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Gender Differences in Writing Achievement
Case study: Third year EFL Students at
IbnKhaldoun University of Tiaret

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English
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Linguistics

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work:

My source of affection My Mother Malika

To the sign of struggle, who motivates me to pursue my studies

My Father Benali

To my lovely sisters Amina and Bochra

To my dear brothers Yassine and Mohamed

To my Beloved friends and sisters: Fatima, Romaiissa, Samira,

Kheira, Fella, Aicha and Marwa

Lamia

Dedication

In memory of my beloved mother Kheira God rest her soul

To the light of my eyes my Father Mokhtar

To my lovely sisters Khadidja, Nadia and Sabah

To my beloved brothers Seddik, Mohamed and Azziz

To all the members of my family

*To my dear friends and sisters Lamia, Fella, Aicha, Kheira,
Marwa and Samira*

Fatima

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Abstract

Numerous studies about language differences have focused on the way males and females speak and write. Yet, very limited researches have been devoted to gender differences in academic achievement. Therefore, this research attempts to highlight gender differences in terms of writing achievement. In particular, the main purpose is to spotlight on students' difficulties and errors when producing a piece of writing. In order to investigate the matter, a content analysis of twenty literary essays of third year EFL students at IbnKhalidoun University of Tiaret have been examined in order to find the ground of differences. The findings reveal that several distinctive features are not perfectly the same in males' and females' essays. Particularly, it is found that males do better than females at the level of cohesion and coherence, but structurally poor; whereas, females do better at the level of structure, but their papers lack cohesion.

Key words: Gender differences, writing, essays, achievement, males, females

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate Students.

General Introduction

General Introduction

Various sociolinguistic investigations over an extended period of time have suggested a great number of hypotheses and approaches about males and females distinctions in oral and written production. More specifically, these researchers have emphasised mostly on the differences between males and females in terms of phonology. However, little attention has been given to the academic institutions. Since schools have become a place of competition between males and females, one should ask if there are differences in terms of academic achievement as well.

Therefore, the present study is a humble contribution to the existing knowledge by examining gender differences in terms of writing achievement. Particularly, this research aims at exploring males and females' use of lexical and syntactic features when writing essays.

In order to achieve these objectives, an attempt is made to answer the following research questions:

1-What distinguishes females' essays from the males' ones?

2 -Do both respect the essay structure and content?

Generally speaking, learners always face difficulties in writing. That is to say, both males and females writing papers are not academically perfect. Yet, it can be assumed that females are better writers because they master rules and mechanics of writing.

In terms of language differences, we assume that there are some remarkable differences. While males often write short paragraphs because they prefer to be direct, females like to write in much detail.

To check the validity of this claim, a twenty (20) copy of literary essays belong to the third year EFL students at IbnKhaldoun University of Tiaret have been examined. Using content analysis as a technique aims at allowing the researchers to gather reliable and observable data.

General Introduction

In terms of the research frame, it is divided into three chapters: The first chapter is a theoretical overview about genders' evolution through time and its relation with language; it concentrates mainly on the differences between males and females in terms of language use. The second chapter is concerned with the description of writing skill and its importance, including writing approaches and processes. Finally, the third chapter, the practical part, deals with data gathering and analysis.

Chapter One

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1-1-Introduction

This chapter brings out the literature review of gender in general and its relation to language use including definitions and the difference between the dichotomy gender and sex. It attempts to give a brief history of this concept including feminism, adding to that it tries to highlight the various models of gender differences among them; difference, dominance, deficit, and discursive approaches. Then, this chapter reveals gender differences in educational achievements.

1-2-Definitions of Gender

Gender is described as a social attribute emphasis on roles and responsibilities of men and women; therefore, it distinguish between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours related to their societies, cultures and changes overtime; Its core deals with discourse varieties (written or spoken) of males and females as given variables to be investigated according to skills of individuals, in different situations.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 9) states that,

We are surrounded by gender lore from the time we are very small, it is ever present, in conversation, humour, and conflict, and it is called upon to explain everything from driving style to food preferences.

The quotation above highlights how males and females have different perspectives and acts from childhood; in fact humans are not born with gender but they often acquire it by imitating elders or other people during their growth. Gender is considered as a natural concept, because it is present in our daily life, activities, and craving for things.

In fact, sociolinguists agreed about language and gender's resemblance both of them stand for men's behaviour, however do not serve women's act in the same position with the opposite sex; males do not express their feelings frankly because they are more serious and do not care about others' problems in group discussions, these attitudes result unemployment and personal unhappiness (Cameron, 2008: 457). In another way, males' and females' way of thinking brings up their way of talking, for

example, males interact unfriendly when communicating with others because they are tough and harsh (Eckert 1989:321).

Gender roles create different problems and challenges in life, culture and society related to men and women's position and power; females' language is extremely stereotypical, which is the non-linguistics beliefs about their language. Gender have focused increasingly on plurality and diversity amongst female and male language users, and on gender as performative which is something 'done' in context , rather than a fixed attribute. This means that gender focus on variability amongst men and women, and concentrates on it as changed characteristic in a given situation.

According to Lakoff (1973: 45), speakers use language and language use speakers, she also issues possible differences in daily life ,like way of speaking, interactional/conversational styles of males and females, their characteristics or attitudes in terms of language use at the level of word choice, syntactic usage, and language acquisition ;depending on different situations. As much as expressions are oriented by concepts that the speaker want to say, thoughts are also controlled by feelings about certain things or interests; For instance, I am strong- minded.

1-3-Gender and sex:

Oxford learner's dictionary defines sex as the state of being male or female. However, gender and sex are two essential and complicated concepts in the sociolinguistics domain that lead to conducting several topics. In sociolinguistics, the term sex was recognised as a social variable beside the previous variables of social organism, age, ethnic, and religion (kutthoff, 1992). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:10) say that: "*Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is social elaboration of biological sex*".It ascribes the physical, physiological, and anatomical difference between males and females containing primary and secondary characteristics (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015: 269). Thus, the primary characteristics indicate the reproductive system and organs, which differentiate between males and females; while secondary features refer to the development of their body shapes; for instance, muscles of men.

