

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II – ABOU ALKACEM SAADALLAH
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**EXPLORING THE CONSTRUCT OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN RELATION TO
METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE HIGH, THE AVERAGE, AND THE
LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS**

The Case of Algerian Third Year Students at ENS Bouzareah

Thesis submitted in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in
English Linguistics and Didactics

Submitted by:
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Academic Year 2020-2021

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

I am duly informed that any person practicing plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions issued by university authorities under the rules and regulations in force.

Date: 10 October 2021

Signed:

DEDICATION

This thesis is in memory of my beloved grandparents and cousin *Kenza*.

To my dear parents for their devotion, unconditional love, and faith in my capacities to achieve my objectives in life.

To my husband Samir. Without his patience, sacrifices, and understanding, I could never have achieved my dream of a doctorate degree.

To my loving brothers Nabil and Amine for their constant support, help, and encouragement to whom I am deeply indebted.

To my dear sisters :Houda, Wahiba, Malika, Assia, and Nacera. Their advice useful for the effective completion of this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The study undertaken in this thesis, entitled “Exploring the Construct of Learner Autonomy in Relation to Metacognitive Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Students. The Case of Algerian Third Year Students at ENS Bouzareah”, concerns and applies to EFL Writing skill specifically, as it represents one of the challenging skills for EFL students. This is the case of ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah) EFL students who are unlikely to produce quality written content works. To explore the problem, only two factors are sought in the current thesis. First, ENSB students’ EFL Writing impediments may be due to their dependency on the teacher as the depository of knowledge. Second, the problem may lie in their limited metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. The purpose of this thesis is to explore whether or not Third Year ENSB students’ proficiency levels in EFL Writing are related to their readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge. The current exploratory thesis involves two phases. In phase one, the objective is to explore ENSB students’ profile in terms of readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing, and in phase two, focus is put on gaining insights into the relationship between ENSB Third Year students’ proficiency levels, their readiness for autonomy, and their metacognitive knowledge. Content analysis reveals the unfamiliarity of the participants with the decisions conducting to autonomous learning. Quantitative data obtained from statistical analyses, indicate a weak association between ENSB Third Year students’ proficiency levels and both their readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge. However, the strong correlation between the informants’ readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge is likely to suggest that raising ENSB students’ awareness regarding their learning process is prerequisite for fostering their autonomy.

Key Words:

EFL Writing, Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Design, Metacognitive Knowledge, Readiness for Autonomy, Proficiency Levels.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ENSB :	Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
SM:	Socratic Method
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development
L1:	Native Language
LRAQ:	Learner Readiness for Autonomy Questionnaire
LMKQ:	Learner Metacognitive Knowledge Questionnaire
SD:	Standard Deviation
M:	Mean
QUAL:	Qualitative
QUANT:	Quantitative

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Major Mixed Methods Designs and Characteristics.....	106
Table 4.2: Planning Mixed Method Procedures.....	111
Table 4.3: Sample of Participants' Verbatim Used as Item in Likert Scale.....	113
Table 4.4: Examples of the Three Types of Coding Used in the Study.....	126
Table 4.5: Cronbach Alpha Coefficient.....	133
Table 4.6: Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency.....	134
Table 4.7: LRAQ Items and Purposes.....	135
Table 4.8: LMKQ Items and Purposes.....	136
Table 4.9: Positively and Negatively Worded Items of LRAQ	137
Table 4.10: Positively and Negatively Worded Items of LMKQ.....	138
Table 4.11: Grading Criteria for the Questionnaire.....	138
Table 5.1: The Framework for Students' Readiness for Autonomy.....	144
Table 5.2: Perceptions of their Roles among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	145
Table 5.3: Perceptions of Teacher's Role among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	151
Table 5.4: Perceptions of EFL Writing Skills among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	157
Table 5.5: The Framework for the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge.....	161
Table 5.6: Person Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	162
Table 5.7: Task Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	171
Table 5.8: Strategy Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants.....	189
Table 6.1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy.....	206

Table 6.2: Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of Readiness for Autonomy.....	209
Table 6.3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants’ Metacognitive Knowledge.....	214
Table 6.4: Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive Knowledge.....	218
Table 6.5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Readiness for Autonomy Components.....	219
Table 6.6: Means and Standard Deviations of Metacognitive Knowledge Components.....	220
Table 6.7: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (Average and Low).....	221
Table 6.8: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (High and Low).....	222
Table 6.9: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (High and Average).....	223
Table 6.10: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge Base (Average and Low).....	224
Table 6.11: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge between (High and Low).....	224
Table: 6.12: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge (High and Average).....	225
Table 6.13: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy, Metacognitive Knowledge, and Proficiency levels.....	226
Table 6.14: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Person Knowledge Components.....	227
Table 6.15 : Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Task Knowledge Components.....	228
Table 6.16: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Strategy Knowledge Components.....	228

Table 6.17: Correlation between Metacognitive knowledge and Perception of their roles Components.....	229
Table 6.18: Correlation between Metacognitive Knowledge and Perception of Teacher’s Role Components.....	230
Table 6.19: Correlation between Metacognitive Knowledge and Perception of EFL Writing Components.....	230
Table 6.20: Model Summary Produced by SPSS Regression.....	232
Table 6.21: ANOVA ^a	232
Table 6.22: Regression Coefficients ^a between Readiness for Autonomy and Metacognitive Knowledge.....	233

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Exploratory Sequential Design Model (Creswell, 2007).....	111
Figure 4.2 Mixed Methods Mixing: Sequential Exploratory Design.....	112
Figure: 4.3 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design for the Study (Phase I).....	114
Figure 4.4 Purposeful Sampling of the Study(Phase I).....	115
Figure 4.5 Steps of the Coding Process.....	124
Figure 4.6 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design for the Study (Phase II).....	129
Figure 4.7 Stratification Sample of the Population of the Study (Phase II)...	131

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF ABBVERIATIONS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement.....	2
1.2 Purpose of the Study.....	3
1.3 Research Questions.....	5
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.5 The Structure of the Study.....	9

CHAPTER ONE: THE AUTONOMY-BASED APPROACH

1.1 Introduction.....	13
1.2 Autonomy: Etymological Definition and Origin.....	14
1.3 Autonomy in Philosophy of Education.....	16
1.3.1 Socrates' Socratic Method.....	17
1.3.2 Jean-Jack Rousseau's Natural Education.....	19
1.3.3 John Dewey's Progressive Education.....	22
1.4 Autonomy in Educational Psychology.....	26
1.4.1 Jean Piaget's Developmental Psychology.....	27
1.4.2 Lev Vygotsky's Social Development.....	29
1.4.3 George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory.....	34
1.5 Conclusion.....	38

CHAPTER TWO: AUTONOMY IN EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING

2.1 Introduction.....	41
2.2 Learner Autonomy in EFL: From Theory to Practice.....	41
2.3 Learner Autonomy in 1 st Language Learning.....	43
2.4 Learner Autonomy in EFL Learning.....	46
2.5 Conditions to Implement Learner Autonomy in EFL.....	50
2.5.1 Independence.....	50
2.5.2 Interdependence.....	53
2.5.3 Teacher Autonomy.....	55
2.5.4 The New Role of The Teacher	57
2.5.5 Learning How to Learn.....	61
2.8 Factors Influencing Learner’s Autonomy in EFL Context.....	62
2.8.1 Learner Autonomy and Motivation.....	63
2.8.2 Readiness for Autonomy.....	64
2.8.3 Learner Autonomy and Culture.....	66
2.9 Conclusion.....	67

CHAPTER THREE: METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING EFL WRITING

3.1 Introduction.....	70
3.2 Metacognitive knowledge.....	70
3.2.1 Person Knowledge.....	72
3.2.2 Task Knowledge.....	74
3.2.3 Strategy Knowledge.....	76
3.3 Expert Verses Novice EFL Writers in Metacognitive Knowledge.....	77
3.4 Writing in EFL Learning.....	80
3.4.1 An Overview of Writing Skill.....	80
3.4.2 Definition of EFL Writing Skill.....	82
3.4.3 The Importance of EFL Writing.....	83

3.4.4 Contemporary Approaches to Writing in the Educational Context.....	84
3.4.5 The Assessment of EFL Writing Skill	89
3.4.6 Approaches to EFL Writing Assessment.....	89
3.4.7 Challenges of EFL Writing Learning for Non-native Learners.....	91
3.4.8 The Conditions for Effective Acquisition of EFL Writing Skills.....	96
3.4.9 The Learning Strategies Used in EFL Writing.....	98
3.10 Conclusion.....	100

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction.....	103
4.2 Research Questions.....	103
4.3 Research Context and Sites.....	105
4.4 Review of Mixed Method Literature.....	106
4.4.1 Rationale for Using Mixed Method Design.....	107
4.5 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design.....	107
4.5.1 Rationale for Using the Exploratory Sequential Design.....	107
4.5.2 Stages in the Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods.....	109
4.6 Qualitative Design for Phase I.....	114
4.6.1 Sampling Design.....	115
4.6.2 The Description of the Participants.....	116
4.6.3 Maximum Variation.....	116
4.6.4 Proficiency Test.....	116
4.6.5 Analytical Rubric.....	117
4.7 Procedures and Data Collection.....	118
4.7.1 Focus Group Interview Instrument.....	118
4.7.2 Focus Group Interview Procedures.....	119

4.7.3 The Structure of Focus Group Interview.....	121
4.8 Data Analysis for Qualitative Phase.....	123
4.8.1 Data Preparation.....	123
4.8.2 Coding the Text.....	124
4.8.3 Data Presentation.....	128
4.9 Quantitative Design for Phase II.....	129
4.9.1 Quantitative Data Collection and Procedures.....	129
4.9 Conclusion.....	141

CHAPTER FIVE: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS OF PHASE I

5.1 Introduction	143
Section One: The Findings of the Participants’ Readiness for Autonomy in EFL Writing.....	143
5.1.1 Perceptions of their Roles.....	144
5.1.2 Perceptions of Teachers’ Roles	149
5.1.3 Perceptions of EFL Writing.....	156
Section Two: Findings of the Participants’ Metacognitive Knowledge in EFL Writing.....	160
5.2.1 Perceptions of Person Knowledge	161
5.2.2 Perceptions of Task Knowledge	170
5.2.3 Perceptions of Strategy Knowledge.....	187
5.4 Conclusion.....	200

CHAPTER SIX: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS OF PHASE II

6.1 Introduction.....	203
6.2 Findings Concerning the Participants’ Readiness for Autonomy Level.....	203
6.3 Findings Concerning the Participants’ Metacognitive Knowledge Level....	210
6.4 Findings Regarding the Participants’ Readiness for Autonomy Level in terms of their Proficiency Levels.....	221

6.4.1 Independent-sample T-test Analysis.....	221
6.5 Findings Regarding the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge Level in terms of their Proficiency Levels.....	223
6.6 Findings Regarding the Relationship between the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy, their Metacognitive Knowledge, and their Proficiency Levels.....	225
6.6.1 Correlation Analyses.....	226
6.7 Findings Regarding the Role of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge in Affecting their Readiness for Autonomy.....	231
6.7.1 Regression Analysis.....	231
6.8 Conclusion.....	233

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

7.1 Introduction.....	236
7.2 Discussion of the Qualitative Findings (Phase I).....	236
7.2.1 The Participants' Readiness for Autonomy.....	236
7.2.2 The Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge	242
7.3 Discussion of the Quantitative Findings (Phase II).....	249
7.3.1 Readiness for Autonomy: Status of the Participants.....	250
7.3.2 Metacognitive Knowledge: Status of the Participants.....	252
7.3.3 Differences in the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy and Metacognitive Knowledge According to the Participants Proficiency Levels.....	255
7.3.4 The Relationship between the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy, Metacognitive Knowledge, and Proficiency Levels.....	256
7.3.5 The Influence of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge on Their Readiness for Autonomy.....	260
7.7 Conclusion.....	262

GENERAL CONCLUSION

1.Limitations of the Study.....269
2.Directions for Future Research.....270

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol for the Participants (Phase I).....	273
APPENDIX B: Study Survey Questionnaire forthe Participants (Phase II).....	275
APPENDIX C: Background Questionnaire to Participants (Phase 1).....	294
APPENDIX D: Proficiency Test Questions for Third Year Students (Phase 1)....	296
APPENDIX E: Timed Essay Question (Phase I).....	296
APPENDIX F: Pedagogical Trends Analytic Rubric.....	297
APPENDIX G:Background Information of the 24 Participants in the Focus Group Interview (Phase I).....	298
APPENDIX H: Sample from the Study: Identifying Verbatim via Nodes in Nvivo Software (Phase I).....	300
APPENDIX I: Sample from the study: Nodes Hierarchy in Nvivo Software (Phase I).....	301
APPENDIX J: Sample from the Study: Imported data in Nvivo (Phase I).....	302
APPENDIX K: Email Invitation Letter to the Participants (Phase II).....	303
APPENDIX L: Sample from the Study: Coding Interview Transcripts in Computer (Phase I).....	304
APPENDIX M: The Coding Categories and Sub-categories of the Study (Phase I)	305
APPENDIX N: Revision of the Survey Questionnaire Items According To Colleagues' Comments (Phase II).....	308
APPENDIX O: Cronbach Alphas for Internal Consistency Instrument.....	308
APPENDIX P: The link of Online Survey Questionnaire (Phase II)	310
APPENDIX Q: Sample from the Study: Codebook Used for the coding process (phase 1)... ..	311
APPENDIX T: Sample from the Study: Sonix Application for Interview Transcript.....	313
APPENDIX U : Sample from the Transcript in the Focus Group Interview.....	314

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reference Books.....	317
Articles.....	325
Theses.....	337
Webs.....	337

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

EFL Writing plays a pivotal role in determining EFL students' academic scope since it is the major way through which their academic performance and knowledge are assessed. Within modern approaches to language learning, EFL Writing is no longer viewed as a final product. It is rather claimed as a dynamic process, requiring first and foremost analytical thinking. Thus, the good command of EFL system and the correct use of grammar and spelling are not enough to achieve a good mastery of this skill. More than the efficient communication of one's ideas, the construction of new knowledge is a requisite for producing quality written content works. Given the complexity of EFL Writing as a cognitive process, learning how to write is one of the daunting tasks in EFL learning context for native students in general and for EFL students in particular.

