grammar teaching requires writing beyond the sentence-level. In writing, 56.66% of the students consider exposition as the most difficult genre in writing followed by comparison and contrast at 30.01% (28.90 “d” + 01.11 “ad”). This may explain why most students feel anxiety and stress during certain examinations where expository essays are mostly required. On the basis of the students’ previous answers, especially to Q2, the time devoted to teaching WE is not sufficient to cover all the aspects they need to learn to write. It is quite logical to find the time to learning writing insufficient, because it is a long and complex process which is rather demanding from both the learner and the teacher.

As to learning grammar, 41.11% of the learners see grammar as a prescriptive enterprise whereas for 42.22% of them it represents a complete inventory of all the grammatical structures of a language. This shows clearly that the students have different conceptions of grammar. Therefore, the definition they give it will influence the role

they give it in developing their writing skills. In learning grammar, 57.78% of the students prefer inductive learning which favours discovery and problem solving. The fact that more than half of the students prefer to find grammar rules by themselves demonstrates that they have reached a level where they want to rely less on the teacher and that they are moving towards becoming problem-solvers. Nevertheless, this inductive learning is achieved through both the explanations given by the teacher and practice.

The majority of the learners (75.56%) consider that grammar terminology is not difficult to remember. This indicates that familiarising the students with the grammatical jargon since their first year is a good initiative to make them become familiar with these terms. Yet, 24.44 % of the students regard grammar terminology as difficult for several reasons amongst the various rules and terms they have to remember. Other reasons include the fact that grammar has many exceptions, that the students rarely use grammar terminology, and the confusion created by the different terminology used in certain grammar books.

43.33% of the students consider English grammar difficult mainly because English is not their native language, it has several rules, and it comprise exceptions. For 56.67 % of the students, however, English grammar is not difficult because of three major reasons: clear explanations which will facilitate retention of the rules, a lot of practice, and motivation. Even if some learners find English grammar difficult, almost the totality of the students agree on the fact that learning grammar is essential because it influences language learning as a whole and writing in particular. The students consider grammar as the most important aspect of language learning because it plays a role in successful learning and contributes to help them in other areas in addition to helping

them acquire the language. Grammar influences writing in terms of achieving clarity in expressing and organising ideas as part of providing contextual clues to the reader, and learning to write a correct English. The importance students give to learning grammar is also influenced by motivation, their learning expectations, and their long-term objectives (i.e., what they intend to do after graduation).

Almost all the students expect from learning grammar to achieve clarity in expressing their ideas. This expectation is essential because it is at the core of integrative grammar teaching. Accordingly, most of the students show a desire to practise grammar in the context of writing. Only a small portion (20%) are against this initiative. For those who are for practising grammar in the WE course, it is mainly because grammar and writing are complementary; this will help them remember the rules, and it will be challenging because they will work with longer texts. In addition, it is a context for testing their grammatical knowledge and a consciousness-raising activity. The students who are against this idea argue that it is better to keep grammar and writing separated, mainly because each one of them tackles an aspect of writing. This enables the students to see the level of improvement in both, avoid confusion, and have enough time to process the knowledge acquired in both courses.

Nearly all the students answered positively to the idea of relating grammar with WE. The learners consider that linking grammar with the genres of texts they are expected to write will help them improve their writing (at least, to alleviate most of the language problems they have), and at the same time, it will help them remember grammar rules (a kind of consciousness-raising activity). Subsequently, 96.67% of the students believe that improving their grammar will have a positive impact on their writing skills. This view is based on the fact that grammar is an important aspect to

develop in writing because it is a necessary component of learning to write, and it positively or negatively influence the quality of ideas. By improving their grammar, they will reduce difficulties in writing. All this amounts in reducing the stress the student writers feel when attempting to express their ideas and contributes to render their writing effective. From a general perspective, most students agree that good writing implies partly a good grammatical knowledge. Nevertheless, a small number of the students consider that it takes more to be a good writer, and a good grammatical knowledge cannot always guarantee success in writing. This belief can be explained by certain types of writing assignments where the students have to show their ability to expose their ideas and support them with solid arguments and good examples.

Many learners are aware that, when they are writing in content areas like literature, the grammatical aspect is taken into consideration in the sense that gaps in this aspect may negatively influence the overall grade of the students' written production in these subjects, and may even cause the scorer to consider the student's writing as poor despite the ideas presented in the essay.

In the process of writing, more than half of the learners (57.78 %) focus on grammar in the planning stage, and a small percentage (14.44) takes it into consideration at the editing stage. The fact that most students consider that grammatical problems are responsible in lowering their grades in examination essays may explain their concerns with grammar since they start shaping their ideas. The fact that they are conscious that gaps in grammar can affect their grades incites them to focus on grammar right from the beginning of the writing process. This means that they are highly concerned with grammar even if they give it a secondary position after vocabulary (see Q1). 94.45% of

the students' answers revealed that they are capable of a certain degree of managing between content and grammar.

On the whole, the students showed that they feel concerned by what is taking place in the writing classroom and by language teaching. The students' suggestions revealed that grammar has a significant place in writing and intervenes in all the process of writing, and that it should be devoted sufficient time. In addition, the students suggested that a good teacher of writing is before all a good grammarian. S/he should have a solid grammatical knowledge to ensure an effective teaching of writing and to provide his/her students with as much strategies/tools as possible.

## **4.2.The Teachers' Questionnaire**

### **4.2.1.The Sample**

The teachers who responded to this questionnaire are teachers of WE and Grammar of Second Year LMD at the Department of English, University of Constantine. The total number of the teachers of WE and Grammar is 16, teaching English in an academic context. 16 questionnaires were handed in by the researcher and by colleagues and all the questionnaires were returned. Therefore, 16 represents our sample.

### **4.2.2.Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 23 questions. Most of the questions are close-ended, and for some questions, the teachers are requested to give explanations or suggest other alternatives. The questions were divided into five sections (see Appendix II).



### **-Section One: Teaching Writing (Q1 to Q7)**

The aim of this section is to get information from the teachers of WE about the students and the writing skill in terms of the actual level of the learners of Second Year (Q1). The definitions of the levels provided in the questionnaire were based on Buckingham's (1979) distinction of levels in teaching writing where "beyond the initial stage the boundaries between beginning, intermediate and advanced level students remain ill-defined, largely because of the lack of agreement on the nature of the component skills at each level and because of a lack of precise ways to categorize these skills" (241-242).

For instance, he defines the advanced level as the skills which "require students to produce anywhere from two logically connected sentences to entire paragraphs, themes, and longer units of discourse" (1979: 244). The definitions were devised for the context of writing only. The aim of Q1 is to know at which level of writing the students are (the sentence, the paragraph, or the essay) because integrative grammar teaching requires writing beyond the sentence-level. Q2 concerns the genre (s) students find the most difficult to write. The list provided was based on the program of the course of WE First and Second Year. The aim is to know whether teachers and students have the same opinion about this question. Section One concerns also teachers' opinions about whether the actual time allocation is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of the students (Q3), and their attitudes towards the Process Approach (Q4 to Q7).