They also believe that gender and sex cannot be separated because gender is not just about names and way of clothing, however it is simply the learning process of being either male or female; while sex is an important quality more than just a simple remark of physical features. It is assumed that a baby acquire how to be male or female by itself, on the other hand matures tend to interfere and help in the process of child gendering unconsciously (16);Therefore adults treats it as either a boy or a girl and influence his/her growing up.

Gender, is shaped by society and institutions like religion and educational system related to race, class, and sexual identity; on the other hand sex is a biological construct that condense the anatomical, physiological, genetic and hormonal differences of males and females, but both gender and sex may change overtime (Johnson and Repta, 2011: 19). According to McCormick (2001: 336):

Gender refers to social categories based on sex, but encompassing behavior, roles, and images that, although not biologically determined are regarded by a society as appropriate to its male and female members. What is seen as appropriate to each gender thus defers in different societies and eras.

In the light of this quotation, society often expects people to behave in a certain way, depending on their biological sex. Men are usually expected to act and look ‘masculine’ and women, ‘feminine’ .However, we all express masculinity and femininity in different ways.

To sum up, sex is natural universal word that brings into focus biological and physiological features of men and women; whereas gender is a socio-cultural pattern emphasis on masculinity and femininity in real world, both of these terms can be used alternately.

1-4-Masculinity and Femininity:

According to Johnson and Repta(2011:25)

Masculinity is a socially constructed component of gender that is typically associated with men and male characteristics, though this strict association has been problematized. Instead of associating masculinity with particular bodies, it is instead popularly theorized to be a range of behaviors, practices, and characteristics that can be taken up by anyone”

The general view of this quotation is that masculinity (maleness) is connected with males' manners of acting, habits and performances, not with specific bodies' features. On the other hand Femininity is linked with femaleness; it is also built through individuals' activities and behaviours in their daily lives. For example, pink and blue are gendered colours (Eckert and McConell-Ginet 2003:16), pink is for females, while blue is for males. The execution of both masculinity and femininity do not mean to produce the same action by men or women, regardless the conditions, it may include various methods in an individual or popular environment related to different social situations and positions; In other words men and women are affected by the external factors to achieve either masculinity or femininity (Ibid:313).

1-5-History of Gender

Gender has become a very common issue in everyday lives speeches associated with language, because both of them are interdisciplinary academic domains. The starting point of gender began with Woman's movement in the late 1960's, which influence different fields of study like education and culture. Women rights activists regard that feminism movement has a great role in forming the historical and learning context of its generation. For instance, Xiufang (2013:1 argues that gender tries to investigate the difference between men and women, because it is known that both of these two have distinctions and disagreements at the level of their bodies or way of thinking, for example: males and females have different skills to achieve a specific work, which sometimes depends on their social roles or the situation where both of them are in.

Feminism itself is derived from the French term "Féminisme", during the nineteenth century it was defined as either a scientific description of males' body, or females with masculine characteristics. Latter on in the Twentieth century, as Jagger, (1983) states, it was utilised to indicate women's group that insisted on the uniqueness of women. Some writings on sex and gender mention that feminism depends on a great dichotomy of the sex and gender differences.

Pamela Turner claims that it is women's determination to get equal status, political, economic, and social rights along with men in the world. A feminist argues that the

reason behind women's' discrimination is their sex, they have certain requirements that remained unsatisfied; the fulfilment of these requirements needs a fundamental change in societies (Delmar, 1986). That is to say, women are trying hard to fight for breaking down the common theory of male-domination, because the latter is superior, so he is the controller of society. Additionally, Wodak (2015:698) continues that due to the history of men as decision makers, they do not only decide the economic, political and social directions of life, but also affect the function and meaning of individual's language.

The year 1975, noticed the beginning of the field Language and Gender, because it witnessed the production of three important books: Robin Lakoffs' "Language and Woman's Place", Mary Ritchie's "Male/Female Language", and Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henly's "Language and sex: Difference and Dominance".

In brief, gender is a biological and cultural category that does not emphasis only on the physical features, but associated also with cultural properties and individual's thoughts, which involves class, ethnic, sexual and regional identities. Males and females decide gender by persisting distinctions in capabilities and the nature, for example: men are more forceful and more dominant than women, the latter were prohibited to express emotions and thoughts as men like, their madness, because there is instability between the sexes; for instance, you look more beautiful, when you are angry.

1-6-The Major Approaches of Gender Studies (Models, Theories)

1-6-1-Labov's Model

William Labov has a great role in giving orientations to community because he examined gender, age, ethnicity and social stratification as variables in a given society; He was the first one who introduced the term "prestige" in sociolinguistics by inserting three main types, which are: The global or overt prestige, that focus on the standard language rules in market place, the second is The covert prestige that refers o the use of non-standard form of the language, in which participants acquire prestige by taking the advantage of their dialect; the last one is Local prestige that emphasis on group in different small areas(Eckert 1989:250).

1-6-2-Trudgill's Model

Peter Trudgill(1972) also took the same path of Labov, he stated that: “*Overt prestige attaches to refined qualities, as associated with cosmopolitan marketplace and its standard language, whereas covert prestige attaches to masculine, “rough and tough” qualities*”. Women’s powerless status in society helped in the appearance of “overt prestige”; it guides their behaviours. Thus women employ overt prestige, on the other hand men use “covert prestige”, because both of them react differently; females are more conservative in their language and linguistic strategies are built by them, in contrast to males .there are few studies about phonological variation of both men and women’s conversational style; Indeed males do not use variants as females do. A great number of sociolinguistics statistical studies about English language speaking world, dealt with the (ING) variable like talking and walking, uttered with alveolar (n) by men, on the other hand women pronounce it with the velar plosive(Chechire,2008).

Some early studies mention that social norms are confirmed by females, because they use more standard language (Trudgill, 1974), while other surveys have revealed that woman are more likely to speak dialects and informal language as well (Wodak, 1984). According to the previous statement women, either adult or young change their form of language depending on their situation, like: family discussion. Gender in linguistics focus on individual and group of people, whether feminine or masculine, young or adult, related to how they speak about themselves and how they are spoken of (Wodak 2015:698).