With the need to fostering students' EFL Writing performance, the teaching of this skill needs to be a process that promotes innovation and self-reliance. Thus, focus needs to shift away from the excessive stress on teaching the grammatical accuracy towards the emphasis on the creation of learning opportunities that assist EFL students in acquiring the needed skills to consciously monitor their EFL Writing learning process. Emphasis should also be laid on helping EFL students reach awareness about the different aspects relative to their EFL Writing learning process. Recognizing these two constructs as being closely related and overlapping, learner autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are highlighted by a cluster of researchers as the needed conditions that are amenable towards creative and high quality written texts.

Being defined as a capacity to take charge of one's own learning process, learner autonomy involves an ability to set objectives, define content, select learning materials and strategies, and use self-assessment. The effective performance of these actions requires a conscious control of the learning situation. In other words, EFL learners can enhance their self-reliance once they can consciously monitor their own learning process. This consciousness is defined in the literature as metacognitive knowledge base, comprising three primary dimensions; person knowledge, task knowledge, and

strategy knowledge. Accordingly, the acquisition of metacognitive knowledge with regard to EFL Writing entails 1) understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses as EFL learner, 2) consciousness about EFL Writing task constraints, purpose, and demand, 3) insights into EFL Writing strategies.

1.1 Problem Statement

In exam periods, ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah) EFL students are unlikely to apply enough efforts to understand the requirements of the questions being asked. Their writing productions are based essentially on a set of predetermined ideas they have already acquired through memorization. In doing so, their writing compositions may look like telling and showing what is already stored in their minds. Little if any importance is attributed to transforming the information, producing new knowledge, and developing the writing topic in a creative way. These practices can result in EFL Writing compositions that are shallow in content and most of the time irrelevant.

This failure in producing quality content EFL Writing compositions can be attributed to two major factors. First, this problem can emanate from ENSB EFL students' lack of personal autonomy and dependency on the teacher for the management of their EFL Writing learning process. Because of this dependency, the students may lack the tools that assist them in managing their own EFL Writing learning process in a self-reliant way. Since they are likely to rely more on the lessons provided in the classrooms, insufficient external investigations and researches are performed on their parts. In such a context, ENSB EFL students may reproduce the ideas and the formulaic expressions they have memorized in their classrooms, which can make their final written works just copies of their teachers' lessons.

Second, the problem can be due to ENSB EFL students' lack of metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. This suggests that the students may potentially lack awareness about their strengths and weaknesses as EFL learners and writers. Likewise,

they can have shallow knowledge regarding the demand and the purpose of EFL Writing task. This can be displayed through their limited knowledge regarding their audience. ENSB EFL students may consider EFL Writing process as a one shot effort in which they address their EFL Writing productions to themselves and to their teachers as the only assessors of their works. Closely related to person and task knowledge is strategy knowledge. ENSB students are unlikely to use much planning and revision strategies, which can be a logical outcome of their lack of audience consideration. This is mainly because the students who seek to meet their audience expectations are more likely to use planning and revision strategies to refine their written works. Not surprisingly then, final examinations may be opportunities for ENSB students to achieve high grades instead of being an occasion where authentic written works are produced for real audience and purposes.

Since enhancing students' autonomy and raising their metacognitive knowledge are part of the teacher's job, the insufficient level of personal autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in ENSB students can be attributed to the teaching methods that can be teacher-centered and content-based.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

A survey of the literature reveals that the students' autonomous capacity to monitor their EFL Writing learning process is highly influenced by their metacognitive knowledge base. It has also been argued that the students who have higher degree of autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are more likely to have higher proficiency levels in EFL Writing because of the quality of the written texts they produce not only in terms of language accuracy but also in terms of content, ideas organization, and critical thinking.

The purpose of the present thesis is, therefore, to explore if ENSB EFL Third Year students' proficiency levels are associated with their readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge levels. An exploratory mixed methods design is used in the

current thesis, with qualitative data collected and analysed prior to quantitative data collection and analysis.

In the first qualitative phase of the study, a focus group interview is conducted with 24 ENSB EFL Third Year students. The first objective of phase one is to explore ENSB students' perceptions of their readiness for autonomy through exploring their perceptions of their own roles as EFL learners and writers, of their teachers' roles, and of their EFL Writing learning task. This underlined objective attempts to examine the view to which ENSB students subscribe (i.e., autonomous or dependent view).

Since students' autonomy as a conscious control of the learning process is based on metacognitive awareness, the second objective of phase one is concerned with exploring the way ENSB Third Year students frame their understanding concerning their metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. This is achieved with regard to three major dimensions; their person knowledge, their task knowledge, and their strategy knowledge. This underlined objective attempts to examine the profile to which ENSB Third Grade students subscribe (i.e., good writers or novice writers).

In the second quantitative phase, which is informed by the initial qualitative data, a five-point Likert Scale survey is implemented with a larger sample (n=125) to gain further insights into ENSB EFL Third Year students' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing. Particularly, the quantitative phase aims at testing empirically the relationship between the participants' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels. Hence, the objectives of this second phase can be summed up as follows:

- 1- To investigate if ENSB students' level in both readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing learning process is satisfactory or not.
- 2- To investigate any possible differences in readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge base among ENSB students in terms of their proficiency levels.

- 3- To investigate if ENSB students' readiness for autonomy is significantly related to their metacognitive knowledge and proficiency levels in EFL Writing or not.
- 4- To examine if ENSB students' readiness for autonomous learning is influenced by their metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing or not.

1.3 Research Questions

This two-phase (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) exploratory sequential mixed methods design uses qualitative and quantitative collected data to address the following research questions that guided this thesis:

- **Qualitative Research Questions (Phase I)**

In the qualitative phase, data are collected and analyzed according to the following primary and subsidiary research questions:

RQ 1 What are the underlying categories of readiness for autonomy reported by ENSB high, average, and low achieving students?

Sub-questions

1. **a** How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their roles as EFL writers?
1. **b** How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their EFL Writing teacher's role?
1. **c** How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their EFL Writing learning process?

RQ 2 What are the underlying categories of metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing reported by ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students?

Sub-questions:

- 2. a** What are the emerging subcategories of person knowledge revealed by the high , the average, and the low achieving ENSB students in EFL Writing?
- 2. b** What are the emerging subcategories of task knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?
- 2. c** What are the emerging subcategories of strategy knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?

• Quantitative Research Questions (Phase II)

The qualitative data obtained from phase one are analyzed and used to investigate the quantitative research questions that are addressed in the second phase.

RQ 1 What is the level of ENSB students' readiness for autonomy in EFL Writing?

RQ 2 To what extent do ENSB students have metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing?

RQ 3 Are there any differences in ENSB students' readiness for autonomy regarding their proficiency levels?

RQ 4 Are there any differences in ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge regarding their proficiency levels?

RQ 5 Is there any relationship between ENSB students' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels?

RQ 6 Can ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy?

- **Hypotheses**

Thus, these six quantitative research questions lead to seven hypotheses that constitute one of the cores of the present thesis.

1. **Hypothesis:** ENSB students' level of readiness for autonomy is satisfactory in their EFL Writing learning process.
2. **Hypothesis:** ENSB students do not possess enough metacognitive knowledge about their EFL Writing learning process.
3. **Hypothesis:** High achieving, average, and low achieving ENSB students differ in their readiness for autonomy with regard to their EFL Writing learning process.
4. **Hypothesis:** Metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing differs among ENSB students according to their proficiency levels.
- 5.1 **Hypothesis:** ENSB students' readiness for autonomy is strongly related to their metacognitive knowledge.
- 5.2 **Hypothesis:** ENSB students' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are strongly related to their proficiency levels in EFL Writing.
6. **Hypothesis:** ENSB students' readiness for autonomy highly depends on their metacognitive knowledge level.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study serves to inform future academic researches on the profile of ENSB Third Grade students with different proficiency levels in terms of readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. By exploring these two constructs at ENSB context through the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the present thesis is significant for both its theoretical and practical aspects.

Because limited literature exists regarding how ENSB EFL students with

different proficiency levels frame their understanding about their capacity for autonomy in EFL Writing, the current thesis adds theoretical knowledge to existing literature. The present thesis can also offer a theoretical framework about ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge regarding EFL Writing learning process. This is through uncovering the major constraints these students encounter in EFL Writing, their knowledge about EFL Writing task purpose and demand , and the strategies they know and use in EFL Writing.

A cluster of past research studies in the Algerian educational context have investigated learners' readiness for autonomy and learners' metacognitive strategy use in EFL Writing. However, to our knowledge, few researches have focused attention on examining the relationship between these two variables in relation to learners' proficiency levels in EFL Writing. Furthermore, the current thesis can provide insights into whether readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing are key indicators of ENSB EFL students' academic success or not.

From the practical perspective, this thesis contributes knowledge and ideas about the major constraints encountered by ENSB EFL students' with the three proficiency levels in the context of EFL Writing learning process. Hence, it can provide directions for future practitioners to investigate the possible solutions to these constraints. This thesis insight can also be valuable for researchers who wish to learn from the limitations of this research study by implementing in future researches more rigorous instruments that assist them to explore in-depth autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in Algerian Universities.

The present exploratory mixed methods design is of significance because qualitative data collection and analysis are undertaken prior to quantitative ones. Hence, the data gathered in the qualitative phase through a focus group interview can be information-rich than those obtained from questionnaires. Given that the informants' thoughts and knowledge are examined in the context of their classrooms,

this thesis adds to academic researchers' in-depth knowledge of ENSB EFL students' perceptions relative to their readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge base in EFL Writing.

1.5 The Structure of the Study

This study consists of an introduction, a conclusion, and seven chapters. The chapters are divided into three theoretical parts (e.g., chapter one, chapter two, and chapter three) and four practical parts (e.g., chapter four, chapter five, chapter six, and chapter seven).

The General Introduction – The introductory paragraph provides the research background of the study along with the problem statement and the purpose. Then it shifts to highlighting the qualitative and the quantitative research questions, the hypotheses, the significance, and the structure of the study.

Chapter One: The Autonomy-Based Approach

This chapter provides philosophical and psycho-educational frameworks and arguments that promoting autonomy in learners does enhance their learning process. Hence, the chapter is devoted to providing insights into the theories of the three prominent philosophers of education and the first constructivists (i.e., Socrates, Rousseau, and Dewey) in the educational realm. Piaget, Kelly, and Vygotsky are selected in this chapter as the three most influential constructivists in educational psychology. Their ideas that put emphasis on the necessity to foster learner autonomy in learning process are highlighted.