### **-Section Two: Teaching Grammar (Q8 to Q13)**

In this section, the objective is to know the attitudes of the teachers of WE vis-à-vis grammar and the degree of importance they give it in their classroom. These attitudes

are first determined by whether the teachers of writing also teach grammar (Q8). This will determine whether the teachers find any occasion in the classroom to focus on grammar and how they manage to do so (Q9 to Q10a), whether they take into consideration grammar mistakes when correcting students' writing and to which extent (Q11 to Q12), and whether they think that grammar difficulties are likely to cause most students' problems in learning to write (Q13).

### **-Section Three: The place of Grammar in Writing (Q14 to Q17)**

This section concerns the teachers' opinions about integrative grammar teaching. The questions involve whether the concept of relating grammar to the teaching of writing can help the students improve their writing (Q14), whether providing students with grammatical information about the genres they are required to write is beneficial (Q15), whether the impact of grammar on students' grades (marks) in content areas like Literature or Civilisation (Q16), and whether they observe any link between what they learn in grammar and their writing (Q17).

### **-Section Four: Suggestions about Teaching Methodology (Q18 to Q22)**

The questions of this section were designed to obtain information about teaching methodology for an eventual introduction of grammar in a WE course: whether this will have any negative influence on the time devoted to teach WE (Q18) and if no, how much time it should be devoted (Q19), whether the existing number of students per group will allow the introduction of any kind of grammar teaching in the WE course (Q20), how the teachers consider collaborative teaching (Q21), and whether the latter will facilitate their work in teaching WE (Q22).

### -Section Five: Further Suggestions

In this section, the teachers are invited to give additional comments about the sections dealt with so far, or to make suggestions concerning integrative grammar teaching.

#### 4.2.3. Analysis of the Results

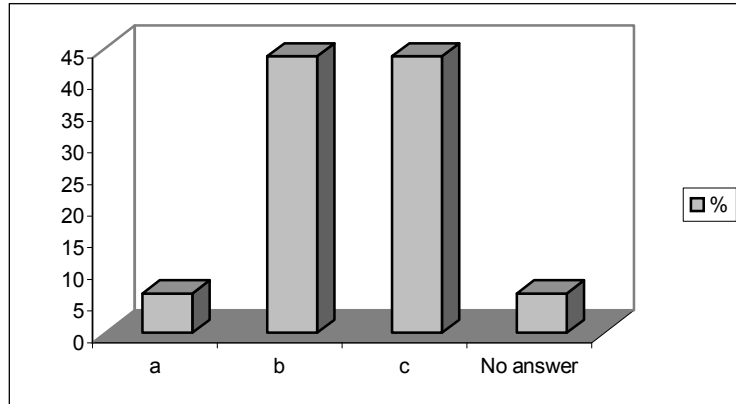
##### Section One: Teaching Writing

1. The actual level of most of your students in writing is:

- a-Beginner: still at the level of the sentence.
- b-Intermediate: able to write beyond the sentence-level but not extended pieces of writing, like essays.
- c-Advanced: able to write beyond the sentence-level and extended pieces of writing like essays.

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	01	06.25
<b>b</b>	07	43.75
<b>c</b>	07	43.75
<b>No answer</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.20.: Teachers' Evaluation of the Students' Level in WE**



**Graph 4.20.: Teachers' Evaluation of the Students' Level in WE**

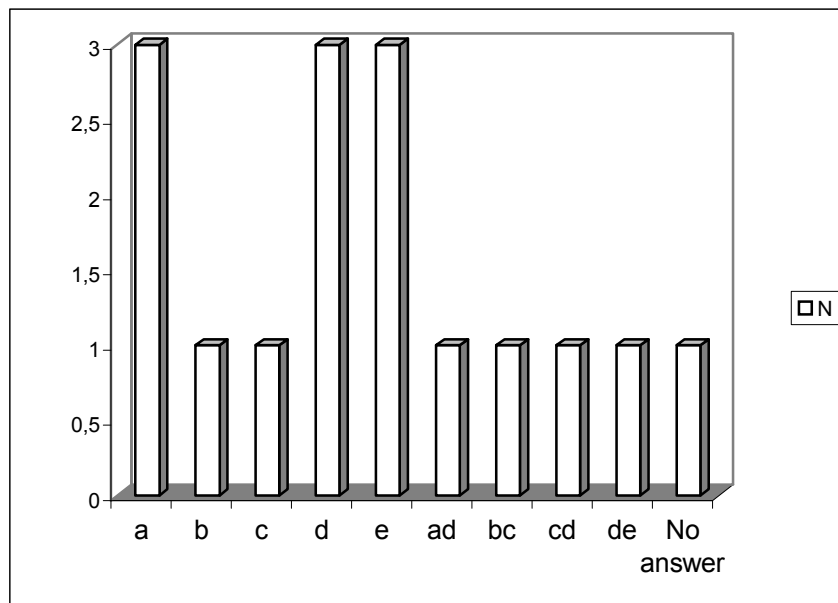
About half of the respondents (43.75%) consider their students able to write extended pieces of writing, and about half (43.75%) consider the students as being at an intermediate level, i.e., only able to write at the paragraph level.

2. What genre(s) of writing students find the most difficult?

- a-Exposition
- b-Narration
- c-Description
- d-Comparison and Contrast
- e-Other: Please, specify:.....

Option	N	%
<b>a</b>	03	18.75
<b>b</b>	01	06.25
<b>c</b>	01	06.25
<b>d</b>	03	18.75
<b>e</b>	03	18.75
<b>ad</b>	01	06.25
<b>bc</b>	01	06.25
<b>cd</b>	01	06.25
<b>de</b>	01	06.25
<b>No answer</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.21.: Teachers' View about Writing Genres Students find Difficult**



**Graph 4.21.: Teachers' View about Writing Genres Students find Difficult**

Table 4.21. shows that the teachers consider that ‘exposition’ [25% (18.75 “a” + 06.25 “ad”)] and ‘comparison and contrast’ [37.50% (18.75 “d” + 06.25 “ad” + 06.25 “cd” + 06.25 “de”)] are both difficult for the students.

The 04 teachers specified other types as follows:

-Classification (01 teacher)

-Argumentative and critical writing (01 teacher)

Other teachers answered the following:

-“Students find difficulties in the process itself: the four genres of writing tend to be alike.” (01 teacher)

-“It cannot be confirmed which genre is the most difficult because they still have not studied all the genres at this level.” (02 teachers)

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

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	04	25
<b>No</b>	11	68.75
<b>No answer</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.22.: Teachers’ Opinions about Time Allocation of WE**

More than half of the surveyed teachers (68.75%) think that the time allocated to teach WE is insufficient to cover the majority of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of their students.

4. Are you an advocate of a process approach to teach writing?

- Yes
- No

Option	N	%
Yes	14	87.50
No	/	/
No answer	02	12.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.23.: Teachers' Attitudes towards Process Writing**

87.50% of the teachers are advocates of a process approach to writing.

5. Please, explain why.

.....

12 teachers explained that they are inclined towards the process approach because:

-It makes the students aware that the process of writing is recursive and not linear, and that the product is constructed along the different stages of the process (02 teachers).