1-6-3-Lakoff's Model

The year 1973, witnessed the publication of Lakoff’s article “Language and Woman’s Place”, who is one of the pioneering feminist linguists. Two years later she republished it as a book, in which she presented some assumptions about women’s spoken language that differ from that of men(Tannen 640: 1990) ; that is to say, she proposed a set of features that describe woman’s speech, such as:

- 1- Lexical hedges: e.g. kind of, it seems like, well.
- 2- Rising intonation: women express uncertainty by raising the pitch of their voice at the end of questions; e.g. It's really nice?
- 3- Empty adjectives: women use unnecessary adjectives to decorate their speech and to grab attention; e.g. lovely, adorable.
- 4- Precise colour terms: women have passion about classification of colours; e.g. aquamarine, turquoise.
- 5- Emphatic stress: e.g. it was an EXCELLENT work.(Eckert,1989:5)

Lakoff (1973:48) stated that: "*when a woman is being discussed by treating her as an object -sexual or otherwise- but never a serious person with individual views*". For instance; when a girl tries to be like a lady she will be seen incapable of thinking, but when she refuse to behave like a lady, she will be criticised for being unfeminine. From a sociolinguistic point of view woman's identity is lost and their language is not taken seriously, because they are considered weak and born just to feel.

Her features show that female's language deprives her from power to gain an official status in society. Lakoff suggest two main preconceptions that women and men speak differently, and male-dominance is the reason behind male and female's differences, these suggestions lead to the emergence of the two approaches:

1-6-3-1-The Difference Theory

This Hypothesis is related to Lakoff's ten features, in order to understand the distinctions between male and female. She indicated that the comparison between the discourse of these two occur at the level of the use of questions; This theory was confirmed by Fishman (1980), he analysed a group of couples conversations, one of his results was that women use Tag questions thrice in comparison to men, because they are not sure about their thoughts(Xiuafang,2013:1487). According to Robin Lakoff, women are indirect because they are afraid of getting a negative response; this act is called "Defensiveness" (Dellaoui, 2017:24), in other words women use super polite form while communicating with others, in contrast to men who tend to interfere and challenge the other's action.

1-6-3-2-The Dominance Theory:

It is men's role to hold authority in society rather than woman, because if she does that she is considered as unfeminine and dangerous, this is why women are prevented by culture to take part in politics and other domains. One of the common stereotypes is that women talk randomly and more than men, thus it is proved by Spender (1980) that men maintain the conversational time about 80 percent, while Zimmerman and West (1975) claim that men's conversational dominance is due to the disruption of women (Lakoff, 2003:162), which means that males have always powerful position in society, unlike females who are expected to play a domestic role; such as being a housekeeper and loving family.

1-6-4-Deborah Tannen's Model**1-6-4-1-The Difference and Dominance Approaches:**

Tannen considered as a defender of Lakoff's hypotheses about males and females differences in conversation, this approach was presented in Deborah Tannens' book "You Just Don't Understand", she states that male and female distinction occurs from infancy, they acquire language differently; for example, a father uses emotional terms with his girl, while he uses verbs when speaking with his son. According to Tannen: *"The main claim is that men and women have different conversational goals and thus although they may say the same things, they actually mean different things"*. Gender and cultural background are related; therefore man tries to reach a certain position in society, while woman seeks to set up social relationships and solidarity (263)

She believes that there are six contrasts, makes distinctions between male's and female's language:

- 1- Status vs Support: Man uses language to achieve control and position, woman uses it to support others ideas.
- 2- Independence vs Intimacy: Males act freely, while females need to have others support

- 3- Advice vs Understanding: Men tend to give solutions, on the other hand women try to show sympathy.
- 4- Information vs Feelings: Males believe in reality, in contrast females rely on their emotions.
- 5- Orders vs Proposals: Men want their instructions to be done, while woman provide suggestions about certain topics.
- 6- Conflict vs Compromise: Males compete and challenge others; females try to show mutual concessions (Language and Gender n.d).

Tannen chooses to make a distance between her and the Dominance approach by the exclude of blaming others, because she prefers not to accuse any one for his opinions and expressions(Mellor, 2011: 3).

1-6-4-2-The Deficit Approach

This approach is attributed to the grammarian “Otto Jespersen” in 1922, which means that the methods used to investigate language and gender using standard or non standard form of the language, for example; men’s language is normative in comparison with that of females and children; which is considered deficient (Mellor, 2011:1). Lakoff assert that women’s politeness and indirectness in speech push them to be powerless and in a valueless position; in other words female’s power and authority in society is measured by their form of the language.

The difference framework describes the misunderstanding between men and women from different subcultures dealing with different social organization especially while growing up. The dominance framework takes into account social order, this asymmetry serves male privilege and power in using language, both of these models can be used to complete each other. According to the deficit framework woman are unsure as language users, because they lack authority. (Talbot, 2010: 98, 99, 100)

Gender is learnt behaviour and continuum associate with language in society; Tannen (1991) states that, power imbalance do not exist between men and women.

Therefore, they coexist as the same and they create problem in communication unconsciously; in opposition to Tannens' report men and women differences in interactional styles do exist and they do not use a single style, but they are not aware of it. (Talbot, 2010:105,107) some scholars seek to study differences in conversations, while others have emphasised on the written form of the language by examining different linguistic characteristics like: adverbs, and synonyms; as Gyllgard (2006) noticed that women tend to use literature to be more superior than men.(Rebahi, 2013)

1-7-The Discursive Approach

Deborah Cameron has conducted many studies about language and gender with the contribution of this approach from a feminist viewpoint. She shows how shifts in economic climate can occur according to the responses; the combination between power and patriarchy ideology produce gender attitudes, as Satele illustrates that to understand masculinity it is not necessary to be related to femininity, but with asymmetrical dominance and prestige of men in society. This new approach emphasis on how gender is built in relation to language and cultural system (Mellor, 2010:5) Therefore, this access deals with different cultural fluid stereotypes, because gender is a changeable notion.