Chapter Two: Autonomy in EFL Teaching and Learning

The literature review, in chapter two, is provided with regard to learner autonomy in EFL language teaching and learning. Hence, focus is put on defining learner autonomy in L1 and in EFL, on stressing the conditions that are conducive to enhancing learner

autonomy, and on highlighting the factors that influence the development of learner autonomy in EFL learning process.

Chapter Three: Metacognitive Knowledge in Teaching and Learning EFL

Writing

In section one of this chapter, the literature review provides insights into metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing as framed by Flavell (1979). Section two involves the definition of EFL Writing along with its significance, the major teaching approaches, EFL Writing assessment, challenges posed by EFL Writing, the conditions required for enhancing this skill, and EFL Writing learning strategies.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter provides the description of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design methodology adopted in the current thesis. The sampling, the procedures, data collection, and data analyses of the two phases (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) are detailed.

Chapter Five: Qualitative Findings of Phase I

This chapter is concerned with reporting on and analysing the qualitative results of the first phase regarding learner readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. Because the methodology adopted (i.e., exploratory sequential mixed methods design) is qualitative data-driven, priority is attributed to qualitative data analysis over quantitative ones. Thus, this chapter is longer than the other chapters because focus is put on presenting the underlying meaning of qualitative data.

Chapter Six: Quantitative Findings of Phase II

This chapter reports on quantitative findings analyses using descriptive statistics, sample Independent t-test, Spearman's Rho correlation statistics, and linear regression statistics.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of the Results of the Study

This chapter is devoted to presenting the discussion of both qualitative and quantitative results with reference to literature review and past research studies and findings.

Conclusion– The general conclusion summarises the research findings and the limitations of the current study, and sets out the recommendations for future researches.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE AUTONOMY-BASED APPROACH

1.1 Introduction

The concept of learner autonomy has gained ground in the field of education from the past decade to this day. Effective and meaningful knowledge is more likely to be acquired by independent and autonomous learners than by dependent and passive ones. Involving responsibility, independence, and freedom in taking control over one's own decisions and actions, autonomy is developed as an idea that empowers individuals to reach their full potentials in life. Not surprisingly then, it has stimulated an increasing volume of attention of various schools and tendencies of thoughts ranging from philosophy to psychology. Despite their wide diversity, philosophers, educationalists, psychologists, and practitioners have all emphasized the need to foster individuals' freedom in running their own affairs in society. This has given rise to a cluster of definitions and analyses associated to autonomy as a political, moral, personal, and educational aim. In the field of philosophy of education, the ideas of the leading figures regarding autonomy have influenced in a large scale both the theories and practices of educational psychology.

The present chapter comprises three major sections. The first section starts with an overview of the etymological origins and roots of autonomy. In section two, focus is put on the theories of the three most prominent figures in the philosophy of education. Referring to their major works and theories, Socrates, Rousseau, and Dewey's philosophical justifications advanced in favor of autonomy in the educational realm are stressed. The third section presents an overview of the three most influential theories of constructivism rooted in the educational psychology. Such theories involve developmental psychology, social psychology, and personal construct theory. Aligned with their fundamental psychological notions, their arguments supporting the use of learner autonomy in education are highlighted as well.

1.2 Autonomy: Etymological Definition and Origin

Etymologically, the word *autonomy* is derived from the Greek stem ‘autosnomos’, where the word ‘*autos*’ refers to ‘self’ and ‘*nómos*’ to ‘law’ (Cuvillier 1956). Autonomy, thus, can be defined as ‘self rule’ or ‘self-governing’ with reference to the Greek political city states where citizens were governed according to their own laws (Benson, 2001). In Henry Cockeram’s *English Dictionary or an Interpreter of Hard English Words*, autonomy is defined as the freedom to manage one’s life according to one’s own law.

In literature, the notion of autonomy is acknowledged as a construct with different philosophical, political, and educational aims. As one of the oldest educational aims, autonomy is rooted in the Greek philosophical work of Plato’s ‘Allegory of the Cave’. In fact, the escape from the Cave implies the philosopher who succeeds to free himself from the constraints imposed on his mind by outer social and intellectual tendencies. Within Plato’s framework, autonomy is associated with the freedom of the rational thinking (Bridges, 1979), whereby reaching the truth can only be achieved through speaking one’s mind freely.

As a political and philosophical notion, autonomy comes into existence from the Kantian and the post-Kantian philosophy. Emphasis is put on the freedom of the moral will from any mode of political control, particularly the Church (Bridges, 1979). In contemporary ethics, Kant (1724-1804), stresses autonomy not only as a moral goal that people should reach but as a ‘moral right’ as well (Sensen, 2013). In describing Kant’s moral autonomy, Robert Paul Wolff (1970) explains: “Moral autonomy is a combination of freedom and responsibility; it is a submission to laws that one has made for oneself. The autonomous man, in so far as he is autonomous, is not subject to the will of another” (p.14)

The major assumption involved in Kant's theory about autonomy supports the idea of individuals with a free self-determination. With regard to this philosophical view, stress is laid on moral autonomy in which individuals are valued because they are conceived as ends in themselves rather than as means to someone else. Thus, their freedom needs to be accepted and respected (Benson, 2011).

In his book, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right* (1762), Rousseau emphasized the political freedom as a legitimate right relative to human beings. His book starts with words like: "*MAN was born free,* and everywhere he is in chains.*" (Rousseau,1979, p.45). Within this outlook, Rousseau believes that autonomy or self-legislation requires a group of people working together towards a common goal. This involves surrendering their freedom as citizens to the political state for the benefit of both their civil freedom and social membership. The civil freedom, within Rousseau's paradigm, refers to citizens' chance to conduct a life of their own choice that is preserved by a legitimate political institution.

Within today's' modern and liberal world, autonomy has developed more as a capacity to exert freedom and achieve one's right (Meld Shell, 2009, p.1). Hence, autonomy is associated with independence of decision making, entailing a responsibility over one's own thoughts, actions, and convictions (Curtis, 1968). Consequently, a close interrelationship exists between autonomy as a 'right' and autonomy as a 'moral duty'. As Curtis (1968) asserts: "All rights carry with them corresponding duties"(p.123). Thus, the right of being free and autonomous is associated with a "corresponding responsibility" (Curtis, 1968). In this context, autonomy does not suggest an absolute but rather a well-regulated freedom. Autonomy is, therefore, regulated by the laws set by a given community to secure its legitimate rights. In connection with this point, Curtis (1968) notes : "No freedom is absolute, but it is restricted by certain obligations which the community believes to be equitable and necessary ." (p.124)

The increasing importance of autonomy as a concept with an intricate nature has given rise to diversified researches and investigations carried out by thinkers in different disciplines, namely in philosophy of education.

1.3 Autonomy in Philosophy of Education

Educational concerns have always been omnipresent in the philosophical questioning and reasoning from the Greek age to the contemporary time. It is the purpose of philosophy, therefore, to provide philosophers and educators with the principles they can apply to treat practical questions in education. In line with that aim, philosophy of education is equally conceived as applied philosophy (Curtis, 1968). This is mainly because when studying philosophy, focus shifts from the theoretical principles toward the practical concerns.

In this respect, philosophers of education “study the problems of education from a philosophical perspective” (Noddings, 1995, p.7). Thus, drawing on the principles and segments of philosophy, philosophy of education is an activity which is distinguished by its concern with studying educational problems (Hirst and White, 1998).

Autonomy has been the primary concern of a variety of great philosophers throughout ages. Their ideas have provided strong philosophical evidence that the development of autonomy, in the educational context, can enhance the teaching and learning processes.

Although classical as well as modern philosophers and educators have long agreed on the importance of autonomy in education, they have different views concerning the definition of this concept. Socrates, Rousseau, and Dewey are considered by a cluster of thinkers and pedagogues (Curtis, 1968; Benson, 2001) as the most critical educational philosophers and the first constructivists who, through their theories and approaches, have influenced the development of learner autonomy in contemporary education.

1.3.1 Socrates' Socratic Method

Historically, autonomy, as a philosophical concept, was ubiquitous in the ancient Greek philosophy. As it stated by Kupetz and Ziegenmeyer (2006), many of the principles of autonomy in pedagogy nowadays have been widely inspired by the ideas of the prominent philosopher Socrates. Through his Socratic Method, he advocates implicitly the idea of independent thinking.

The Socratic method or '*elenchos*' is essentially based on a 'reasoned inquiry'. It is also called a dialectic method as depicted in Plato's earlier dialogues *Meno* (Vlastos, 1994). In dictionaries, the word 'dialect' is synonymous to 'conversation', 'talk', or 'discourse'. Following this perspective, the Socratic Method is contemplated mainly as a philosophical conversation between two persons, namely between Socrates and one of Athenian fellows. Using series of adroit questions and answers, Socrates' objective is to foster independent thinking in the Greek fellows. In this regard, Rebecca asserts :

SM with the Socratic practice of cross-examination known as the elenchos. The elenchos is identified with a logical device Socrates uses for refuting the interlocutor by testing his alleged knowledge, or a set of beliefs, for consistency [...] By means of a series of questions and answers, Socrates is able to draw the opposite conclusion of the interlocutor's thesis from premises the interlocutor accepts. (2007, p.6).

The Socratic Method is an interrogative model used as a tool for leading out the interlocutor to cross-examine his internal preconceptions and reflect on his ostensible knowledge. Thus, in seeking to uncover some moral truths connected with conceptual matters like 'goodness', 'justice, and 'temperance' (Curtis, 1968), Socrates uses questions to enhance the interviewer's self-reflective mind . This Method comprises , then, four key steps ranging from the Socratic Irony, Definition, Analysis, to Generalization.

As a teacher-leading, Socrates usually starts this questioning by showing a total ignorance of the topic, using Irony. This Socratic Irony known in Ancient Greece as

'eironeia' (Hintikka , 2007) helps Socrates express not only an openness and a willingness to learn from the others' knowledge but it also encourages him to create an optimum environment. In this context, the interlocutor feels free from presuppositions, hence he brings his inner thoughts to the discussion.

The second step in this philosophical inquiry is “the Definition of notional concepts” (Hintikka, 2007 p.96). At this point of the conversation, Socrates involves the interlocutor in a deeper and more serious discussion, asking a principal question called *prima facie* request of Definition. The primary focus is to lead the interlocutor to posit his preconception as a way to make him fully engaged with the dialogue and the arguments he proffers, hence accept all the implications and consequences of his ideas. (Bensen, 2007).

Seeking to delve more deeply into the dialogue, Socrates uses, as a third step, vigorous inquiry and questions, entailing an Analysis of the suggested Definition. Socrates' primary intent is to raise the interlocutor's awareness about his misconceptions. Through this dialectic Method, Socrates conducts him to reflect on his own ideas, beliefs, and errors. (Vlastos , 1994) .

In the last step, which is identified as Generalization, Socrates focuses attention on enhancing the process of rational thinking in the interlocutor (Noddings, 1995). Through discussion and argumentation, the interviewer is guided to reason on his own to unravel the meaning of the philosophical concepts. Within the Socratic perspective, the conclusion is not reached by means of instruction and transmission but through discussion. It is important to note, at this stage, that the Definition of the suggested concept is tested and cross-examined by the interlocutor as a way to lead him out “ learn new facts through self-knowledge” (Benson, 2007, p.1)

The underlying argument, in this respect, is that the Socratic Method is an *'interrogative model of inquiry'* that favors the use of reason, with a view to enhancing the critical and independent thinking in learners. Rejecting the passive acceptance of

readymade ideas, which stem basically on old beliefs and prejudices, SM calls for mental argumentation and freedom of thinking. Not surprisingly then, this SM model is a learning approach that fosters open, well structured, and democratic discussion within which learners are stimulated to learn *how to think* rather than *what to think*.

In addition to the contributions of Socrates' ideas, modern ideas on autonomy have also their Western origin in the educational reforms with the philosophical works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the Enlightenment Period

1.3.2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Natural Education

Considering the field of philosophy of education, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) is acknowledged as the forerunner of individual freedom and autonomy. This, in fact, has been "expounded clearly in his educational/didactic treaty; *Emile*" (Curtis, 1968, p.125).

Emile (1762) is Rousseau's book that is replete with insights into individual autonomy. In fact, notions of freedom, discovery, and experience as fundamental pillars rooted in modern learning are highly emphasized in this treaty, which is widely recognized as "*a seminal book*" (Rusk, 1979, p.100) for the modern theory of education.