-While writing, the students should know that they are dealing with different steps of a process that they must respect (planning, drafting and revising) for the sake of their topic, their purpose of writing, and their audience (01 teacher).

-It focuses on the techniques and strategies that will help the students generate the written product (02 teachers).

-Through this approach, the students are encouraged to write even if they commit mistakes, and the flow of their ideas is not slowed down by form (01 teacher).

-It emphasises the steps that generate the final product. However, emphasis on grammar should not be left at the end of the process (01 teacher).

-It is the most efficient way to teach writing (01 teacher).

-It engages the students significantly in the process of writing by involving them in the activities and helping them become more aware of their own problems in writing (02 teachers).

-“It is difficult to apply it with the number of students in our classrooms and the number of hours allocated to teaching writing, but good writing does require going through the stages of the writing process. Many of our students do not respect the process and this is one of the habits they need to change. Asking them to rewrite their production (or part of it) helps raise their awareness to the necessity of the process of writing.” (01 teacher)

-“Learner’s creativity is given much more interest and sufficient importance which allows them to understand what they write and relate it to their personal experiences.” (01 teacher)

6. Do you think that a process approach is compatible with the students’ actual level?

-Yes

-No



<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	10	62.50
<b>No</b>	03	18.75
<b>No answer</b>	03	18.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.24: Compatibility of the Process Approach with Students’ Actual Level**

62.50% of the teachers consider that using a process approach to teach writing is compatible with the students’ level.

7. Please, explain why.

.....

08 teachers explained that the process approach is compatible with the students’ actual level on the basis that:

-The process approach encourages the students to write whatever their level. Students’ level does not hinder the process approach (01 teacher).

-“I think it has no relation with the student’s level since, through this approach, we are teaching him how a piece of writing is built up.” (01 teacher)

-The students are in their second year, i.e., they have acquired basic skills of writing (01 teacher).

-“Second year students have been introduced to paragraph development in the first year, and in the second year, they learn the different stages of the writing process. In addition to this, students like to work in groups and to exchange thoughts and they want to be evaluated by teachers and by peers. I think they are in a level of maturity”. (01 teacher)

-As writers at the university level, they have acquired sufficient knowledge to cope with the requirements of a process approach to achieve fluency not just accuracy and cover all the steps of the process (04 teachers).

Three (03) teachers think that the process approach is incompatible with the students' actual level because:

-The approach is difficult to apply at this level (02 teachers).

-“The process approach should not be the only focus of a writing class. It seems that our students need to work on both the linguistic aspects of the language and the graphic representation of that language in order to express meaningful texts. An eclectic approach, using the reformulation technique for example, can lead to quite interesting results.” (01 teacher)

**Section Two: Teaching Grammar**

8. Do you teach the grammar module?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	08	50
<b>No</b>	08	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.25.: The Number of WE Teachers Teaching Grammar**

50% of the teachers of WE also teach the grammar module.

9. In the writing classroom, do you find occasions where you might focus on language structures/grammar?

-Yes

-No

Option	N	%
Yes	15	93.75
No	/	/
No answer	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.26.: Teachers Focus on Grammar in the WE Course**

93.75% of the teachers find occasions to focus on language structures in the classroom.

10.a. If “Yes”, please, explain how do you manage to do so.

.....

14 teachers described the procedures they follow to focus on grammar in the writing classroom as described below:

1-Focus generally occurs **at the revision stage** of the process of writing where more attention is paid to tenses, sentence structure, etc. Occasionally, the teacher is obliged to give a **grammatical review** before this stage if the students’ mistakes are really serious (01 teacher).

2-**When giving feedback** to the students:

-students’ attention is focused on some of their mistakes including grammatical ones, thus, **explaining** and **correcting** the errors. (01 teacher)

**-during practice and the correction of students' essays**, the teachers focus on language structures and grammar. When students commit grammatical mistakes, for instance tenses, the teacher corrects these mistakes with some explanations (03 teachers).

**3-In the form of a mini-lesson** where the teacher attracts the students' attention to the structure, asks if it is correct or wrong, invites the learners to give their point of view, and gives his explanation and adds further information giving examples (01 teacher).

**4-When it is necessary:**

-“Sometimes, we find ourselves dealing with grammar lessons when we find the necessity to do so. This kind of **interference** takes **the form of practice**” (01 teacher).

-“I try to **give rules**, or, sometimes when someone makes a mistake, I write the sentence on the board and ask the students to find the problem and correct it.” (01 teacher)

**-explain it from time to time** (01 teacher).

-“When it is necessary, I just insert them to make the writing techniques clearer.” (01 teacher)

-“If the student writer has expressed an interesting idea using an inappropriate grammatical structure, the sentence is rephrased and the linguistic elements are discussed. The teacher can this way target different grammatical issues in a single writing session.” (01 teacher)

**5-Focusing on the grammatical aspects related to the genre being taught:**

-“For example, we usually teach the transitions that go with each type of development we introduce and this is an occasion to **emphasise their grammatical properties** (structure, punctuation, etc.)” (01 teacher)

-“I focus on language structures related to the type of writing development being taught.

For instance, in cause-effect writing, I revise modals, conditionals(01 teacher).

6-Grammar is tackled during the grammar course (01 teacher).

10.b. If “No”, please explain the reasons that prevent you from doing so.

.....

No answer was provided for this question as the majority of the teachers find occasions to focus on language structures in the classroom.

11. When correcting students’ papers, do you take into account grammar mistakes?

-Yes

-No

All the teachers take into consideration the grammatical mistakes of the students when correcting their papers as they provided in the previous question.

12. If “Yes”, how?

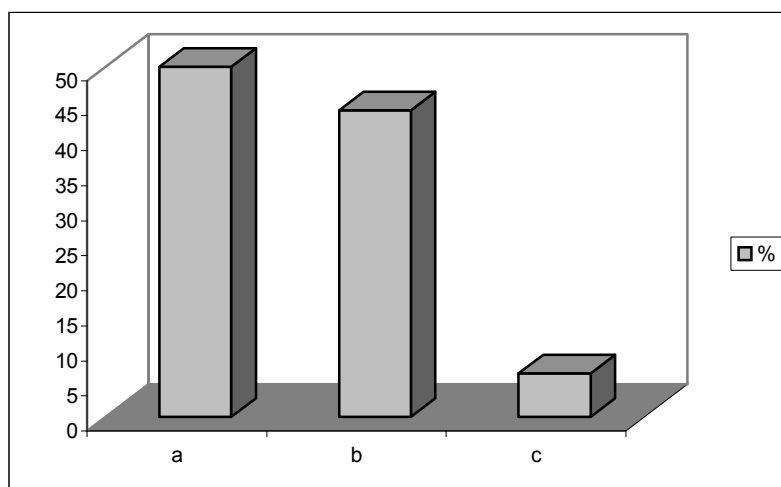
a-All the mistakes.

b-Only major mistakes.

c-Other: Please, specify:.....