1-8-Gender Differences in Educational Achievement

Gender and education relations are complex and influence males and females differently. For instance, when poverty forces interfere boys are supposed to work, while girls are expected to play a domestic role. The lack of profitable employment chances for woman leads some families to prefer boy's education over girls. Research mention that, low educational attainment may cause unequal power structures besides the influence of gender norms and people's attitudes (gender and educational attainment, 2017:1, 2) . That is to say, education is mostly related to economic development because it may leads to unequal practices and opportunities

The increase in female educational attainment has been one of the most evident trends in education in the last three decades, from the 1950 women tried to be equal

with men in educational investment; however they have not reached gender parity. Nowadays females dominate males' educational attainment especially in the industrialised states, therefore female students are the most graduates from secondary school and involved in tertiary education; moreover, gender gap expands in favour of women in future (Pekkarinen, 2012: 3).

In 1948, the universal declaration of human rights provided that primary and higher education should be free and compulsory to all (Santosh et al, 2). According to Subrahmanian, gender parity is the numerical participation of males and females in a specific context; thus, it refers to the balance of boys and girls involvement in education at a specific moment of time, whereas gender equity is the strategies that provide equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, such as scholarships. Both terms parity and equity are regarded as important but insufficient to achieve gender equality, this latter refers to the situation where males and females have equal rights and freedoms to achieve their full potential and benefit from social, cultural, and economical progress. The development toward gender equality requires both spaces, changing the formal laws, as well as informal values within society (Daro, n.d: 1).

All around the world, men and women are supposed to have situations in societies; however masculine role dominates in life, these roles influence the system of education and family relations. It is agreed that males and females have equal rights, but it differs in reality because it is difficult to reach equal positions in society; UNESCO states that Algeria's education was in favour of men, who have higher rates of enrolment. The year 1990 witnessed the legislation of free and compulsory education for all children whether males or females, later on the phenomenon of imbalance between men and women have become in favour of woman. For instance, the number of girls graduated from high schools and universities surpasses that of boys (Ouadah-Bididi, 2018:84)

According to Subrahmanian:

The right to education [access and participation], as well as rights within education [gender-aware educational environment, processes, and outcomes], and rights through education [meaningful education outcomes that link educational equality with wider processes].

The general view of this quotation is that gender equality focus on equivalence between males and females within and through education that determine the learner's interaction with the learning process while gender parity emphasis only on the participation to education, which mean that gender parity and equality are different, the former is associated with one variable, whereas the latter deals with gender dynamics like, curriculum and teachers.

Teachers affect their learner's gender roles; thus, it influences their educational outcomes, moreover teacher's classroom management is essential part to improve and shape student's performance, because walls and books are not sufficient to learn. In other words teachers should provide a positive environment elevate motivation among learners. Some studies declared that there is no relation between gender and classroom management; Robert V. Bullough Jr stated that there are some differences between men and women in classroom managing and teaching (Oktan, 2015)

1-9-Conclusion

This chapter presents the literature review about the relationship between language and gender, because the latter has an essential influence on the change of society therefore, both of them develop at the same time. Starting with a theoretical overview about the linguistic differences in men and women's style, and the reasons behind these differences in society; indeed, these differences led to the emergence of the distinct models and approaches mentioned by several feminist linguists among them: Lakoff, Tannen, and Eckert. In the light of all what is shown above, gender is associated with social factors, power, and stereotypes which are about men and women's behaviour and attitudes towards language.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Writing skill and Its Importance

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Chapter Two: Writing skill and Its Importance

2-1-Introduction

This chapter highlights the importance of writing as an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish, in comparison to the other skills; it overviews some aspects related to teaching and learning writing such as approaches such as product, process and genre; it also presents strategies and steps for better writing, especially in the department of the English language at IbnKhalidoun University of Tiaret.

2-2- Writing Skill

It is well acknowledged that people learn to speak a language first, but when it comes to writing they face some obstacles. This is simply because writing requires intensive practice. In other words, students must follow a set of rules in order to be competent in writing. In addition, writing is not just about what have been learnt or read, it also concerns the development of certain critical skills, which ultimately can lead students to create and accomplish a successful and better work.

Therefore, Horvath (2001: 5) mentions that “*writing is among the most complex human activities, it involves the development of a design idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge and of experience with subjects*”. It is the production of written texts through transferring thoughts, expressions and feelings that defines students’ competence and performance in classrooms. Rivers (1984: 294) states that “*Writing is conveying information or expressions of original ideas in a consecutive way in the new language*”, which means that writing is considered as a mental process that focus on three main elements, the writer, reader, and the text produced to achieve communication. This means, as noted by Krashen (1984), the idea of good writing is about style and formulation of content rather than technical accuracy.

This suggests that writing is mindfulness engagement. Practically speaking, writers are required to ask themselves different questions like: what does they want to express?, how they are going to deliver it? In what form they should present it? Why and to whom it is addressed.

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Finally, writing should serve the audience needs like: informing, explaining and solving a problem, because communication involves both the reader and the writer.

2-3- Writing Skills

Many learners may care much about speaking rather than giving importance to writing because that they believe that language is all about speaking. Others learners may express willingness to develop their writing skills, but they found it somehow a difficult process to accomplish as it requires certain knowledge and previous researches. As stated earlier, writing is not just about taking down words on papers, but it is a process that demands from students' different capabilities like thinking and mind mapping. Therefore students have to be aware of the whole process of writing before producing any text. Yet, one has to mention that, as Penny (1991) states, writing differs from one individual to another, and there is no 'right' organisation that should be followed to create an equal result; that is to say, everyone has own way of drafting and organizing before making the last version.

In the language classroom, teachers should assist their learners through more practical strategies and meet their learners' needs. Hence writing activities need to attract their interests and suit their level to encourage brainstorming, either beginners or advanced learners.

To conclude, a good student writer requires two main things: faith and commitment to the process of writing.

2-4- Writing Approaches

2-4-1-The Product Approach

According to Pincas (1982), product approach is about the linguistic knowledge with the emphasis on the use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices. It is divided into 4 stages:

- a) First stage is Familiarisation: it is the students' analysis of a model text by looking at its features such as organisation of ideas.

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- b) The second stage is controlled writing: students do control activities in isolation to practice features of writing.
- c) The third stage is guided writing: it is the organisation of ideas.
- d) The last stage is the end result: in this stage, learners should use the skills, structures, and vocabulary that they have been taught.