Rousseau was against the authority exerted on learners' education by educators of his time. Commenting on this doctrine, Curtis (1968) asserts that for Rousseau, the prime motive forces of learning should be triggered by learners' natural impulses. Focus is put on the necessity of setting learners free from the restraints imposed by society. Not surprising then, the two fundamental tenets pertaining to Rousseau's philosophy of education are namely '*nature*' and the '*child*'. The concept of natural education properly understood, in the book *Emile*, emphasizes learners as natural beings, who follow their natural and inner impulses. Also, learners' actions need to be driven more by their "immediate interests than by the adults' dictations". (Curtis,

1968, p.127). This is because this can enhance their natural growth and reinforce their “[...] *true freedom and less domination*” (Rusk, 1979, p.68). Putting it as follows, Rousseau underlines the necessity to foster greater liberty for Emile’s physical movement:

Let him fall a hundred times a day. So much the better. That way he will learn how to get up sooner. The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds [...] Another progress makes complaint less necessary to children; this is the progress of their strength. Able to do more by themselves, they need to have recourse to others less frequently. (1979, p.78)

Focus is, then put on empowering Emile’s natural organs and senses as the first raw materials he can use in his process of learning to inquire, explore, and discover the world around him. Nevertheless, if his freedom is restricted, his ultimate right to have his own personal experiences is likely to be robbed and divested .

Moreover, Rousseau's conception of autonomy comprises the ability to set one’s feeling and self-determined judgment free. These are acquired gradually through two types of education, namely negative and positive. While the negative education is addressed to children, the negative one is designed for adolescents and adults.

Rousseau propounds, in his first and second chapters of his book *Emile*, a ‘*negative education*’. This consists “not in teaching virtue or truth, but in securing the heart from vices and the mind from errors” (Rousseau, 1979, p.94). The underlying principle of Rousseau’s didactics is that any interference on the part of adults in the child’s education can be corrupting. As a child has a unique way of thinking, seeing, and understanding that is proper to him Ibid (pp.89-90) , he is can understand better through experiencing himself facts “whose utility he sees right now” (Ibid, p.184). Thus, for Rousseau, children should not be taught “what they would learn much better by themselves” (Ibid, p.78).

In this negative education that involves no teaching, Rousseau proffers a doctrine known as a discipline of “*natural consequences*” (Curtis, 1968, p.129). He highlights

this point, regarding the child's education, in the following words: "Do not even allow him to imagine that you might pretend to have any authority over him" (Rousseau, 1979, p.91).

The argument put forward is that the less the adults interfere in influencing the child's education, the more he can be provided with the opportunity to reflect on his own mistakes and learn meaningfully. Leaving him the room to learn from the natural consequences of his own actions can teach him more how to be responsible, independent, and self-reliant. (Curtis, 1968).

In the third and fourth chapters of his book *EMILE*, Rousseau's introduces the positive education. This involves the training of adolescents' mind and judgment. The major objective aims at leading Emile as an adolescent to grow as an active thinking being who has not only feelings but ideas as well (Rousseau, 1979) . In stressing this point, Rousseau notes:

The spirit of my education consists not in teaching the child many things , but never letting anything but accurate and clear ideas enter his mind [...] Reason and judgment come slowly, prejudices come in crowds; it is from them that he must be preserved. (1979, p.171).

To this end, Rousseau opposes the use of books in education, for he considers them as another form of authority exerted on learners' mind. His rejection is justified by his claim that the knowledge acquired through books is likely to substitute learners' thinking process and judgment. Hence, for Rousseau, science should be discovered and practiced rather than acquired out of books that involve readymade ideas.

No book other than the world. No instruction other than the facts. The child who reads does not think, he only reads; he is not informing himself, he learns words....Let him not learn science but discover it. If ever you substitute in his mind authority for reason, he will no longer reason. (1979, p.168).

The argument put forward is that it is through self-discovery that learners can actively use their reason for a better understanding and resolution of the problems

encountered in their physical environment. Thus, within Rousseau's outlook, education consists of less theory than practice, aiming at the promotion of learners' mental faculties rather than at the acquisition of information. By this, Rousseau is claiming that learners need to rely more on their own mental strengths and less on the opinion of others. Thus, Rousseau's conception of learner autonomy implies a developed capacity for independent and self-determined judgment.

No doubt thus, education for Rousseau is not based on the unquestionable and absolute authority of the tutor. The teacher's task is concerned with guiding learners toward both discovering and building their own knowledge and character. As claimed by Rousseau (1979, p.205): "The goal is less to teach Emile a truth than to show him how he must always go about discovering the truth," Consequently, the education Rousseau propounds is purely learner-centered.

Although Rousseau doesn't explicitly use the word autonomy in his book (i.e., *Emile*), the ideas of responsibility, experience, and self reliance are highly grounded in his thoughts. His ideas have a potentially significant influence on philosophy of education. Among those thinkers who were deeply affected by his views was John Dewey, a more well-known twentieth century pragmatist philosopher and educator. So, many of Rousseau's principles central to education have been incorporated in the modern theories and practices advanced by Dewey,

1.3.3 John Dewey's Progressive Education

John Dewey (1859-1952) is an American philosopher and progressive educator. His ideas regarding learner autonomy as an educational objective bear a visible resemblance to those of Rousseau. Although Dewey rejects the romanticism involved in Rousseau's premises, he follows him in recommending that learners are educated through experience and well-regulated freedom. Refining Rousseau's ideas, Dewey creates what is known today as 'the progressive child-centered approach'.

Like Rousseau, Dewey rejects the traditional educational ideas and practices. Considering them as lifeless and static in objectives and contents, Dewey claims that the primary feature of this old education is the imposition of adults standards, methods, and thoughts up on young learners' mind. For him, traditional education marks "the dependency of one mind up on another" (Dewey, 1938, p.19). Thus, learners, in this setting, can only be stimulated to passively accept readymade information imparted by teachers than to think or inquire. In stressing this point, Dewey assumes: "Learning here means the acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders. Moreover, that which is taught is thought of as essentially static" (1938, p.19).

It is clear for Dewey that education in the traditional outlook is conceived as 'finished products', so they are already prepared to be consumed by learners. Because traditional education programs and objectives are still oriented toward the past, they are old fashioned and fixed. Hence, few if any importance is given to learners' needs because knowledge involved in schools textbooks is totally irrelevant to young learners' real life, objectives, past experiences, interests, capacities, and inclinations.

Furthermore, the wide gap existing between the curriculum and learners' experience urged Dewey to conclude that the traditional learning is likely to impede learners' active participation in their process of knowledge acquisition. Also, as these programs are primarily remote in concern from learners' present time, no due importance is given to the changes that may occur in learners' actual society (Dewey, 1938).

The new education suggested by Dewey involves a learning context that enables learners not only to have their own learning experiences but also to cultivate their intellectual dispositions, abilities, and agencies (Hansen, 2006). Introducing himself in the philosophical realm as a pragmatist philosopher, Dewey's major concern is the development of learners' critical intelligence and practical knowledge (Peters, 2010).

Dewey means that education aim needs to be oriented toward the fostering learners' growth through immersing them in problem-solving activities triggered by everyday life. (Peters, 2010). In this context, learners may learn from their active and personal experiences.

Thus, Dewey's pragmatism involves essentially a method of thinking and acting in a creative and future-oriented way (Elkjaer, 2009). In order for learners to learn effectively and intelligently, they are required to cope with the challenges they may encounter in the future. Following this perspective, emphasis is put on 'learning by doing' where *thinking* is not separated from *acting*. Thus, the knowledge that learners acquire in their schools should be put to test of experience and action, hence be subject to constant change. Elkjaer puts it as follows: "Experience is the concept Dewey used to denote the relation between subject and worlds as well as between action and thinking, between human existence and becoming knowledgeable about selves and the worlds of which they are a part" (2009, p.78).

For Dewey, the use of concepts and abstract theories are required as they play important pedagogical function in guiding learners toward knowledge (Ibid, p.87). However, they are not enough to achieve informed learning. He argues that since learning experiences involve both action and thinking, learners can have more opportunities to tackle real challenges, initiate inquiry, and think of possible solutions through their personal learning experiences. It is only through this way that knowledge is constructed knowledge is constructed. Thus, for Dewey, becoming knowledgeable means to carry actions with intelligence, freedom, foresight, and awareness in the real world.

Consequently, according to Dewey, schools should be the playgrounds that relate society to learners' education, inclinations, and interests. In this context, learners need to have the chance to learn how learn, to experience, and to develop intelligent and useful learning habits and strategies (Weber, 2010). To this end, cooperative-problem

solving activities are highly required by Dewey.

Within this Deweyan outlook, learners' growth is more likely to be achieved through shared experiences where learners may communicate their ideas, interests, concerns, and findings with other peers (Peters, 2010). Consequently, fostering learners' abilities to act effectively both individually and socially in school is necessary as a preparation for more efficient future conduct in their actual communities.

Hence, stress is put on the practical and authentic more than the abstract knowledge. Priority is attributed to experience over theory and to progress and development of learners' new attitudes over the automatic succession of their studies. By emphasizing the significance of experience in achieving meaningful learning, focus is put on enhancing learners' individuality and freedom in learning what is useful and meaningful to them on a daily basis.

Learners are considered by Dewey as independent agents with individual purposes, who need independence in managing their own educational experiences. Thus, according to Peters (2010), the virtue of learner autonomy itself, which is conceived as an ethical value, is highlighted within Dewey's pragmatism and ideology of 'growth'.

For Dewey, effective knowledge acquisition rests up on learners' abilities to respond intelligently to difficult situations (Elkjaer, 2009). It arises from a learning situation where learners are involved in group work in the classroom to carry out projects, perform tasks, plan and execute activities, experiment, and examine the results of their works. Thus, the progressive education as suggested by Dewey is a social process which helps to bridge the gap between schools as social institutions and learners' local communities through day to day contact (Benson, 2001).

In doing so, Dewey's contribution to the idea of learner autonomy lies mainly in the relationship he established between education and learners' social participation in their actual society (Benson, 2001). This is mainly because becoming responsible and valued members of a democratic society requires educational experiences that provide learners with the opportunity to promote their self-reliance and autonomy.

The ideas promoted by Dewey have informed the contemporary trends in educational psychology whose influence and contributions on the theories and practices of learner autonomy in education are significantly important.

1.4 Autonomy in Educational Psychology

As its name implies, educational psychology embodies two fundamental disciplines; psychology and education. Education, for its part, is a process through which learners' potentials and skills are likely to develop. Like psychology, education is central to the well-being of learners. As part and parcel of psychology and education, educational psychology ultimate objective is designed toward developing the educational context. Focus is, thus, put on implementing a set of psychological theories, principles, and researches into the study of human learning (Reynolds and Miller, 2003).

Out of the existing cognitive theories of knowledge in the field of educational psychology, constructivism is conceived by many pedagogues and theoreticians as the most salient approach, particularly with regard to learner autonomy. Therefore, within the sphere of educational psychology, significant support for autonomy in learning is provided within the constructivist's psychological principles and ideas. Many pedagogues believe that the constructivist approach started and prospered with the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Kelly.

1.4.1 Jean Piaget's Developmental Psychology

As the father of constructivism and a dominant figure in the developmental psychology, J Piaget (1896-1980) is highly interested in the cognitive nature of learning. The way that learners learn, think, and acquire knowledge is the focus of his researches. In this regard, important researches on 'genetic epistemology' have been carried out by Piaget. In trying to define Piaget's 'genetic epistemology', Pritchard and Woollard assert that "Genetic epistemology looks at the validity of an individual's constructed knowledge in relation to the process of its construction" (2010, p.10).

Considering the content of the quote, Piaget's genetic epistemology involves two fundamental areas; *genesis* and *epistemology*. The former refers to the origin, the birth, and the growth, while the later is closely related to the study of knowledge. Hence, being influenced by the major disciplines; biology and philosophy, Piaget's '*genetic epistemology*', involves the developmental psychology whereby the emphasis is put on "the study of the development of knowledge construction from infancy to adulthood" (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.21).

Piaget's work provides deep insights into learners' knowledge acquisition development as a process of maturation. By maturation, Piaget intends *the development of the self* that is acquired basically through the interaction between learners and their learning environment (Ibid). Piaget's primary focus, in this respect, is put on studying learners' knowledge construction with regard to their personal experiences. In this context, he posits that a new information is essentially acquired by means of experience involving learners' direct contact and interaction with the world around them. In their work, entitled *Constructivism and Social Learning*, Pritchard and Woollard (2010) reveal that for Piaget, meaningful acquisition and understanding of knowledge requires three basic processes that learners always use unconsciously. Such processes are : *assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration* .