Option	N	%
a	08	50
b	07	43.75
c	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.27.: The Way Teachers correct Grammar Mistakes**



**Graph 4.27.: The Way Teachers correct Grammar Mistakes**

50% of the respondents take into consideration all the grammatical mistakes they detect when correcting students' writing. On the other hand, 43.75% focus only on major mistakes, i.e. serious ones. 01 teacher specified that s/he takes into account only the mistakes that hinder communication, i.e., the understanding of the ideas.

13. Difficulties with grammar are likely to cause students most problems when writing.

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	15	93.75
<b>No</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.28.: Grammar Difficulties as the Major Cause of Students' Problems in Writing**

93.75% of the surveyed teachers consider grammar difficulties as the major cause of students problems in writing.

### **Section Three: The place of Grammar in Writing**

14. If grammar is related to the teaching of Written Expression, will this contribute to make the students improve their writing?

- Yes
- No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	15	93.75
<b>No</b>	/	/
<b>No answer</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.29.: Linking Grammar to WE as a Means to improve Students' Writing**

A large majority of the teachers (93.75%) believe that linking grammar with the teaching of writing will play a part in improving students' writing.

15. Providing students with grammatical information about the genres they are required to write is beneficial.

-Yes

-No

All the teachers think that providing the students with grammatical information related to the genres they are expected to write is helpful.

16. If students are helped to reduce their problems with grammar, will this improve their grades (marks) in content areas like Literature or Civilisation?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	13	81.25
<b>No</b>	01	06.25
<b>No answer</b>	02	12.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.30.: Improving Students' Grades through Reduction of Grammar Problems**

In Table 4.32., we can notice that 81.25% of the teachers believe that reducing students' problems with grammar will positively influence their grades in content areas like literature. This may be due to the teachers' observation of this fact in their course where students already write for content.



17. When you correct the students' papers, do you observe any connection between what they are learning in grammar and their writing?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	12	75
<b>No</b>	04	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.31.: Students' Use of Grammatical Knowledge in Writing**

More than half of the teachers confirm that when correcting students' papers, they perceive that the students use their grammatical knowledge while writing, i.e., they make a connection between grammar and writing.

#### **Section Four: Suggestions about Teaching Methodology**

##### **-Time Allocation**

18. Do you think that a focus on grammar within a course of Written Expression will waste valuable time?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	07	43.75
<b>No</b>	09	56.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.32.: Time Allocation for Grammar in a WE Course**

56.25% of the respondents, as shown by Table 4.34, think that a focus on grammar within a WE course will not waste valuable time, whereas 43.75% believe that this focus will negatively affect the time devoted to the course of WE.

19. If there is any focus on grammar in a course of Written Expression, how much time should it be devoted with regard to the total time allocated to teaching writing?

.....

14 teachers answered that a focus on grammar in a WE course should not monopolise the time of teaching writing and that it should be:

1-a little time:

-“less than the half time allocated to teaching writing because this is the job of the grammar teacher.” (01 teacher)

-“only when giving feedback, thus it depends on the quality of mistakes students make.” (01 teacher)

-“Just short remembrances.” (01 teacher)

2-At most a third share of the total time (02 teacher).

3-40% of the total time (01 teacher).

4-15 minutes for each session as a review especially at the beginning of the year, depending on the aspects dealt with, or to draw students’ attention to grammar (04 teachers).

5-4h30 per week (01 teacher).

6-During 1 session (1h30), half an hour (30 minutes) is quite enough (02 teachers).

**-The Number of Students**

20. Does the existing number of students per group allow the introduction of any kind of grammar teaching in the Written Expression course?

- Yes
- No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	09	56.25
<b>No</b>	07	43.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.33.: Compatibility of Integrative Grammar Teaching with Students' Number**

56.25% of the respondents think that the actual number of students per group does not represent a difficulty to the introduction of any kind of grammar teaching in the writing course.

**-Individual vs. Collaborative Teaching**

21. If it is possible to include grammatical aspects into a writing lesson, do you want to:

- a-Do it yourself?
- b-Leave it to the grammar teacher?
- c-Work in collaboration with the grammar teacher?

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a</b>	04	25
<b>b</b>	/	/
<b>c</b>	12	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.34.: Teachers' Application of Grammar in WE**

According to Table 36, 75% of the teachers show a positive attitude towards the initiative of working in collaboration with the teachers of grammar. In comparison, only 25% of the teachers prefer individual teaching.

22. Collaborating with the grammar teacher about the kind of grammatical items to teach the students will facilitate your work in teaching Written Expression?

-Yes

-No

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	15	93.75
<b>No</b>	01	06.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.35.: Teachers' Attitudes towards Collaborative Teaching**

As it can be noticed in Table 37, the vast majority of the teachers (93.75%) consider that determining the kind of grammatical items to teach the students in collaboration with the grammar teacher will facilitate their work in teaching writing.

## Section Five: Further Suggestions

23. Please, add any further comment about the place of grammar in the teaching of writing.

12 of the surveyed teachers gave several useful comments summarised as follows:

1-Grammar plays a vital and essential role in the teaching of writing because:

-“it negatively or positively influences students’ writing performance.” (01 teacher)

-it enables the students to write correctly (01 teacher)

-“I believe that grammar gives a particular flavour in the teaching of writing. Grammar represents form. It is the framework of writing that is why the writer should devote time to this aspect.” (01 teacher)

-The importance of grammar is not limited only to the teaching of writing, but also to other areas like literature or civilisation. (01 teacher)

2-The experience as a former learner and as a teacher is very influential on the basis that:

-in content modules such as Literature, Civilisation and TEFL, the mark allocated to the essays the students are required to write takes into account, to a considerable degree, the **form** of the essay. In other words, grammar is the skeleton on which each piece of writing is based (01 teacher).

-“grammar is an extremely important factor to achieve at least an accurate writing because sometimes you can convince your reader with the way you use your words (grammatically) rather than with your ideas.” (01 teacher)

3-The teacher’s understanding of grammar has a considerable impact on the role it plays in the writing classroom. The teacher of WE should:

-“first teach grammar; he must first be aware of the different grammar rules then move to types (genres) of writing. Written Expression is both rules and ideas, i.e., expressing ideas in a correct good language.” (01 teacher)

-“focus on the grammar items which may create problems to students in their writing and also those related to the writing genre he is teaching”. (01 teacher)

4-A collaboration between teachers of WE and teachers of grammar is important and offers several advantages:

-“A successful academic paper is a paper combining pertinent ideas and appropriate grammatical structures. A collaboration between grammar teachers and WE teachers seems to be a prerequisite if we want to help efficiently our students to become mature writers.” (01 teacher)

-“focusing on given grammar structures would help students in getting rid of common mistakes that impact negatively the understanding of the student’s intended message.” (01 teacher)

-“Grammar is an inseparable element from writing. This is why they should not be taught in isolation from one another. The grammar lesson should be part of the writing course or at least **taught in collaboration and as a response to students’ needs that are depicted in the writing session.**” (01 teacher)

However, 1 teacher went further in suggesting that “grammar should not be the focal point in teaching writing because other aspects might be more important.” Another teacher added that collaboration between teachers of grammar and writing is helpful, but may not be always applicable because of many reasons mainly the attitudes towards collaborative teaching and working conditions (01 teacher).