In brief, the product approach highlights the importance of students' use of vocabulary, grammar, and structure; therefore, teachers should focus on the final version of writing, and how it looks like.

2-4-2-Process writing Approach

According to Badger and White (2000, 154),

Writing in process approach is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less on linguistic knowledge such as knowledge about grammar and text structure.

This means that learners should follow a series of steps to produce a finished piece of writing and focus on the form rather than the content of the text, which is giving less importance to knowledge about vocabulary and word choice; the process writing approach involves going through several skills such as: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

In the writing process, students need to reach a goal communicating with the audience about a certain subject. Herein, it is useful to respect types of the audiences:

- ✓ Who reads their texts?
- ✓ Identity and characteristics of the reader like, age, sex, and education....
- ✓ Readers' knowledge about the topic (general, expert).
- ✓ Readers' perspectives and viewpoints towards this subject.

2-4-3-The Genre Approach

Another important approach to writing is the genre approach. The main centre in the genre approach is on writing about different social situations (Badger & White:

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2000). this requires teachers to take into account their learners' needs in order to help them understand the given task. Stating differently, teachers need to simplify the students' comprehension of the purpose and the context of writing.

Practically speaking, this approach, according to Cope and Kalantzis (2001), includes three stages:

- 1) The teacher introduces the target genre for students;
- 2) Collaboration of teacher and students to put together the text;
- 3) The text is firmly produced by the student himself.

Teachers' role here is to assist students in the comprehension of features of both context and purpose of writing without giving much importance to the subject, content and the form of the text. The learners then can complete their task depending on themselves to develop their writing style.

2-5- Steps of Writing Process

2-5-1- Pre-writing (Planning)

Planning might be the first important step to produce an excellent paper; before writing, students need to think about the content through readings, previous knowledge, and writing whatever comes to their mind. Then it comes the brainstorming to generate ideas and organise them.

Brainstorming is an essential technique that helps students to be creative to generate ideas about that topic; this is specifically beneficial for those students who are less inventive, and specially those who find difficulties in linking thoughts. In this stage, students can use several pre-writing techniques to develop their essays such as:

- ✓ Deciding the who, what, where, when, why, and how,
- ✓ Finding out what they already have, and what they need to know.
- ✓ Drawing an outline, including problems and consequences.
- ✓ Listing supporting arguments.

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2-5-2- Drafting (Composing)

In this stage, learners emphasise on the fluency of writing instead of accuracy of grammar, in which they start to register their own ideas on the first draft. At this level, students start to write and take notes, and modify or add some facts. Then students begin to place their organisation of ideas into paper. In writing drafting strategy, they should be aware that they control well the first draft. But as it is common, drafts are not perfect since writers may feel unsatisfied with their draft, and so they are obliged to correct and check their works in terms of structure. i.e., form, spelling, punctuation, coherence, and cohesion, and etc.

In this vein, Brown (2001) suggests that drafting requires a great amount of time, patience, and students' ability to understand and decipher the given instructions. This means those because students' ideas and decisions are subject to adjust and change in order to coordinate and to be clear in their writing, they should control their time.

2-5-3- Revising and editing

This strategy is about all what has been already written. At this level, students re-think and re-examine their papers by correcting mistakes, and/or changing some elements. This helps them to gain an opportunity for developing their language. Learners should also focus on the clarity of their texts.

Moreover, editing is the phase where linguistic accuracy: grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation are corrected after revising and reading carefully; therefore, Smith (?) argues that once the writer finishes his deep reading, they will be able to eliminate some miss placed words and remove repeated and irrelevant sentences.

In this process, Badia (2016) lists five (5) elements that should be considered by writers:

- 1) Reread what they have written and consider others feedback.
- 2) Remove excessive and irrelevant items.
- 3) Put themselves in place of the readers.

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- 4) Ask themselves, whether their ideas are well organised and if the purpose is obtained.
- 5) Emphasis on the content

Finally, the steps of writing process can be summarized as follow:

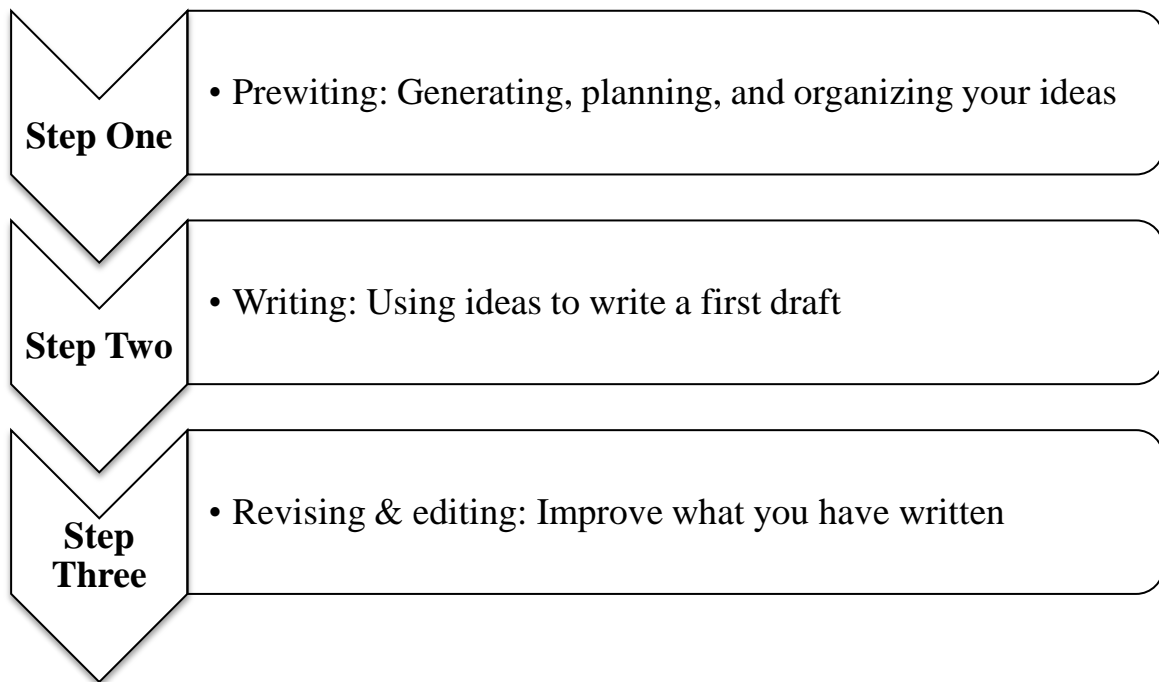


Figure 2.1: Blanchard & Root's Process writing (2004:11)

2-6- Essay Writing and its Main Elements

The capability to write essays well is one of the determinants of academic success, in any academic setting students are commended to organize ideas related to a specific topic into coherent and proficiently written paper, thus learning the appropriate writing strategies is important for students. Every essay should have a beginning, middle and an end; the beginning is an outline of what the writer wants to do, the middle involves evidence which reinforces his opinion; the end is a brief restatement of all what is mentioned in the body.