First, when a new concept is acquired, it is added, by means of *assimilation*, to what learners already know. It is, therefore, a mental operation through which the incoming knowledge is modified to fit learners' schema. *Schema*, in fact, is learners' prior information, and it is important in the networks of knowledge as it can be "stored in a long term memory and be recalled each time the learner needs to understand or interpret a new notion in his surroundings" (Ibid, p.12). A second salient mental operation in Piaget's theory is *accommodation*. This is used in a situation where learners encounter a new idea that contradicts their existing schema. In this context, a change and modification of the existing prior knowledge is necessary as a step to acquire the new information. In case there is no contradiction, learners use the third process that Piaget calls *equilibrium*, which is put by Pritchard and Woollard (2010) as follows: "Equilibrium is a state of balance for a schema when there are no conflicting elements. Equilibrium is the state which is innately sought by individuals" (p.18).

The critical point in Piaget's theory is that the development of learner's thinking and intelligence constitutes the main instrument of a meaningful learning. He postulates that "Intelligence is the product of innate potential interaction with the environment" (Hans and Wachs, 1975, p.11). Within this regard, it can be clearly stated that learning environment is a central condition for the enhancement of learners' intelligence. As Piaget reports, "The only way to be intelligent is to act intelligently". Therefore, for him, practice and experience are the major boost of this faculty (Ibid, pp.14-15).

Assimilation, *accommodation*, and *equilibrium* are three equally important mental processes that need to be promoted within an optimum learning context. Given this assumption, it is inevitable that if learners are studying concepts in the traditional way, where they passively learn information, they are unlikely to be actively involved in using their intelligence to understand and acquire knowledge.

In Piaget's paradigm, learners are expected to build their own peace of

knowledge by means of complex mental processes. Thus, when interacting with the environment, learners are more likely to encounter difficulties before being able to interpret and understand new information. This can raise their awareness not only of themselves as problem solvers but of their own autonomy as well (Little, 1991).

Thus, given that thinking is “a self-regulating activity” (Furth and Wachs ,1975, p.19), it is not surprising that Piaget’s cognitive model of intellectual development is a child-centered one which stresses the significance of learner autonomy in education . In doing so, Piaget is calling for the necessity to create a favorable learning environment where learners’ mental capacities and individual differences are considered. Thus, focus has to be put on assisting learners to be proactive , self reliant , and free in constructing their own peace of knowledge. For this to be achieved, the teacher’s teaching contents, methods, and means need to be adapted to learners’ own interests, cognitive needs, capacities, and stages of development (Furth and Wachs ,1975) by providing activities that trigger learners’ intellectual development and growth (Noddings, 1998, p.18).

By distinguishing between ‘developmental learning’ as an active process and ‘rote learning’ as a passive one, Piaget’s works on Developmental Psychology appeals to many educators in language learning who believe that learners should be active and self-reliant in their own learning process. The importance of autonomy as a capacity for managing one’s own learning highlighted in Piaget’s theory is also evidenced in many constructivists’ researches, notably those shaped by the work of Vygotsky’s Social Development Psychology. His contributions to promote learner autonomy are focused essentially on the Zone of Proximal Development and the ‘Scaffolding’ in which instruction, interaction, collaboration, and group work are key factors.

1.4.2 Lev Vygotsky’s Social Development

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) is considered as one of the most influential Russian psychologists of the twentieth century. In his work on Social Development, the Soviet

social constructivist points out that the essence of successful learning is achieved by means of social interaction (Newman and Holzman, 1993). His major assumption holds that learners are more likely to progress through a collaborative than an individual work. (Ibid). Hence, the primary psychological-methodological discovery relative to Vygotsky's scientific production is probably the term Zone of Proximal Development that is often abbreviated as (ZPD). The focus, within (ZPD), is laid essentially on the relationship between *instruction* as the product of pedagogy or learning and *learners' development* as a spontaneously occurring phenomenon. As advanced by Benson, the Vygotskian perspective with regard to (ZPD) involves that "learning begins from the starting point of the child's existing knowledge and experience and develop through social interaction" (2001, p.41). In highlighting the significance of collaborative learning as a key factor to autonomous learning, Vygotsky posts:

The child is able to copy a series of actions which surpass his or her own capacities, but only within limits. By means of copying, the child is able to perform much better when together with and guided by adults than when left alone, and can do so with understanding and independently. The difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help and the level of independently solved tasks is the zone of proximal development (1982, p.117) .

Based on this definition, (ZPD) is identified as the difference between what learners can do independently without the help of others and what they can perform alone. It is, therefore, the zone that involves a cluster of tasks that are difficult enough for learners to be performed on their own. Learners highly require the assistance of a more knowledgeable other to accomplish the tasks effectively. The term 'more knowledgeable other' is used , in literature, to refer to social interaction that can take place between learners and another individual who is likely to offer the appropriate assistance due to the potential he/she possesses. Within the Vygotskian outlook, this other can be a member of the pair work, a friend, or a teacher (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010, p.15).

In fact, it should be noted , in this stage, that subsequent parallels is drawn between Vygotsky's (ZPD) and 'Scaffolding' , a term introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976). Hence, both concepts are used to mean the provision of adequate assistance tailored to learners' needs with the intention to facilitating their understanding of the challenging activities. (Newman and Holzman , 1993).

Regarding education, the term scaffolding is used to refer to both cooperative and guided learning. It can then be provided both by the input of other members of the group or by the teacher himself. This input might potentially consist of facts, advice, or techniques. According to Peter E. Langford (2005), the teacher's scaffolding should be offered in the right moment as a boost' that helps learners overcome the problems associated to the learning situation.

Accordingly, Seth Chaiklin (2003) identifies three basic aspects by which (ZPD) can be understood. Such aspects are: *generality assumption*, *assistance assumption*, and *potential assumption* (p.41). The first aspect, *generality assumption*, involves learners' ability to accomplish a set of tasks. However, through collaboration with more developed other, these tasks can be performed more effectively . Hence, "the (ZPD) can apply to any situation where the necessary guidance can accelerate the learners' ability to have a good mastery of the topic they are learning" (Wells,1999, p.333).

Assistance assumption is the second aspect of the (ZPD) pertaining to *the how* does the more competent other interact with learners to assist them in achieving fruitful learning. This involves the kind of scaffolding that may potentially have a positive influence on learners' acquisition of the task. (Gillen, 2000).

In the third aspect, *potential assumption*, the focus of attention shifts to the potentials and the qualities of learners themselves. This consists mainly of both the willingness and the readiness to learn as the key factors for the promotion of learners'

intellectual growth. Not surprising then, these two factors can not only accelerate but also facilitate meaningful learning for learners (Fables and Martin, 2016).

In this process of development ,as being defined by Vygotsky , the teacher's intervention and assistance can take different forms, encompassing “demonstration, leading questions, and introduction of elements' of the task's solutions” (Vygotsky, 1987, p.209). Imitating the teacher's demonstration is highly required as a central step toward the acquisition of new knowledge or skill. However, Vygotsky makes the point that this is not intended to mean ‘*a purely mechanical process*’, arguing that learners cannot imitate what is far beyond their level ,nor can they copy what they already know well. Successful imitation can take place only when learners are in “the process to learn” an issue they can achieve because it is in “the range of their development level” (Newman and Holzman, 1993, p.53).

Thus, for a new knowledge to be acquired, learners need to use what they already *know* and what they *can do*. They are unlikely to learn information or skills surpassing their faculties .Thus, learning process in its content and procedure has to be relevant to their potentials.

Based essentially on imitation as a crucial element, the (ZPD) is intended to assists learners to learn from their teacher or peers the actions needed to cope with the difficulties encountered in their learning situation . In doing so, active and independent learning can be facilitated as they might potentially be empowered by the teacher's support. It is important to note, in this stage, that Vygotsky's view is closely related to Dewey's progressive theory.

Social progressivists, of whom the best known today are Dewey and Vygotsky, assert that education should be based on the principles that the child is part of society and that its learning is social. The school should encourage what is social within the child to blossom on an individual basis (Langford, 2005,p.124).

The salient point in these thinkers' approach is that both suggest an active and a

social dimension of teaching that is meant to promote learners 'growth for a better social performance in the future not only in their school but in their society as well. Accordingly, Vygotsky argues that 'the good learning' entails the creation of the zone of personal development, with a particular emphasis on the promotion of learners' intellectual faculties. This is likely to be achieved only if the learners are offered opportunities to socially interact with the environment and people of their society and culture. The (ZPD) has been elaborated , thus, as a secure area where learners can receive gradual scaffolding on their learning process (Vygotsky, 1978) through facilitating the acquisition of those skills and strategies that once being achieved , the scaffolding can be withdrawn paving the way for gradual independent learning to take place. Not surprisingly then, learners are led , within, the (ZPD) toward "taking a progressive control of their own learning" (Harry Daniels,1996, p.270).

The educational implication of Vygotsky's view with regard to the (ZPD) is that learning is a guided activity. As a fundamental claim of his social constructivist theory, learning process is a context where learners can acquire new skills and strategies they need to further their learning in a self-reliant way. This point, in fact, provides a strong support to the theory of autonomy in learning. It constitutes one of the fundamental arguments advanced by Henry Holec (1981) in favor of self-reliance, claiming that "a capacity of autonomy cannot be fostered without guidance" (David little, 1991, p.21).

Within Vygotsky's social theory, learner autonomy is the major concern of the learning process. The contribution of the Zone of Personal Development to learner autonomy lies primarily in the central idea that learners' progress rests on cooperation rather than on individualism. Effective learning is likely to arise from the social-interactive process whereby collaboration between the teacher and learners or between the learners themselves is the main medium . Being the prior condition for promoting learners' intellectual as well as psychological growth, group work constitutes a key factor in the (ZPD) . Based on it, a significant shift from the position of dependency

toward that of autonomy can occur .The following quotation advanced by Little provides a useful summary of Vygotsky’s contribution to autonomy with relevance to group work:

The chief argument in favor of group work as a means of developing learner autonomy is Vygoteskian in origin : collaboration between two or more learners on a constructive task can only be achieved by externalizing, and thus making explicit processes of analysis, planning and synthesis that remain largely internal, and perhaps also largely implicit, when the task is performed by a learner working alone (Little, 1995, p.214).

In accordance with Little’s view, acquiring a capacity of autonomy entails first “the active involvement of the learners in learning how to share responsibility with the group through collaborative works and projects” (Little, 2004, p.22). Consequently, the Vygotskian constructivism aims essentially at preparing learners to engage in performing their future tasks independently of others, thereby reaching the level of development and maturity.

Closely related to the constructivist theory of Vygotsky, George Kelly (1905-1967) is another pioneer of the constructivist movement, who had a great deal of impact on research in autonomy within the sphere of the educational psychology today, particularly with respect to his personal construct theory.

1.4.3 George Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory

Personal construct theory was elaborated in 1955 by the American psychologist and psychotherapist, George Kelly (1905-1967). It emerged mainly as a reaction to behaviorism, which was viewed as a mechanic and inappropriate approach for developing learners’ critical and creative thinking. (Skerrit, 1997). Behaviorism was criticized as being an approach that shows little consideration to learners’ mind, considering their behavior as a response to a stimulus that can be controlled and manipulated (Ibid).

Similarly, it is claimed by the Cognitive theories that the Behaviorist Approach put focus on the observable behavior rather than on the internal faculties of learners, failing to conceive them as active participants in the learning situation (Ibid). As put by Skerrit, “Ignoring or negating the internal world of people misses the essence of their personhood, flattens human reality and leads to educational practices which are mechanistic and lacking in respect for the basic integrity of the person » (1997, p.40). This point, in fact, is acknowledged by Skinner (1975), positing that the techniques involved in the experimental study grounded in his behaviorist theory are not meant to foster learners’ mind.

Therefore, as an alternative to behaviorism, Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory focuses attention on learners as active knowledge constructor rather than as passive agents responding to external stimuli (Skerrit, 1997) . This involves learners making sense of events and the world they live in.