#### **4.2.4. Interpretation of the Results**

In the writing classroom, 43.75% of the teachers see most of their students at an advanced level, whereas 43.75% consider them at an intermediate level. This difference in situating the level of the students can be related to the fact that the classes are not homogeneous in terms of writing abilities. Compared to the students' answers to a comparable question, both teachers and learners have approximately a similar perception of the students' levels in writing. Concerning the genres of writing, the teachers of WE view that 'exposition' and 'comparison and contrast' represent the most difficult types of writing for the learners. This view is also shared by the students, but with a slight variance in which the learners consider the expository genre as highly difficult to write. Similarly to the students, the teachers consider that the current time allocation does not enable them to cover most of the elements the students need to develop their writing skills. This means that both students and teachers are on the same wavelength concerning time allocation.

In teaching WE, the majority of the teachers are advocates of the Process Approach because, through this approach, the students will experience writing as a recursive process where they can move back and forth as much as necessary through the steps of the process to satisfy their purpose and the expectations of their audience, and are provided with techniques and strategies to generate their texts. This Process Approach helps the learners become self-reliant and encourages their creativity and their ability to express themselves without being blocked by concerns with form. As most students are able to write beyond the sentence-level, 62.50% of the teachers think that teaching writing based on a process approach is applicable regarding their level. This belief is based on the fact that the students possess the basic skills of writing and are

mature enough to cope with the requirements of a process approach. However, some teachers argued that, at this level, the approach is difficult to apply. In addition to that, what really the students need to learn is the linguistic aspects of the language.

Concerning the teaching of grammar, half the teachers of WE are also teachers of grammar. The aim of this question is to see whether the fact of teaching both WE and grammar influence in any way the teaching of writing, and whether this gives the teachers a more widened view about grammar. The fact that the vast majority (93.75%) of the teachers find occasions where they might focus on language structures/grammar in the WE classroom reveals that, even if only 50% of the teachers of WE teach grammar, this does not prevent those who do not teach it to focus on languages structures in their classroom. However, focus on grammar/language structures is not done systematically at each session of writing. Most of this focus is undertaken when a point is raised in students' writing and when the teacher considers it important to tackle. In other words, focus occurs only when it is necessary. It takes the form of:

**-focused feedback** where the teachers deal only with the most salient mistakes by correcting the mistake and explaining the use of the structure or the grammatical item;

**-tips during the revision stage**, such as the use of tenses, or at other stages of the process of writing if the students need a grammar review;

**-mini-lessons/short lessons** done inductively;

**-only when necessary** in the form of practice, hints to help the students understand the writing techniques, or strategies to help students express their ideas clearly and appropriately;

**-highlighting the grammatical elements related to the genre being taught**, for instance, teaching the conditional in cause-effect writing.



All teachers of WE insist on correcting students' grammatical mistakes. This shows that they are aware of the importance of correcting grammar mistakes and that they are committed to tackle all the aspects of writing. 50% of the teachers take into account all the grammatical mistakes the students commit, which is a tremendous task, and 43.75% consider that only serious mistakes are to be taken into account, especially those which inhibit communication.

Almost all the teachers (93.75%) agree that difficulties in the area of grammar represent the major source of students' problems when writing. This means that, even if most of the teachers favour a process-based teaching of writing, they nevertheless recognise that grammar is also an important aspect to develop in teaching writing. Accordingly, 93.75% of the teachers are convinced that relating grammar with writing represents a good initiative that will contribute in helping the students improve their writing. All the teachers argue that providing the students with the grammatical aspects specific to the genres they are supposed to write will offer great benefits. These benefits will be manifested in content areas where the learners will be evaluated for their abilities to increase the amount of language and where, in some cases, for their ability to develop their ideas in certain ways like comparing between two characters or more of a novel or a play. Consequently, this may positively influence their grades in these subjects.

Several teachers notice in the students' papers a link between the learners' grammatical knowledge and their writing. Whatever the intensity of this connection, what is important is to reinforce this link and develop the students' capacity to balance between their grammatical knowledge and their ability to write their ideas without being blocked by grammar.

With regard to teaching methodology, the opinions of the teachers are divided about time allocation. Some teachers consider that a focus on grammar in the writing course is not beneficial. This may be due to the fact that some teachers of WE already teach the grammar module which is entirely devoted to deal with the grammatical aspect. On the other hand, some teachers believe that this focus will not disrupt in any case the course of WE. This can be explained by some of the techniques or strategies they use in their classroom when they focus on grammar, and to the fact that this focus is done only when the teacher feels the necessity to do so. The majority of the teachers explained that the amount of time devoted to grammar in a course of WE should be, in any case, inferior to the time devoted to teach writing. This varies between 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes per session, mainly to review some grammar points and to give corrective feedback. However, one teacher proposed 4h30 per week, implying that this should be allocated to teach the grammar module. On the whole, the fact that most teachers proposed that a focus on grammar in the writing classroom should be devoted a little time with regard to the total time suggests that, since grammar is taught on its own and that some of the teachers of WE also teach grammar, they expect much of the work to be done in the grammar course.

The introduction of grammar teaching in the writing classroom depends on the number of the students per class. 56.25% of the teachers estimate that the existing number of students allows it, whereas 43.75% think that it is not possible to do so. For the latter, the reason is that, generally, the classrooms that include a large number of learners are difficult to manage. A solution to remedy this problem is the exploitation of the advantages of groupwork and pairwork depending on the learners and the tasks they are assigned.

Most teachers showed a positive attitude towards working in collaboration with the teachers of grammar and deciding about the kind of grammatical items to be taught. This attitude is very constructive because it will benefit both teachers and students: it will alleviate the task of the writing teacher whose job is rather tremendous and laborious regarding all what is expected from him/her in teaching the learners to write, and will help the students to relate what they learn in grammar with what they learn in writing under the mutual agreement of both teachers of grammar and writing.

Many teachers provided us with several interesting suggestions. Grammar is an important aspect in teaching writing and has a considerable impact on students' writing. The teachers' beliefs influence greatly their conception of grammar and the role they assign it in their classroom. But the most important issue is that, focusing on the aspects the students need most and on the areas of weaknesses that deserve improvement will lead to make the teaching of writing effective. Effective teaching is sometimes achieved through mutual agreement and cooperation between teachers. This collaboration must have as objective to satisfy the needs of the students. However, this kind of collaboration should not be regarded by the teachers as an interference in their job or as an obligation if this kind of teaching is to succeed.

## **Conclusion**

The present investigation reveals that both students and teachers consider grammar an important aspect to develop in learning to write and intervenes in all the process of writing. Even if the teachers of writing advocate a process approach, they nevertheless do not neglect the role that grammar plays in the writing classroom and are aware that gaps in this aspect can affect students' writing. For both teachers and students, grammar negatively or positively influences writing and is essential in language learning as a whole.

Both learners and teachers show a positive attitude towards integrative grammar teaching: for the students, it is practical and challenging; for the teachers, it is beneficial and will facilitate their work in teaching writing. To make the teaching of writing effective, looking for what is most useful for the learners is the most important task of the teachers.