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2-6-1-Introduction

It is the most important paragraph in the essay writing because it determines the opening statement about the topic, helps the reader to figure out what does this essay cover. This paragraph contains three main elements to make a clear idea of the topic to audience from general to specific;

First, Background info: it includes two or three introductory sentences that provide knowledge and comments about the subject.

Second, Thesis statement: it is created from the essay question, which contains one or two sentences that covers what the paper is about; whatever elements are specified here, will be restated in the body with the same order.

Third, the Outline: it is the organisation of ideas to do not confuse the readers' minds.

2-6-2-Body

It is the part that describes papers' main points in many details, in which students write two or more paragraphs about different points, it is the toughest phase, since most of writers get confused, when it comes to knowledge about that subject. Students should write in each paragraph supporting arguments and logic evidences that defend on the thesis statement by using good linking words; such as: to begin, in other words, and in this case. Moreover, every writer ensures that transitional sentences are present to create a great flow to the essay with the use of relevant examples.

2-6-3-Conclusion

It is hard, but not difficult in comparison to the introduction; as far as the conclusion is concerned, its role is to summarise the writers' issues, arguments, and discussion. In this part learners should ensures that the readers are left with something to think about, many writers leave their introduction and conclusion last to verify that they express what is inside the body of the essay.

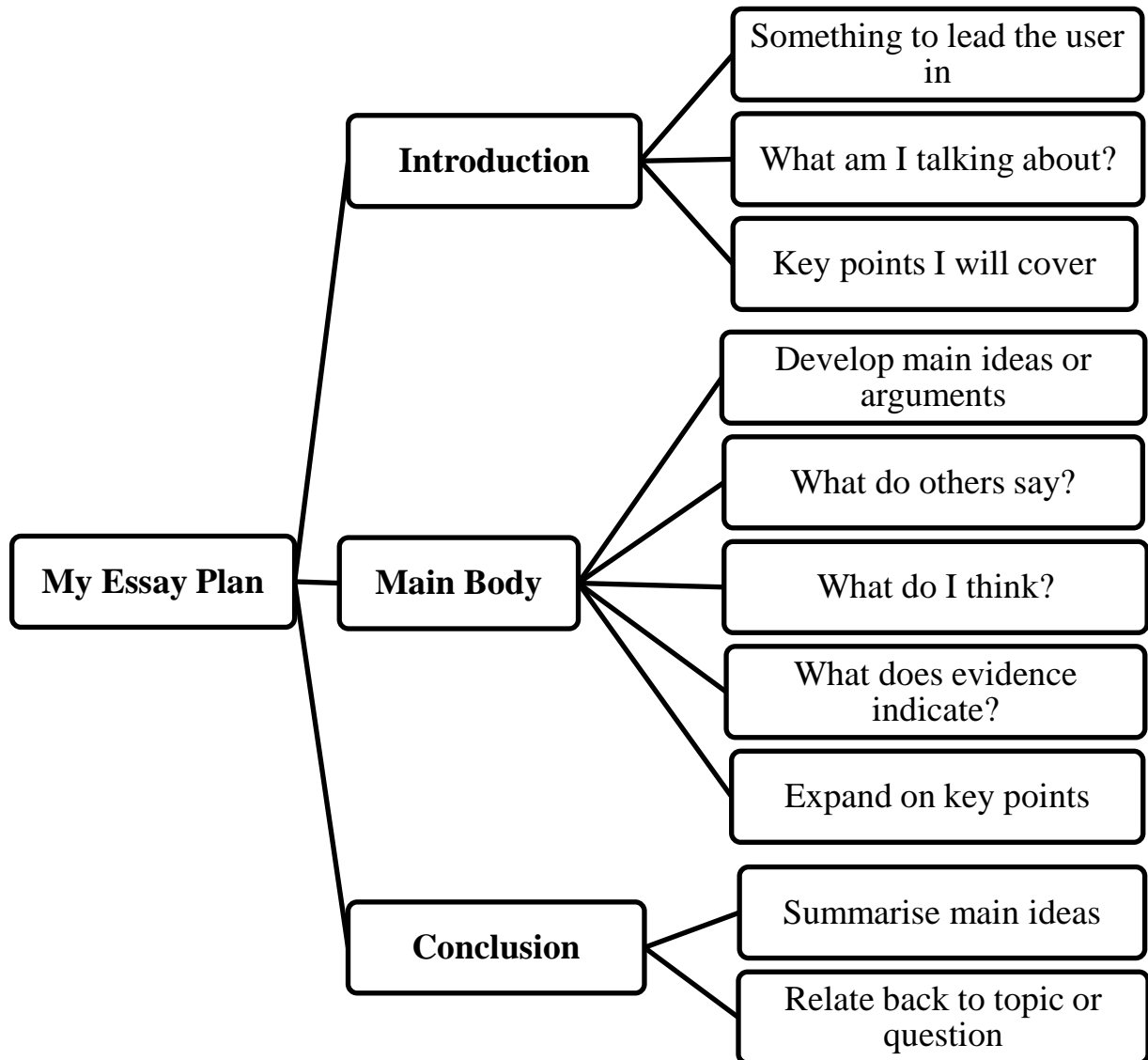


Figure 2-2: Essay Writing Plan

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2-7- Summary: Steps of Effective Writing