Consequently, Kelly’s theory stems on the fundamental assumption that knowledge is a set of ‘working hypotheses’ rather than a cluster of ‘universal ‘truths’ (Airasian and Walsh, 1997, p.445) .There is no objective and fixed knowledge that can be found and reached in reality .Knowledge is rather personally built by the individual learners themselves. The argument put forward is that since the world is not static, people’s thinking and intelligence will potentially continue to develop to construct new information every day. The constructed knowledge can be subject to constant change and interpretation. This entails making hypotheses and then testing and revising them to “investigate the validity of the prior assumptions” (Skerrit, 1997, p.56). It is evident that Kelly views learners as scientists, making their own predictions and personal interpretations about the universe. The following quotation provides a summary of Kelly’s position:

What we have said about the experience of the individual man holds true also for the scientist. A scientist formulates a theory a body of constructs with a focus and a range of convenience. If he is a good scientist, he immediately starts putting it to test. It is almost certain that, as soon as he starts testing, he will also have to

start changing it in the light of the outcomes. Any theory, then, tends to be transient. . (Kelly, 1991, pp.10-11)

Thus, for Kelly, learners and scientists are involved in essentially the same task. Just like the scientists, learners are constantly seeking to make sense of the world. To this end, they need to have their own individual experiments to construct hypothesis .To confirm or disconfirm their own hypotheses, Kelly suggests that learners be involved in predicting , testing , revising , and even changing their thoughts if these are misleading (Skerrit, 1997).

The focus, within this paradigm, is put on “learners’ ability to build their own view of reality” (Brown .2007, p.12). Other constructivists like Slavin (2003) believes that “Learners must individually discover and transform complex information if they are to make it their own” (p.257). Such a claim is rooted in Kelly’s approach, positing that the process of changing the information requires transforming the complex knowledge and adapting it to one’s own understanding. In this way, it is likely to be integrated to one’s own schema.

In doing so, learners are more likely to learn how to acquire ideas from the external world, how to develop their own hypotheses, and finally how to make sense of the events and the environmental context around them. Following this perspective, Kelly is interested in learners as agents with individual differences, having different perceptions of the world and events. Based on their diverse experiences, individual learners may potentially attach specific meaning to new phenomena they experience. Not surprisingly then, their intellectual development is in continuous progress because the knowledge they build can always be subject to constant transformation and revision (Little, 1991).

Kelly’s thoughts regarding learners’ personal construct provide a principled and practicable route toward learner autonomy. Rejecting what he called the ‘push-pull’ theories grounded in the behaviorist approach to knowledge, Kelly points out that learners are expected to assume active decisions in the learning process. This should

be based on “their personal and meaningful understanding” (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.27).

Hence, in addition to being active constructors of their own piece of knowledge, learners need to gain awareness regarding important areas relative to their learning process. This requires an optimum learning context where learners are trained to assume responsibility over their own learning process. Learning context, therefore, needs to be an active procedure where each information taught is accommodated with learners’ needs and background knowledge. As it has been argued by Little (1991, p.15), the construction of a new knowledge “necessitates the reorganization of existing knowledge”.

It is a fundamental point within Kelly’s approach that learners be assisted to enhance their autonomy. As Little (1991, p.15) puts it, “The child is autonomous in the sense that the stimulus to develop comes from within itself and the process of development is not subject to external control”. According to this view, learners are appealed to have active and cognitive contributions in constructing personal meanings in their classrooms. This may prepare them to determine their weaknesses and strengths, paving the way for a gradual *conscious* control of their own learning process, or what Little calls “*conscious autonomy*” (1991, p.20).

Based on what has been argued earlier, constructivism is revealed as one important theory in the educational psychology, which is concerned with underlying the possible alternative ways that educators may adopt to help learners move toward autonomy. This point is well explained by Von Glaserfeld: “Constructivism cannot tell teachers new things to do, but it may suggest why certain attitudes and procedures are counter-productive, and it may point out opportunities for teachers to use their own spontaneous imagination” (1997, p.177).

However, it is important to note that constructivism provides evidence that learner-centeredness and autonomy help to foster the teaching and learning processes

(Little, 2004). Putting stress on the intellectual differences of each individual learner, the major claim of the constructivist approach is that the teaching process with its objective, organization, curriculum, and methods need to be approached from learners' perspectives, personal construct, and zone of proximal development. Piaget, Vygotsky, and Kelly's theories constitute a keystone in the works conducted by practitioners of autonomy in the field of language learning in general and in EFL Writing skill in particular, namely with the works of Little David.

1.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the origin and evolution of autonomy as a theoretical construct has been emphasized from various researches' perspectives. As stressed repeatedly throughout this chapter, focus is put on philosophical, psychological, and educational spheres, which provided theoretical clarification and understanding of the nature and significance of autonomy. Philosophy of education and constructivism in educational psychology have been introduced as two significant areas of study. Their contributions to the knowledge base on learner autonomy in terms of educational objective has been highlighted.

This chapter has been prompted by the need to be divided into three sections. In the first section of this chapter, an overview of the origin of autonomy is presented. The second section comprises Socrates, Rousseau, and Dewey as the three major advocates of autonomy in the philosophy of education and the first constructivists in the educational realm. Emphasizing the ideas of responsibility, freedom of thinking and doing, and experience, autonomy has been implicitly argued, within their approaches, as a pre-condition for learner empowerment. Next, with a view to providing psychological backdrop central to autonomy in the educational context, a considerable attention has been paid to constructivists' works in the third section. Drawing on the three most important scholars in constructivism ranging from the developmental psychology of Piaget, the social-constructivism of Vygotsky, to the personal construct of Kelly, autonomy has been stressed as a requisite for the

enhancement of learners' intellectual growth. Thus, the prominent role that autonomy can play in assisting learners to construct meaningful knowledge has been highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO:

AUTONOMY IN EFL TEACHING

AND LEARNING

2.1 Introduction

Given its importance in adult education in general and in EFL learning in particular, learner autonomy has developed as a precondition to improve Western communities 'quality of life' in terms of social progress. Unlike dependent individuals, autonomous ones have more tendencies to exercise responsibility in their society and contribute to its effective advance. Due to its intricate nature, learner autonomy has received different definitions by many researchers in language learning process.

With a view to conceptualizing this construct in EFL, the definition of learner autonomy as a learning capacity is first presented in relation to L1. The three fundamental dimensions developed by the most prominent pioneers and advocates of learner autonomy in EFL learning are then discussed. Considerable concern is given to the presentation of the conditions under which learner autonomy in EFL context can be fostered and deployed, encompassing independence, interdependence, and teacher's autonomy. Having a major influence on learner autonomy development in EFL learning, the new role adopted by the teacher and learner's training are delineated. Motivation, readiness for autonomy, and culture as the three factors that have a significant impact on the development of learner autonomy are stressed.

2.2 Learner Autonomy in EFL: From Theory to Practice

Learner autonomy has emerged as an instrument to foster the growth of foreign language learning (Little, 2007). In his report to the Council of Europe, which is entitled as *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*, Professor Holec Henry (1981) pointed out that the origin of the concept in this field traced back to the end of the 1960's with the industrial development that took place in the advanced Western countries. Characterized by a socio-political tendency, these societies major target was less concerned with the development of material goods. Their primary focus, however, was directed more toward the enhancement of the 'quality of life', with a particular emphasis on promoting personal freedom and respect of individuals in their societies.

Aligned with this point, Little (1991) argues that the primary focus of Western societies was to provide the individual citizens with the liberty to have an active contribution in the society they belonged to. The objective was to oppose the authority and barriers grounded in the traditional educational structures.

Being tools of oppression and manipulation, this traditional education is blamed to create a discrepancy between *learning* and *living*. One of the significant criticisms directed to it is the one advanced by Illich (1979). Within his outlook, the traditional school is a place of instruction and provision of institutionalized information rather than that of true learning. In an attempt to standardizing values, schools create confusion in learners' mind. Not only are learners confused between teaching and learning in these formal institutions but also between grades and education and between diplomas and competence.

Thus, it is clear for Illich (1979) that true learning cannot be enhanced by this traditional schooling because focus is put more on packaging instruction with certification than on fostering long life skillful and competent learners. Given this assumption, Illich's ideas imply a total disassociation of learning from all the aspects relative to the traditional system, which fails to bridge the gap between true learning and actual living. Thus, a substitution of the traditional teaching by a more dynamic educational system is required.

In fact, these kinds of thoughts in which education is conceived as a 'political process' (Little, 1991) have resulted in a multitude of social awareness, most notably in the matter of adult education. New educational aims and roles, which are a prerequisite to the relationship not only between learners and the school but also between individuals and their societies, are highly required within the change in the socio-political context. In the words of Holec :

Despite their wide diversity, the innovatory proposals relating to adult education policy which emerged from these discussions all have one thing in common; they insist on the need to develop the individual's freedom by developing those

abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives (1981, p.1) .

Thus, education in general and adult education in particular become “an instrument for changing the environment itself. From the idea of man as a ‘product of his society’, one moves to the idea of man as a ‘producer of his society” (Janne, 1977, p.1). As a response to the new demands of this political tendency of democratic societies, learner autonomy has reached mainstream recognition in adult foreign language education (Ibid).

This concern was first pronounced by the Council of Europe in the late 60’s at the CRAPEL; Centre de Recherches et D’Applications en Langues in Nancy, France. The head of the CRAPEL, the Professor Holec Henry (1981) called for the redefinition of the whole structure of adult learning process.

Many European countries, which were changing their socio-political context, were prompted by the idea of implementing learner autonomy as a new objective in their educational context. Thus, a shift from a ‘directed teaching’ toward a ‘self-directed learning’ and autonomy becomes a precondition for the social development of Western societies (Little, 2007).

Before defining learner autonomy in EFL learning context, an understanding of the nature of this construct in L1 learning is required.

2.3 Learner Autonomy in 1st Language Learning

For many of the advocates of learner autonomy, learners are born with natural tendencies to take control over their mother tongue. L1 is then acquired as an integral process of normal learners’ development. This suggests that the mother tongue is unlikely to be learned word by word. It is, however, acquired through a series of stages ranging from single-word utterances, of which meanings are related to a given context, to strings of words, encompassing language developed structures.

To shift from one stage to another, learners, in their early stages of development, are involved in a process of modification of their existing language knowledge to fit the new structural features. Parallel to this, L1 is learned and used simultaneously as a result of learners' daily communication with their parents. In this context, this cognitive and linguistic development is not imposed on them. It is rather acquired progressively when learners themselves feel ready to move from one stage to another to meet "the communicative needs generated by its interaction with the environment" (Little, 1991, p.25).

Thus, it is important to note that, in this first cognitive and linguistic developmental stage, learners are argued to learn their mother tongue autonomously. This autonomy is according to Little (1991) unconscious in the sense that learners have little awareness as well as knowledge concerning their progress. Furthermore, they lack structured agenda up on which their linguistic development can proceed.

Based essentially on social freedom, L1 is acquired through a process of spontaneous interaction with parents and other relations that learners are likely to enjoy. They have then the freedom of deciding what to talk and when to do it within the range of possibilities that are restricted by the environment they live in (Ibid).

As the learning process starts to be carried out within the institution of the school, it tends to be more complex because learners are no longer spontaneous and free as before. More specifically, when learning a foreign language like English within a formal educational context, learners are argued to "give up much of their autonomy" (Benson, 2001, p.74). This is mainly because they find it challenging to carry on learning a new and foreign language autonomously. It is, however, easier for them to be guided and directed by teachers.

As the mother tongue is the medium through which learners manage their social life, they can express themselves freely using this language (Little, 1991). EFL, however, is likely to be acquired within a limited range of situations and within

restricted opportunities of communicative events. Faced with such a situation, EFL learners' limited communicative repertoire makes it difficult for them to learn English in the same way they learnt L1. In order to meet the challenges posed by the cognitive processes involved in EFL learning process, EFL learners are highly required to exert control over complex tasks relevant to their EFL learning process such as setting objectives and assessing progress. Hence, to enhance their learning process and meet their communicative needs, EFL learners are highly appealed to exhibit efforts and reach a degree of autonomy.

The idea of autonomy as a natural attribute that is suppressed by formal education, grounded in Rousseau and Illich theories, provides evidence that learners have a natural tendency to be autonomous. However, if autonomy in EFL formal learning implies a conscious control over the learning process, it is more than a natural and spontaneous capacity. By this argument, autonomy in EFL learning cannot develop independently of any formal setting. It presupposes then a capacity that is promoted systematically through a period of training toward a self-directed learning.

The idea of learner autonomy in EFL learning has spawned a wealth of pioneering researches and experiments ranging from Stirling in Great Britain, Bournemouth in Great Britain, the Study Circle Experiment in Sweden, to the research carried out at the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues in Nancy, France. With a view to offering EFL learners opportunities for lifelong learning, these experiments used different action researches. The findings of these researches provided empirical evidence that success in EFL learning is determined by learners' personal and constant efforts.

These case studies, which were carried out by experts in The Council of Europe, contributed to the provision of not only theoretical but also practical explanations of the use of autonomy in EFL learning context (Holec, 1981). Based on the works of the most prominent practitioners in this domain, autonomy as a complex construct is defined from different views and perspectives.