On the whole, for both teachers and learners, grammar is the framework on which writing is constructed and an enterprise worth considering.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Introduction

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Relating the teaching of writing to grammar instruction is a complex task regarding all the factors to be taken into account. The students' and teachers' questionnaires revealed that taking into account the students' needs and looking for the grammatical structures which characterise the writing genres can help in applying integrative grammar teaching. They also showed students' preferences in learning grammar and writing, and teachers' practices in teaching grammar in relation to teaching composition.

On the whole, both teachers and students consider that grammar negatively or positively influences writing and plays a significant role in learning writing. They also view grammar as a necessary aspect to develop in learning writing because it is its organising framework and a tool to reinforce the linguistic abilities. If grammar instruction is to be linked with the teaching of WE, it will be helpful for the teachers to develop grammar-oriented activities with the help of the grammar teacher, to help the students edit grammatical errors in their writing productions, to provide them with a variety of syntactic strategies and options for composing to shape effectively their ideas, and to help them understand how grammar contributes to meaning not only at the sentence-level but also at the discourse-level.

This chapter provides a set of guidelines and suggestions to help the teachers apply integrative grammar teaching in the Written Expression classroom.

## **5.1. Foundations of Integrative Grammar Teaching**

Relating grammar to writing instruction needs to take into consideration the implementation of a contextualised grammar, the students' needs, the objectives of the course, and the existing materials.

### **5.1.1. The Implementation of a Contextualised Grammar**

Relating grammar and writing is first of all dependent on the learners' and the teachers' beliefs. As most students consider that grammar and writing are complementary, writing should be seen as a good context to apply their grammatical knowledge, to notice their mistakes, and to remember the grammatical rules. Integrative grammar teaching is challenging for them because it requires from the students more effort to pay attention to grammar while they are writing their ideas. As to the teachers, their beliefs influence greatly the role of grammar in the teaching of writing, i.e., grammar is dependent on whether they are convinced of its importance and about the ways to use it more effectively.

It is important to take into account the time devoted to teach WE because time is not enough in the classroom regarding what is expected from the students to learn. Integrative grammar teaching compensates for this lack of time. The teachers of WE suggested that the focus on grammar in the WE course should be short; this implies a duration of 15mn to a maximum of 30 minutes per session in the form of mini-lessons if the problem does not require extended explanations. However, if the problem needs more focus and more time, the grammar course will serve this purpose.

The success of integrative grammar teaching requires an extensive view of what grammar is. The efficiency of grammar depends on regarding it as a resource that offers

alternatives for expressing ideas and not an end in itself. This kind of grammar should be “contextualised, i.e. presented in a meaningful context, text-based, i.e. presented beyond one sentence, and student-centered, i.e. students’ own errors provide the outline of the grammar syllabus- what is taught and when it is taught” (Keh 1991: 17-18).

In addition to these features, in applying integrative grammar teaching, the teacher should emphasise more practice than theory, because its main goal is to foster linguistic performance in the learners. S/he should also ensure that this kind of teaching is ‘cumulative’, i.e., building on the structures that learners already know like for instance the identification of nouns, verbs, prepositions, and adverbs and the different roles they play in sentences.

Accordingly, integrative grammar teaching is going to be mostly context-bound, functional, and dependent on the students and their particular needs. It is flexible since it is largely applicable with different genres and different grammar items.

### **5.1.2.Needs Analysis**

Before applying integrative grammar teaching, the teacher should carry out a needs analysis which will reflect perceptions and priorities of the students, and will make modifications to be acceptable to them. First of all, a short test in the form of a written production will be helpful to see the overall level of the students as individuals, and the level of the group as whole, and to see areas of weaknesses with identification of problematic grammar items. Then, the students’ texts will be analysed in terms of what grammatical aspects deserve most attention.



### **5.1.3.Objectives**

The efficiency of integrative grammar teaching is partly dependent on a well-organised framework that implies a clear specification of a set of objectives. As time in the classroom is short and precious, this step will guarantee that the teacher will not introduce grammatical items that will not correspond to the students' needs. Defining objectives can be achieved with joint help of the teachers of grammar and WE. Both can agree on a set of grammar items to be taught and communicate this to the students. Of course, as students' needs may change, what is going to be taught may change.

Before setting up objectives in integrative grammar teaching, several elements including what types of text will be focused on, what grammatical aspects will be addressed in relation to these types, and what procedures to follow for this purpose should be taken into account. Integrative grammar teaching aims mainly at developing students' awareness about grammar in their writing through an increase of their grammatical resources, and making them gradually become independent from the teacher. On this basis, one objective is that students will practise error awareness in order to reduce the number of the most salient types of errors through editing independently their writing (Hinkel 2004).

From a general perspective, the most important goal of integrative grammar teaching is increasing learners' language gain by using a few 'shortcuts' and using it as an efficient means to expand student writers' 'arsenals'. This will help them become better equipped for their academic survival.

#### **5.1.4. Materials**

The most valuable material in the classroom is students' own texts as they represent authentic language and offer the teacher an opportunity to target areas of conflict and difficulty. The WE teacher can give to the grammar teacher the texts students produce in the classroom as a response to assignments. The grammar teacher analyses the texts, taking into account only the grammatical aspects. From this analysis, s/he can make a corpus of the most salient errors that emerge from students' texts keeping a record of these errors as they appear in students' texts, i.e., in their real context. This corpus of errors will constitute the basic source from which the courses will be developed. Of course, the grammatical items/structures that will be addressed in the courses should be relevant to the students' needs and to the genres they are required to produce.

### **5.2. Teaching Practices in Integrative Grammar**

Integrative grammar teaching necessitates a well-organised course and a description of the writing genres students are expected to write. It also needs to take into account students' learning preferences and motivation, and teachers' attitudes towards collaborative teaching.

#### **5.2.1. The Organisation of the Integrative Grammar Course**

In organising the integrative grammar course, the teacher should ensure that there is a balance between grammar and content, a selection in the grammatical aspects and the terminology, focused feedback and regular testing.

Integrative grammar teaching is principally meaning-based, but when it is necessary, it can become form-based. The teacher can make the learners move from a

mechanical stage to a communicative one and vice versa. This balance will ensure that the students will not get bored and will help the teacher sustain a reasonable degree of motivation in the learners.

Most teachers of WE are selective in the choice of the grammatical aspects they focus on in their classroom. This means that not every problematic issue in students' writing needs necessarily to be addressed in the course. For instance, issues of comma splices and spelling, even if they are problematic, are less important than verb tense and word order. In addition, selection aims at using the time in the classroom in the most efficient way and developing practical and useful skills that are relevant to producing academic writing. Therefore, the selection criteria must be based on students' needs and objectives of writing instruction. Selection concerns also terminology. As most students are acquainted with grammar terminology from their first year, the teacher and the learners can agree on a list of grammatical terms to be used in the classroom to facilitate their work. However, terminology will depend on students' background and the kind of terms they are used to. The teacher should not use grammatical terms that are unfamiliar to the students, but build on what they already know from their first year.