It is commonly known that writing skill is an important part of communication therefore, effective writing permit the writer to transmit his message with clear ideas and interesting details to develop a certain topic, by using his voice through word that influence the readers' understanding of the overall message. Any type of writing requires to make a variety of decisions such as; the use of the appropriate words and language to bring forth a new vision and sentence fluency, which can be defined as the combination of sentences, structures and style together to create a motion that facilitates reading, taking into consideration conventions like: spelling, grammar and punctuation. The above mentioned ideas for effective writing can be summarized as follow:

- ✓ Write whatever comes to mind,
- ✓ Concentrate on the reader because it is more important than the topic;
- ✓ Imagination should not be ignored and creativity,
- ✓ Avoid slang, fancy words and abbreviation

2-8-Conclusion

This chapter shed light on the writing skill in the language classroom. It dealt predominantly with the most aspects related to good writing; this included writing approaches, techniques, and steps of good writing. Finally, since it is a subject of our study, we concluded with the notion of writing essay and its main criteria.

Chapter Three

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Chapter Three: Research methodology, Data Collection, and Findings Analysis

3-1-Introduction

The present chapter outlines the practical side of this study determining a comparison between the two variables in terms of essay writing achievement. More specifically, it analyses gender differences in writing in terms of lexis, spelling, structure, coherence, cohesion and the like. The research method of investigation includes a content analysis of twenty literary essays.

3-2-Aims of the research

This study attempts to investigate gender differences in writing performance regarding different elements of language learning such as word choice, spelling and cohesion. In other words, it examines how males and females learners do in their writing. That is to say, the study attempts to reveal how males and females vary in the sense of writing achievement.

3-3-Research Methodology

Educational researchers in different domains require making decisions about which methods, they should use when conducting a research. There are two main approaches; first, quantitative which is used to measure the problem by transferring data into statistics through observation with the choice of the appropriate instrument using correlational research to examine the relationship between two variables; the second one is the qualitative which can be defined as the collection of data on variables, it also examines humans' behaviour and act in society through time, by selecting a case study; these two paradigms complete each other.

In this study, we use a content analysis method. Content analysis according to Krippendorff (2004:3) refers to "*the systematic reading of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from author's or user's perspective.*" This means that, it is a strategy used to observe and analyse a written document ensuring validity and reliability, these methods were chosen for their ability to clarify the difference between these variables.

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3-3-1- Research Instruments

In order to gain a thorough understanding about gender linked language and its influence on learners' writing achievement, a 20 papers of literary essays are used as a main instrument in this research.

3.3.2. Participants

The data of this research have been extracted from a sample of twenty (20) EFL students at IbnKhaldoun University of Tiaret. Twenty copies of literary essays were provided by the instructor of literature to be analysed in terms of language choice, coherence, cohesion, spelling and punctuation.

The papers were divided depending on learners' gender: Ten (10) copies written by females and ten (10) by males.

3-4- Content of the Literary Essay

3-4-1- Condensed Meaning

Guy DeMaupassant's story 'the Necklace' is about a woman, Mathilde, who are unsatisfied with her lack of money. The story begins when she and her husband Monsieur Loiselare invited to a party. For she has no nothing to wear, Mathilde refuses to go, for she has nothing to wear. Upset to see her unhappy, her husband uses money that he was saving to buy a rifle, to buy her a dress. Still, Mathilde is not happy yet fro she has no jewels to show off. She then borrows a necklace from her rich friend Madame Forestier for the occasion. However, during that evening Mathildefinds out that she has lost the necklace.

Mathilde and her husband look everywhere, but they could find it. Consequently, this leads them to sell all their savings and lend money to buy a necklace, which takes them about ten years of hard work to pay them back. After losing nearly everything, Mathilde meets her friend Madame Forestier walking down the street and tells her the whole story. Madame Forestier is surprised and tells Mathilde that the original necklace was actually a fake.

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3-5- The Results: Analysis of Language Aspects

3-5-1- Coding

Since we examine twenty Students' papers, this section intend to count the frequency of terms used by both males and females.

The mostly used words in these documents are: necklace and party, mentioned by males more than females; therefore, male students try to show their understanding of the story.

3-5-2-Accurate Punctuation

Gender	Females	Males
Over use of commas	There are six (6) females who respect the use of commas appropriately, while four (4) out of ten place them randomly.	The amount of students who over use them out number that of females, only two (2) students out of ten regard this rule.
Quotation marks	Four (4) students use quotation marks “ ” incorrectly especially to highlight some words supposing that it has importance, for example; “Necklace” and “Mathild”, while six (6) of them employ it logically or keep away from.	Nine (9) males students avoid using unnecessary quotation marks, except of one student who use it to spot light on that word such as “fake”.
Period	All females use the period at the end of sentences suitably.	Seven (7) males pay attention to the right positioning of the period; in contrast to the other three (3) males who do not use it in favour of commas.

Table 3.1: Differences between males' and females' punctuation

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3-5-3-Spelling (Syntactic Errors)

It is the way of writing down words

Females	Males
<p>Eight (8) female students do not concentrate on spelling mistakes. For instance; obay (obey), maney (money), disided (decided), finaly (finally), take (talk), prise (price), round (around), affect (effect).</p> <p>Except of two (2) papers which were free of mistakes.</p>	<p>Four (4) students succeed to manage their syntactic errors when writing papers; while six (6) others made different spelling errors; for example, choc (chock), necklase (necklace), conflect (conflict), woman (women), sureifice (sacrifice), beautifull (beautiful), throw (through), 10 (ten).</p>

Table 3.2: Major Males' and Females' Syntactic Errors

3-5-4-Wrong Expressions (Logical errors)

Females	Males
<p>Four (4) females do not use any wrong expressions , while the other six(6) create bad expression without prior planning, like; his wife expecting to.., error of fate, in order to make it up, at that time count a lot, this portrayed in the story.</p>	<p>On the other hand four (4) males use bad expressions such as, the returned to the house, two married couples, and little clerk; while six (6) males students are clean and clear of mistakes.</p>

Table 3.3: Males and Females' Use of Wrong Expressions

3-5-5-Subject Verb Agreement

Verb and subject must agree in number, either singular or plural.