2.4 Learner Autonomy in EFL Learning

The examination of the definitions of learner autonomy in EFL learning context reveals three major dimensional degrees, namely methodological, psychological, and content (socio-political). These are highlighted by three primary first advocates of autonomy in this sphere: Henry Holec, David Little, and Phil Benson.

According to Schwartz (1977), autonomy in education refers to the capacity to be responsible about one's own affairs. Reacting to Schwartz's definition, Holec advances that in EFL learning, autonomy is "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (1981, p.3).

In this respect, learner autonomy in EFL is described more as "a power or a capacity to do something" than as "a type of behavior" (Ibid, p.1). Given such an assumption, the ability to act autonomously, for Holec, is not an innate disposition. It is rather a potential agency, which should be cultivated with the aid of 'expert' in a formal learning .Not surprisingly then, autonomous EFL learners are expected to be involved in taking control of their own learning through being capable of assuming practical decisions that are relevant to their foreign language learning process. In summing up such decisions, Holec asserts:

To take charge of one's learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.: determining the objectives; defining content and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc); evaluating what has been acquired . (Ibid).

Within Holec's view, this learning ability encompasses not only knowledge about EFL culture and language learning culture but also about *the know-how* ranging from the selection of objectives to the use of self-evaluation . Accent is then put on the qualities that autonomous EFL learners have to possess as well as on the actions and the skills they are expected to undertake (Benson, 2007).

It is obvious that the dimension of autonomy discussed by Holec is *technical* and *methodological*. This lies primarily in his focus on the actions to be performed by autonomous learners than on the components and the essence of the concept itself (Benson, 2001). In stressing this point, Benson argues that Holec (1981) is more concerned with the description of the exercise of learner autonomy than with the definition of learner autonomy itself.

Within this outlook, it is evident that by the capacity of control, Holec (1981) intends those significant decisions that EFL learners can take in relation to the organization, management, and control of their EFL learning process major aspects. Nevertheless, since focus is put more on the steps than on the ways through which EFL learning can be organized, the cognitive dimension of autonomy is not emphasized explicitly. In highlighting this point, Benson asserts that “although his definition explained what autonomous learners are able to do, it did not explain how they are able to do it” (Benson, 2007, p.23). This is mainly because stating what autonomous learners are likely to do is not enough to reveal the how they can do it (Benson, 2006).

Viewed as the most widely cited in literature, this seminal definition advanced by Holec (1981) constitutes the platform to further efforts and descriptions of learner autonomy in EFL learning field. Closely related to Holec’s conception, Little is another pioneer and practitioner of learner autonomy, who has explicitly defined the way EFL learners can monitor their own learning process. According to his view, learner autonomy consists of “a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning” (1991, p.4).

Looked at in this way, learner autonomy implies, for Little, the provision of maximum language learning opportunities in which EFL Learners are enabled to

exploit their language use potentials to the full. It is important to note, in this context, that the nature of EFL autonomous learners' relation to EFL learning process is described in terms of learners' control over their capacities for 'detachment', 'critical reflection', 'decision-making', and 'independent action'. This presumes the control over cognitive as well as metacognitive processes through which EFL learners can manage systematically and effectively their EFL learning. Not surprisingly then, unlike Holec (1981), Little's (1991) definition focuses attention on the cognitive dimension of learner autonomy. This is because this control is explained in terms of the self-management and organization of the cognitive processes that EFL learners are appealed to master (Benson, 2001).

Apart from the cognitive dimension, Little focuses attention on another dimension of autonomy, most notably the psychological one. According to him, the way EFL learners learn EFL and transfer what has been acquired into wider contexts can reveal the extent to which they are able to not only understand the acquired language learning strategies but also use them to cope with difficulties posed by EFL learning situation (Little, 1991).

In considering Little's definition concerning learner autonomy, three significant principles can be deduced according to Carson (2010). The first principle is essentially relative to EFL learners' capacities for independence, involvement, and active participation in their own EFL learning process. The second is much concerned with EFL learners' reflection and capacity to use their minds critically. The last principle is more about EFL learners' capacity to act, decide, and use the target language in an independent way.

In addition to the *methodological, cognitive, and psychological aspects*, Benson (2001) adds a *content dimension* to the definition of learner autonomy in EFL learning. This conviction is reflected in his words: "The content of learning should be freely determined by learners" (p.49). As regards this definition, it might be noted that learner autonomy for him implies more than the decision of how and when to learn ,

extending it to the choice of what and where to learn. The major argument put forward is that as this construct implies a responsibility over one's own process of learning, it is inevitably that EFL learners exhibit further control over EFL learning content.

This 'learning content level' (Griffiths, 2008) of autonomy involves EFL learners' right to select autonomously and collectively with teachers and peers syllabi and contents they judge relevant to their personal needs and priorities. Putting it as follows, Benson assumes: "Greater learner control over the learning process, resources and language cannot be achieved by each individual acting alone according to his or her own preferences" (1996, p.33), Given such an assumption, it is obvious that learner autonomy in EFL learning needs to be featured with social rather than individual aspect, presupposing a negotiation between teachers and EFL learners about the objectives, contents, and materials to be learnt.

Thus, for Benson (2001) learner autonomy implies bringing about modifications into EFL programs. Benson's content-based definition is most likely to pose a challenge regarding the established EFL classrooms and the academic institutions power relationships. Being aware of this risk, Benson argues that:

The desire to take control over learning content can bring students into conflict with teachers and institutions and will often involve control over the collective situation of students' learning and the use of capacities for social interaction that are distinct from those required in the individual management of learning methods (Benson, 2001,p.112).

The underlying assumption in the quote involves that the control over the cognitive processes implies taking decisions relative to the learning content. With Benson's (2001) definition, the dimension of learner autonomy has taken a socio-political character.

As the three distinct but increasingly interrelated dimensions, the *technical*, *psychological*, and *socio-cultural* or *content-based* perspectives advanced by Holec, Little, and Benson help to underscore the concept of learner autonomy in EFL

learning. Although the three versions tend to differ ideologically, they overlap in their emphasis on the idea of autonomy as *a conscious control* of EFL learning process, which represents the operational definition of the current thesis.

Because of its intricate nature, learner autonomy is submitted to various misconceptions. Disagreement among scholars as well as EFL practitioners on learner autonomy has spawned numerous definitions, encompassing different understandings and interpretations of this construct in EFL learning context.

This little consensus on its conceptual meaning presupposes a clarification of what learner autonomy really stands for in the context of EFL learning. To achieve this, the distinction of learner autonomy from a set of synonymous notions, which can potentially lead to false assumptions, needs to be made. From this perspective, a clear determination of the most important conditions under which learner autonomy can be fostered are delineated.

2.5 Conditions to Implement Learner Autonomy in EFL

In a process aiming at promoting learner autonomy, the optimum conditions that can determine the effective implementation of this educational objective (i.e., learner autonomy) are worth considering. Hence, in an attempt to define this concept in the context of EFL learning, many scholars and practitioners shift attention away from providing a common definition toward discussing the aspects as well as the conditions that are conducive to its successful development. Independence, interdependence, teacher autonomy, teacher new role, and learners' training are the five required conditions within which this construct can be promoted.

2.5.1 Independence

Because autonomy opposes the idea of total dependence on the part of language learners and their excessive reliance on the teacher as 'learning full control retainer' (Holec, 1981), this concept entails essentially learners' freedom in taking charge of

their learning process. Based on the Constructivist Psychological Theory in general and on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory in particular, learner autonomy in EFL learning implies independence as a central condition for reflection. Therefore, the active and independent learners are more likely to construct their own sense of the world better than their passive and dependent counterparts. As argued earlier within Kelly's outlook, learners are likely to attribute personal meaning to events according to their own interpretations. Based on this assumption, a capacity for learner autonomy, with which EFL learners can build their own understanding, requires independence as an 'individual dimension'.

Nevertheless, defining learner autonomy as a capacity for independent learning has arisen a set of misapprehensions according to Little (1991). The most frequent fallacy relative to this construct is the one held by the practitioners Riley (1988) and Dickinson (1987). Shifting away from the objective set to learner autonomy in EFL learning by Holec (1981) and Little (1991), these researchers have used terms like 'complete and full autonomy'. In his book *Self-Instruction in Language Learning*, Dickinson (1987) has described learner autonomy as "the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p.11). Advocating an individualized view of autonomy, which is associated to self-instruction, Dickinson argues that this concept describes a situation in which EFL learners learn under their own direction. This entails an entire independence not only from the school or institution but also from the teacher, who is conceived as redundant.

From this point of view, it is important to note that what has roughly been understood by the capacity of taking charge of one's own learning, within Dickinson's perspective, is not only a total absence of the teacher but also an absolute independence of EFL learners, who are required to be left on their own in their EFL learning process (Benson, 2001).

Against this tendency, many researchers advocate that although freedom is a requisite to learner autonomy, this capacity is unlikely to be promoted through EFL learners' complete isolation from their teachers or peers' assistance (Benson, 2001). Also, Benson (2001) makes it clear that although learners are individuals with distinct characteristics, they need the social dimension to move toward autonomy. Thus, for him, 'individualized self-directed learning' is not a sufficient condition to promote this capacity because learner autonomy can by no means be confined with self-instruction, nor can it be synonymous with total independence. In highlighting this point, Little (1991) states the following:

Perhaps the most widespread misconception is that autonomy is synonymous with self-instruction; that it is essentially a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher. Certainly, some learners who follow the path of self-instruction achieve a high degree of autonomy, but many do not. For autonomy is not exclusively or even primarily a matter of how learning is organized (p.3).

Given that autonomy requires the teacher's assistance, it is evident that Little (1991) prioritizes 'interdependence' over 'independence' in EFL learning. The argument put forward is that learners are by essence 'social beings', who need to interact with their social environment. Thus, their "independence is always balanced by dependence" (Ibid, p.5), so interdependence is prerequisite for enhancing learner independence. In fact, a similar concern is expressed by Hurd (1998) ,who stresses the importance of guidance and training in this process, noting that "if learners are not trained for autonomy, no amount of surrounding them with resources will foster in them that capacity for active involvement and conscious choice, although it might appear to do so" (pp.72-3).

Thus, much of the arguments of this chapter so far tend, by implication, toward the conclusion that the teacher's adequate intervention is unlikely to restrict EFL learners' responsibility and initiatives. The teacher's assistance and scaffolding are rather highly required. Benson argues that "fostering autonomy does not mean simply leaving learners to their own devices, but implies a more active process of guidance

and encouragement to help learners extend and systematize the capacities that they already possess” (Benson, 2001, p.91). Hence, more than a degree of independence, interdependence, as another fundamental condition that is conducive to learner autonomy, is a requisite.

2.5.2 Interdependence

The clear shift in power of control and transfer of responsibility from the teacher to EFL learners requires a development of learners’ freedom in their language learning process. However, since it has been argued earlier that learner autonomy is not equated with an absolute independence, the social aspect of learning is of utmost importance. For many researchers and pedagogues, it is a must that both the theory and practice of learner autonomy be framed with the practice of interdependence. By this term, Benson (2001) intends a situation that involves both teachers and EFL learners making collaborative decisions and working together toward achieving their shared objectives.

As argued earlier in the previous chapter, the theory of autonomy finds additional support in the Social Interactionism perspective, which adopts Vygotsky’s (1987) view that collaboration and social interaction in the learning process are key ingredients of self-reliance in language learning. Based on the Zone of Personal Development elaborated by Vygotsky (1987), the underlined principle holds that EFL learners are more likely to internalize meaning under the guidance and scaffolding of a more experienced person or peer than in isolation. The importance of social interaction is supported by Little (1991). Considering social interaction as a precondition for developing reflective skills, Little (1991) argues that meaningful learning can take place through a collaborative work.

The developmental learning that unimpaired small children undergo takes place in interaction with parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, family friends, neighbors, and so on. Education, whether institutionalized or not, is likewise an interactive, social process. For most of us, important learning experiences are likely to be remembered at least partly in terms of our relationship either with one or more other learners or with a teacher (p.5).

Consequently, total detachment from the teacher is rejected not only as a form of alienation from society but as a kind of autism as well. This is mainly because autism as a “severe social impairment” and “the absence of the ability to engage in reciprocal two-way interaction” (Frith and Happé, 1989, p.10) mismatches with the principles grounded in the autonomous learning. Resting not only on the individual but also on the social skills, learner autonomy implies a situation where EFL learners engage in both individual as well as collaborative work.