Most of the attention given to grammar in the writing course occurs during the revision stage and the correction of students' papers (drafts). As most practice is done in the classroom, the teacher should employ strategies that will favour a maximum of learning and save time as the use of focused feedback which principal aims are avoiding over correction, focusing on salient features related to writing genres, and making students experience language in context and raising their awareness about what they write.

It is important to check regularly the progress of the students formally through the use of tests, or informally through discussion to gather data about what is still problematic to the students. Regular testing will inform the teacher (and also the learners) about students' progress, the extent of successful teaching, and the areas that deserve focus.

### **5.2.2. Grammar and Writing Genres**

Linking grammar with writing genres by including a description of the grammatical features of these genres should not be done with all types of texts. Accordingly, exposition is the genre that deserves most attention.

Exposition is the most required type of writing at the university level particularly in explanations. In expository texts, the writer is expected “to explain or clarify the topic/subject. In general terms, exposition is entailed in expressing ideas, opinions, or explanation pertaining to a particular piece of knowledge or fact” (Hinkel 2004: 28).

Expository writing often includes research reports, persuasive compositions or argumentation, and literary analysis. For instance, reports typically relate “a set of facts, using specific statements to back up general ones. They often include descriptions or use comparison/contrast structuring. [They] can be organized by taking a large phenomenon and dividing it into its component parts (e.g., *There are three branches of government...*)” (Schleppegrell 2003: 12). Reports mainly use the simple present tense, *saying* and *thinking/feeling* verbs like *shows* or *means* to indicate the significance of the points made in the report, noun phrases often expanded with relative clauses and prepositional phrases, and conjunctions of cause and purpose (Schleppegrell *ibid.*)

Argumentation is a form of exposition which is based on facts/research/published literature and which includes ‘an element of persuasion’. Its rhetorical purpose does not only entail to present, explain, or discuss facts but also to convince the reader of a particular point of view. In argumentation assignments, the writer is required “to recognize that issues have at least two sides and present the facts or information to develop a reasoned and logical conclusion based on the presented evidence” (Hinkel 2004: 30). Persuasive texts (or argumentations) are expositions where “the judgment that is made must be argued for; often putting forward alternative explanations and arguing against them. Persuasive texts express opinions overtly” (Schleppegrell 2003: 13). This kind of texts are particularly used in responses to literature where, for example, the student is asked to describe a character and evaluate it, or to convince the reader about a particular position. Persuasive texts use modal verbs (e.g., must, should), tense shifts (e.g., simple present tense for generalisations and past tense to refer to past events for exemplification). They also use “transition phrases, with a variety of conjunctive relationships providing arguments and counter-arguments, and contrastive conjunctions (e.g., *but, although, as a matter of fact*, etc.) that, for example, help develop an argument that contrasts with others” (Schleppegrell *ibid.*: 13).

On the basis of these descriptions, looking for the functions these genres elicit is helpful because it gives teachers guidance about how to focus on grammatical features and how to help students learn to use them. In addition, academic writing is characterised by several conventions in its discourse structure and language features, and some of these features tend to recur in several types of assignments (Hinkel 2004).

### **5.2.3.The Teacher**

Both teachers of WE and grammar have a positive attitude towards collaborative teaching. They agree that, in order to help the students improve their writing skills, there must be a collaboration between the teacher of grammar and writing. They emphasise that grammar and writing are complementary. They suggest that grammar should be taught in collaboration and as a response to students' needs. Therefore, help between the WE teacher and the grammar teacher is necessary to the success of integrative grammar teaching. However, they must not perceive it as an obligation.

Integrative grammar teaching is highly influenced by teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The teacher should adopt positive attitudes towards the learners particularly in making their needs a priority. Concerning the teacher himself, self-criticism is important because it is the path to improvement, and is reflected in self-evaluation.

In general, effective teaching requires from the teachers the capacity to select what is in accordance with the students' needs and may require from the teachers to "constantly revise, vary, and modify teaching/learning procedures on the basis of the performance of the learners and their reactions to instructional practice" (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 19).

### **5.2.4.The Learner**

The learner is a key-element in integrative teaching. In addition to his/her beliefs about learning grammar and writing, his/her learning preferences and motivation have also to be taken into account.

All the students do not have the same learning preferences. Some prefer to learn grammar inductively; others rather prefer a deductive approach. The teacher can make a

compromise: when a grammatical item is difficult and necessitates the teacher's intervention, a deductive approach is appropriate and may save time. When the item represents a reasonable degree of complexity (not too difficult), the teacher can use an inductive approach which favours discovery and problem-solving. Most students emphasise that they need more grammar practice beyond the sentence-level and show a desire to rely less on the teacher. Integrative grammar teaching will help them to achieve these goals and will likely have a positive impact on their motivation.

The students are motivated to learn grammar and to relate it to writing. They also show a degree of motivation in taking risks. They show a desire to move towards more autonomy, and to adopt other ways of language learning. This kind of motivation is important; and therefore, it is essential to sustain it. It can be achieved through the use of students' own texts as a valuable source of material, and allowing the learners to perceive learning benefits immediately through regular tests. It can be also reinforced by explaining to the students that what is expected from them is to produce texts that are clear, accurate, with ideas correctly formulated to ensure that they will be understood by the reader.

## **Conclusion**

As any kind of modification in teaching practices, integrative grammar teaching has its set of inconveniences that may render its application difficult. First, as the learner is the most important variable, the students may not accept this kind of teaching because they have already a grammar course and expect it to be too demanding. In addition, students are different in each class, and so are their needs. Second, the teachers may not accept to change their practices because of their teaching beliefs (for instance, advocates

of process writing are not always in favour of grammar in their classroom). They may find this kind of teaching time-consuming and may not accept collaboration, which is a key-element in integrative grammar teaching. Last, identifying the most important grammatical features of text genres and deciding on what is important in students' grammatical errors may be difficult because what may seem important to one teacher may be trivial to another.

Students are not expected to improve their writing in a short time. The purpose of integrative grammar teaching is to help the learners to go as far as possible in their instruction, because students and teachers must be realistic in their expectations. Writing is a time-consuming process and improves with practice. The real goal of integrative grammar teaching, and of any other kind of teaching, is to progressively make our students become independent writers by providing them the tools and the strategies that ensure their success as writers once they have finished their writing courses with us.

The present work does neither represent an ideal way of teaching grammar nor promote any particular method. The most important issue in teaching effectively grammar is not a question of choosing a method but of developing methodology.



## CONCLUSION

Learning to write in a language other than one's native language is a long process. As any teacher knows, no teaching can possibly cover the full range of what students need to develop their writing skills; therefore, it is our responsibility to maximise language learning in the classroom whatever techniques we use to achieve this.

The present research starts with the premise that linking grammar instruction with the genres of texts the students are required to produce will likely improve their writing. This is confirmed by the results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaires addressed to the teachers of Written Expression and the students of Second Year LMD. The aim of this study is to determine whether it is possible or not to develop an integrative approach to the teaching of grammar in the context of academic writing. It has been noted that integrative grammar teaching involves a philosophy of local solutions to local problems and has to remain sufficiently flexible to allow the teachers to adjust their teaching practices according to the particular needs of their students.