Females	Males
<p>Five (5) students do not face any problem in according the subject with its verb.</p>	<p>On the other side, eight (8) males could handle the relation between both subject</p>

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<p>Unlike, Five other females who are unable to link between the verb and its subject; such as:</p> <p>Which are (whom are), it told (it's told), the story focus (focuses), give (gives), she talk (talks), decided (she decided), the society care about (cares).</p>	<p>and verb. Only two students could not succeed in forming the right structure; like:</p> <p>They goes (go), these couple (this couple).</p>
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Table 3.4: Differences between Males and Females in Subject Verb Concordance

3-5-6-Tenses of Verbs

Females	Males
<p>At this level only one (1) female student realises the correct form of verbs in different tenses.</p> <p>However, nine (9) students face some difficulties in giving the correct form of verbs; for example: to bought (to buy), to accepted (to accept), work (working), choosed (chose), founded (found), hadn't (didn't have).</p>	<p>As opposite to females, four (4) males are conscious of both tenses and verbs; unlike, six (6) others who encounter problems especially in irregular verbs. Such as, was (were), try (tries), used to get (got), has (had), hadn't (didn't), has been (was), determine (determined), focus (focuses).</p>

Table 3.5: Males and Females Common Mistakes in Tenses

3-5-7-Capitalisation

Females	Males
<p>All students are aware of capitalisation rules.</p>	<p>Five (5) males out of ten make errors; such as, To (to), That (that), The Lady (The lady), ministry of education (Ministry of Education)</p>

Table 3.6: Males' and Females' Awareness of Capitalisation

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3-5-8-Use of Unnecessary Words

Females	Males
<p>Eight (8) females do not use unnecessary words, while two (2) others add words unintentionally, for example:</p> <p>The injustice system was applied (injustice was applied), born into lower middle class (lower class family).</p>	<p>Six (6) males do not employ useless words, which means that they go straight to the point; however four (4) others do, like:</p> <p>Parties and events (parties), afraid to appear between people from higher class (afraid of rich people judgements), two branches and problems of economics (divided into two classes), a couple, this reflects to us (this reflects).</p>

Table 3.7: Differences between Males and Females in using unneeded terms

3-5-9-Repetition

When it comes to repetition, we found that:

Females	Males
<p>Most of female avoid it and use different words that are similar or refers to the same meaning; on the other hand, three (3) out of ten students repeated some expressions like: Mathilde, story, woman.</p>	<p>Nearly the same with females, six (6) males keep away from repetition; while four (4) others rewrite the same terms frequently. for instance,</p> <p>The higher class, Mathilde.</p>

Table 3.8: The amount of Repetition between males and females

3-5-10-Cohesion

It is the consistency and connection of ideas at the level of sentences and paragraphs.

Females	Males
<p>Seven (7) females take into consideration the link of ideas at the level of sentences and paragraphs; though three (3) others</p>	<p>Nine (9) males' papers are well constructed in terms of cohesion; only one (1) student lists his ideas in a form of</p>

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do not think about the union of ideas in their sentences.	points.
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Table 3.9: Males' and Females' Consideration of Cohesion in their Essays

3-5-11-Coherence

It is the unity and logical order of ideas, moving from general to specific.

Females	Males
Despite the fact that five (5) females are too broad, their papers miss the organisation of ideas. Five (5) others respect the logical order of the content.	Six (6) males are capable of expressing their thoughts correctly, while four (4) others are not able to employ their knowledge about that topic.

Table 3.10: Males and Females Differences at the Level of Coherence

3-6-Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Findings

The written production of undergraduate students is probably the most important factor in determining the degree of their academic success. The present study does not seek to be bias to one variable, but it attempts to provide basic differences and investigate the relevance of the familiar assumption that girls are better writers.

After using the content analysis of the students' literary essays, the main findings guided us to confirm that males writing determine relevance and interpretation of the essay question related to appropriate content. This means that males' students are too concise and clear in writing paragraphs. That is to say, they often use simple words and sentences; however, it was remarkable that they misuse punctuation and essay organization. This, of course, cannot be generalized. One males' student's paper is almost excellent in terms of the examined elements.

As far as females' students are concerned, it is found that their papers reflect accuracy and expressiveness of appropriate related subject thoughts and ideas, using suitable words that develop the content of the essay. One can infer that they draw more attention by giving importance to the outline, which determines their attitudes towards writing academic tasks; however, probably because of their lack of certainty, they

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(females) try to write down everything even if it is not relevant. Ultimately, this oftentimes leads to the lack of their papers' cohesion.

Broadly speaking, the results shows those while males essays are too concise and clear but not well organised females' essays are structurally well developed but are not cohesive. This is, as sated earlier, because females tend to write everything in their minds.

3-7-Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with some of writing problems among EFL learners, in particular it highlights similarities and differences between males and females when producing written texts in English; we presented the results after using a methodology, procedures and descriptive statistics for data collection. The data analysis shows males awareness when writing in comparison to females' level, in terms of; coherence, cohesion, and subject verb agreement; to sum up, gender effect language use and way of writing among third year students.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study is a contribution to the existing knowledge related to gender-based language differences. More specially, it concentrated on writing academic achievement, highlighting the different strategies made by males and females students in writing essays.

Taking the third year EFL students at IbnKhalidoun University, twenty (20) copies of literary essays were analysed in order to know which gender do better and to understand if there were different strategies followed by males and females. In terms of achievement, it was found that females write better than males, but not in the perfect way that meet the standard of academic writing. In term of differences, it was found that females' papers are structurally acceptable but lack cohesion. Males' papers; however, were the opposite. Males' papers were structurally poor but more cohesive than females'.

Stating differently, this investigative research revealed that males paid more attention to the content rather than the form, i.e., by using cohesive paragraphs with logical simple words and sentences. Yet, because, males are not expressive - like to be too direct- they easily achieve cohesion.

On the other hand, it was revealed that females were more conscious about the organisation of their essays. Yet, because females are more expressive than males, they tend to write too much idea, but they often fail to pay attention to the cohesion of their papers.

In short, the results of this research aim to provide a basis for other researchers to investigate and explore the reasons of these differences.

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