The analysis of the students' questionnaire revealed several aspects concerning their view about grammar. Even if the students consider grammar as secondary in comparison with vocabulary, they nevertheless regard it as an essential element that positively or negatively influences their writing performance. The analysis showed their views about all the aspects involved in learning to write. They are aware of their specific problems and that improving their writing skills comes about through trial and error.

They are also conscious that grammar can solve only a portion of their writing problems, but this does not discourage them from trying new ways of learning.

Concerning the teachers, they are aware that the time spent in the Written Expression courses is not enough to develop good writing skills. Through their responses to the questionnaire, they showed a commitment to find more efficient ways of teaching the writing skill. The teachers' attitudes towards integrative grammar teaching revealed that they are not bound to any specific method. Indeed, even if most of the teachers of Written Expression favour a process-based teaching, they do not neglect the grammatical aspect which they consider essential in learning to write.

## **APPENDIXES**

**Appendix I : The Students' Questionnaire**

**Appendix II : The Teachers' Questionnaire**

**APPENDIX I**  
**The Students' Questionnaire**

Dear students,

The following questionnaire aims at finding out students' opinions about learning writing, learning grammar, and the importance they give to grammar in learning writing.

I would be grateful if you could answer this questionnaire.

Please, tick (✓) the appropriate answer or make a full statement when necessary.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Miss DAKHMOUCHE Linda  
Department of Foreign Languages  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Mentouri University of Constantine

## Section One: Learning Writing

1. Classify the following items according to the importance you give them in writing using 1, 2, 3 or 4:

a-Organisation of ideas

b-Grammar

c-Vocabulary

d-Punctuation

2. Learning to write enables you to:

a-Write different types of texts.

b-Have good marks in examination essays.

c-Succeed in writing like native speakers.

d-Other: Please, specify:.....

.....

3. Your actual level in writing is:

a-Beginner: still at the level of the sentence.

b-Intermediate: able to write beyond the sentence-level but not extended pieces of writing, like essays.

c-Advanced: able to write beyond the sentence-level and extended pieces of writing like essays.

4. What genre of writing do you find the most difficult?

a-Exposition

b-Narration

c-Description

d-Comparison and Contrast

e-Other: Please, specify:.....  
.....

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

-Yes

-No

**Section Two: Learning Grammar**

6. Grammar is a set of rules about:

a-How we should speak and write a language.

b-All the possible grammatical structures of the language.

c- How the sentences of a language are formed.

d-Other: Please, specify:.....  
.....  
.....

7. In learning grammar, you prefer:

a-To be given the rules directly by your teacher.

b-To find the rules by yourself.

8. If your answer is “b”, is it through:

a-The teacher’s explanations?

b-Practice?

c-Both of them?

9. Grammar terminology is difficult to remember.

-Yes

-No

10. If “Yes”, please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

11. English grammar is difficult.

-Yes

-No

12. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

13. Learning English grammar is a waste of time.

-Yes

-No

14. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

**Section Three: The Place of Grammar in Writing**

15. Do you expect learning grammar will help you express clearly your ideas in writing?

-Yes

-No

16. Would you like to practise grammar within the Written Expression Course?

-Yes

-No

17. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

18. Linking grammar with the types of texts you are required to write will help you improve your writing.

-Yes

-No



19. Applying grammar rules in writing helps you to remember these rules.

-Yes

-No

20. Improving your grammar will contribute to improve your writing.

-Yes

-No

21. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

22. Problems with grammar will cause you to lose marks in examination essays like in Civilisation and Literature.

-Yes

-No

23. When you are writing, you take into consideration grammar, when you:

a-Start writing your ideas on the rough paper.

b-Have finished writing down your ideas on the rough paper.

c-Start writing the final version.

d-Are revising your final version.

24. When you are writing, you are able to focus on:

- a-Grammar only.
- b-Writing down your ideas only.
- c-Both.

**Section Four: Further Suggestions**

25. Please, add any further comment about the place of grammar in the teaching of writing.

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## APPENDIX II

### The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire is part of a research on teaching grammar in the context of writing. It aims at finding out the teachers' opinions about teaching writing, teaching grammar and the importance they give to grammar in teaching writing.

I would be thankful if you could fill in this questionnaire.

Please, tick (✓) the right answer or give a full statement when necessary.

I extremely appreciate your collaboration.

Miss DAKHMOUCHE Linda  
Department of Foreign Languages  
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## Section One: Teaching Writing

1. The actual level of most of your students in writing is:

a-Beginner: still at the level of the sentence.

b-Intermediate: able to write beyond the sentence-level but not extended pieces of writing, like essays.

c-Advanced: able to write beyond the sentence-level and extended pieces of writing like essays

2. What genre of writing students find the most difficult?

a-Exposition

b-Narration

c-Description

d-Comparison and Contrast

e-Other: Please, specify:.....  
.....

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

-Yes

-No

4. Are you an advocate of a process approach to teach writing?

-Yes

-No

5. Please, explain why.

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.....  
.....

6. Do you think that a process approach is compatible with the students' actual level?

-Yes

-No

7. Please, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....

**Section Two: Teaching Grammar**

8. Do you teach the grammar module?

-Yes

-No

9. In the writing classroom, do you find occasions where you might focus on language structures/grammar?

-Yes

-No

10.a. If “Yes”, please, explain how do you manage to do so.

.....  
.....  
.....

10.b. If “No”, please explain the reasons that prevent you from doing so.

.....  
.....  
.....

11. When correcting students’ papers, do you take into account grammar mistakes?

-Yes

-No

12. If “Yes”, how?

a-All the mistakes.

b-Only major mistakes.

c-Other: Please, specify:.....  
.....

13. Difficulties with grammar are likely to cause students most problems when writing.

-Yes

-No

### Section Three: The place of Grammar in Writing

14. If grammar is related to the teaching of Written Expression, will this contribute to make the students improve their writing?

-Yes

-No

15. Providing students with grammatical information about the genres they are required to write is beneficial.

-Yes

-No

16. If students are helped to reduce their problems with grammar, will this improve their grades (marks) in content areas like Literature or Civilisation?

-Yes

-No

17. When you correct the students' papers, do you observe any connection between what they are learning in grammar and their writing?

-Yes

-No

## Section Four: Suggestions about Teaching Methodology

### -Time Allocation

18. Do you think that a focus on grammar within a course of Written Expression will waste valuable time?

-Yes

-No

19. If there is any focus on grammar in a course of Written Expression, how much time should it be devoted with regard to the total time allocated to teaching writing?

.....  
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### -The Number of Students

20. Does the existing number of students per group allow the introduction of any kind of grammar teaching in the Written Expression course?

-Yes

-No

### -Individual vs. Collaborative Teaching

21. If it is possible to include grammatical aspects into a writing lesson, do you want to:

a-Do it yourself?

b-Leave it to the grammar teacher?

c-Work in collaboration with the grammar teacher?



22. Collaborating with the grammar teacher about the kind of grammatical items to teach the students will facilitate your work in teaching Written Expression?

-Yes

-No

**Section Five: Further Suggestions**

23. Please, add any further comment about the place of grammar in the teaching of writing.

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