For researchers such as Marion and Burden (1997), a successful learning can be achieved through a collaborative work. EFL learners are by essence ‘members of social world’. Hence, they need to be provided with opportunities to interact and learn from one another if they are to develop. Instead of the absolute isolation, the social interaction may potentially pave the way for the exchange of information and expertise and also for the negotiation of important aspects of the foreign language learning process.

Within peer work, EFL learners can be prepared to acquire the effective skills needed for their empowerment as social and responsible agents. Thus, for enhancing a capacity of autonomy, it is essential that EFL learners be prepared to work both independently and cooperatively. Given that the promotion of autonomy highly implies interdependence, this concept starts to be viewed as a “socially and institutionally contextualized construct” (Benson, 2001, p.16).

Used as a synonym of autonomy, interdependence as a capacity with social dimension encompasses two major objectives. First, it helps to raise EFL learners’ awareness about their own autonomy .Second, it is likely to encourage them contribute critically in social interaction. As this is difficult to achieve without the help of a teacher, Benson (2001) argues that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. This involves greater attention not only to the new role of EFL learners but also to the role of the teacher ,who is demanded first to promote his autonomy before enhancing that of his learners. In highlighting this point, Little (1995) argues that since learning is

based on interaction and interdependence, the promotion of learner autonomy entails the development of teacher autonomy as well.

2.5.3 Teacher Autonomy

As argued earlier, fostering learner autonomy depends on the teacher providing learners with the necessary help ranging from setting objectives to the assessment of their progress. However, in his task to prioritizing learners' needs and autonomy, the teacher is highly required to be autonomous himself. As argued by Little, "It is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what is to be autonomous" (2000, p.45).

In this new pedagogy, therefore, a change in the teacher's attitude with regard to his learners and his teaching practices in EFL classrooms becomes a necessity. Put at its simplest, a completely radical shift from his traditional role as an authoritative figure and a supplier of knowledge to that of autonomous and flexible partner should be accepted first then adopted. This point can be reached only when teachers themselves "start questioning their own traditional teaching practices, feeling 'uncertainty' about them" (Nakata, 2009, p.194).

Little (1991) makes it clear in his work *Learner Autonomy; Definition, Issues, and Problems* that the transition from traditional to a new type of teaching, involving interaction and negotiation, is quite difficult. In highlighting this point, he argues that "Teachers who were themselves taught in the expository mode and whose training was in the same tradition, are likely to find it difficult to make the transition from purveyor of information to counselor" (1991, p.44).

However, it is one of the major arguments of this chapter that if teachers refuse to abandon the use of the 'one-way action' grounded in the traditional lecturing in classrooms, they are unlikely to transfer responsibility and control to their EFL learners. This is because doing the "talk for a large part of each lesson" (Little, 1991,

p.44) can impair their learners from having the opportunity of independent self expression, which is evidently an important condition to boost their autonomy.

Another primary requirement for the teacher to be autonomous is to become 'independent enough'. This involves possessing the capacity and responsibility to make significant choices with relevance to his own teaching practices (Aoki, 2002). With a view to emphasizing this premise, Smith (2003) uses the term 'teacher-learner autonomy' to stress the importance of the teacher who needs to function both as a teacher and a learner, notably in the field of foreign language education.

In fact, it is this teacher's conception of himself as an independent professional agent, a researcher, and autonomous reflective practitioner that can encourage him/her exhibit further personal efforts. Not surprisingly then, having 'ongoing experiences' and 'continuous process of inquiry' to promote his professional development is more likely to prepare the teacher enhance not only "the ability to control the processes involved in teaching" but also "the ability to control one's own development as a teacher" (Benson, 2001, p.189).

Professional freedom represents a salient condition through which the teacher can progressively transfer control to his learners. In highlighting this point, Benson (2001) makes it clear that the teacher's professional independence requires his responsibility over the educational environment itself. This involves coping with the barriers associated to his teaching environment. Such challenges might potentially be triggered by 'educational policy' and 'institutional rules and conventions' (Benson, 2001). These kinds of constraints are likely to inhibit the teacher from exercising control over his own teaching practices, hence from becoming independent partner in the teaching process context. Therefore, teacher autonomy implies the adoption of a 'critical approach' regarding the educational systems that create these constraints. To highlight this point, Mackenzie notes:

Teachers only have responsibility for the classes we teach and students we have

‘under’ us. There is no sense here that teachers can have responsibility for, or influence over the constraints around us. This focus on control from the outer denies our inner psychological and physical need to change the environment around us towards our needs. These drives are often strong or misdirected, but used consciously with full awareness of the impact that we are having on others, they can help us act to change our teaching and learning context (2002, p.225).

The author thinks that one of the salient aspects of teacher autonomy is his involvement in influencing the learning environment itself. This requires his/her conscious reflection and active participation in the curriculum development. Taking decisive actions in selecting aspects and contents of the curriculum that can best fit learners’ interests and match their needs are the first step for the teacher toward fostering his/her personal and professional empowerment and autonomy.

Closely related to the teacher’s involvement in curriculum development, the understanding of the constraints that may be posed in his/her teaching process is also required. To this end, collaboration with colleagues that aims at analyzing the limitations and “transforming them into opportunities for change” (Barfield, 2003, p.220) is likely to empower the teacher in exerting control over his educational setting, hence support the autonomy and independence of his learners (Benson, 2001).

Considering these entire requirements up on the teachers’ shoulders, it should be noted that his/her role is significantly important in this new pedagogy. Assisting his EFL learners to learn autonomously requires this radical shift from ‘teaching’, ‘telling’, or ‘showing’ toward being the promoter of greater independence and autonomy. Following this perspective, a new educational role is required from the teacher.

2.5.4 The New Role of the Teacher

In a learner-centered educational context where EFL learners are required to be responsible of their own learning process, the teacher needs according to Holec (1981) to “redefine his role in reference to this focusing on the learner and his learning”

(1981, p.24). In the pedagogy of learner autonomy, the teacher's role is reinforced and strengthened rather than relinquished (Little, 1991). Thus, his presence and position as a teacher who intervenes in the organization of the learning situation in the educational system is still required. However, what changes considerably is the power structure of the classroom and the kind of support and help he offers in accordance with his EFL learners' needs in the matter of language acquisition.

In a general way, teaching coming under the heading of action based on autonomy should no longer be looked upon as 'producing' learning but as 'facilitating' it. It must take place in the shape of a set of procedures most of which are still to be discovered, procedures that help the learner to learn and not that make him learn, and which are used by the learner rather than 'mould' him (Holec, 1981, p.23).

According to Holec, the initiatives the teacher takes consist of providing a progressive help to learners that enable them develop a capacity of choice making concerning important areas in their learning process. This is because making choices is the first step toward learner autonomy. In this context, learners are provided with the opportunity to "feel that they are in control of the learning experience" (Zoltan, 2001, p.103). As noted by Good and Brophy (1994), "for one thing, the simplest way to ensure that people value what they are doing is to maximize their free choice and autonomy - let them decide what to do and when and how to do it" (p.228).

Given such an importance, EFL learners need scaffolding from their teacher on how to make these important choices, namely fixing objectives, selecting content, learning methods, and techniques, and using self-evaluation (Holec, 1981).

Following this perspective, three umbrella terms are suggested by Voller (1997) to describe the teacher's new polyvalent roles. Such terms are: facilitator, resource, and counselor. These three qualities are itemized by Voller (1997) under two broad headings, encompassing 'technical support and psycho-social support' (Benson, 2001).

Concerning the technical support, the teacher is appealed to act as a *facilitator*, a *resource*, and a *counselor*. Making the first move toward involving his EFL learners in

gaining insights into important aspects of their learning process entails the creation of the optimum conditions and healthy learning environment. This should be a climate in which learning EFL is based on negotiation, interaction, and problem-solving activities. Such a role can support EFL learners in analyzing their needs, exploring explicitly the syllabus objectives, and setting their own objectives. This concern is quoted by Little:

Perhaps the first step he should take towards developing autonomy in his learners is to negotiate a joint interpretation of the syllabus with them [...] Such a process is more likely to succeed if it begins by inviting the learners to make explicit what they expect from the learning process and what they can bring to it, than if it begins with a lecture on the benefits of autonomous learning (1991, p.44).

For Little, the help the teacher can provide as a facilitator is significantly important in enabling EFL learners, by means of ‘communicative behavior’, define their learning objectives according to their basic language needs. Another requirement for the teacher lies in facilitating the content understanding for EFL learners. In doing so, he can act as a guide who helps them gather EFL linguistic information that are central to their learning material sources. More than that, clarifying these information for them is highly recommended for the teacher facilitator by preparing techniques through which these linguistic content can be classified (Holec, 1981).

In encouraging EFL learners’ decision making, the teacher has also the responsibility to be a *resource*. To achieve this, the teacher needs to monitor his learners to select the adequate learning methods and techniques. For this to happen, he may create spaces for them to draw up a list of learning activities out of what is proposed in different manuals. In trying out different methods and techniques, EFL learners are most likely to select those which prove to be appropriate for their learning cases (Holec, 1981).

Additionally, assisting EFL learners in monitoring their learning procedure is another role assigned to the teacher as a resource. Emphasis is placed on offering them with the opportunity to be problem solvers. In this context, they are encouraged by the

teacher-resource to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to cope with the difficulties encountered throughout the language learning process. In doing so, they can be prepared to figure out the possible solutions and “impose a suitable working discipline” (Holec, 1981, p.24) upon themselves.

As it has been widely acknowledged earlier, EFL learners’ responsibility is likely to be superficial if they are not involved in evaluating their progress. Thus, being one of the stages that determines the level of learners’ control upon their EFL learning process, self-evaluation is one of “the practical modalities” (Holec, 1981, p.9) that the teacher as a *counselor* is required to help his learners acquire.

Closely related to the technical support, the psycho-social one (Benson, 2001) requires a cluster of personal qualities and capacities the teacher needs to be featured with. Benson (2001) argues that care, patience, tolerance, empathy, and non-judgmental spirit are highly required in the teacher. In this respect, Little argues that “for a teacher to commit himself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve, not least because it requires him to abandon any lingering notion” (Little, 1991, pp. 45-46).

Interestingly, Little identifies a supportive and open minded spirit as some of autonomy-supportive qualities, which can help the teacher to reinforce the mutual respect and trust between him and his learners. It is this mutual trust that can encourage EFL learners exhibit personal efforts, share the responsibility with the teacher, and be prepared to move towards ‘greater autonomy’ (Stutridge, 1997). Not surprisingly then, raising EFL learners’ motivation and awareness regarding their EFL learning process and creating optimum spaces for them to exercise further control over their learning process entail a consciousness on the part of the teacher regarding the tasks he needs to perform as a psycho-social support (Ibid). Rather than telling, showing, and teaching, where the teacher carries “the whole burden of learning on his own shoulders” (Little, 1991, pp.45-46), negotiation and interaction in EFL classroom need to be adopted. In clarifying the significance of the novel teacher’s role, Underhill (1999) points out:

Facilitation is a rigorous practice since more is at stake. It pays attention to a broader spectrum of human moves than does either Lecturing or Teaching. The move from Lecturer to Teacher to Facilitator is characterized by a progressive reduction in the psychological distance between teacher and student (Underhill, 1999, p.140).

Presumably, the teacher's new role is unlikely to mean the 'free for all' mentality as it requires the progressive transmission of responsibility to learners. This entails according to Zoltan (2001) the transition from three dimensional modes ranging from *hierarchical*, *cooperative*, to *autonomous*. In the *hierarchical mode*, the teacher's full control entails taking the decisive decisions of EFL learning process. Moving from this mode to the *cooperative* one presupposes sharing responsibility between the two participants; teacher and learners. In this context, focus is put on assisting EFL learners to gain insights into important aspects of their EFL learning. In the final mode, the tutor acts as an *autonomous* teacher, who is expected to respect his learners' autonomy of exerting a total control of their EFL learning process. In fact, the difficulty and genuine of the teacher's role lies essentially in figuring out the adequate balancing and shift from one mode to another as a way of preparing EFL learners to gradually move toward an increased independence (Zoltan, 2001).

Likewise, training learners to exhibit 'conscious' control over important aspects of EFL learning process constitutes another fundamental role the teacher needs to play.

2.5.5 Learning How to Learn

As argued earlier in this thesis, a capacity for autonomous learning should at least involve a capacity of reflection up on one's learning and the effective use of learning strategies.

For the most part, EFL learners are unlikely to critically reflect on their own progress. According to Little (1991), this is the result of their unawareness about their autonomy. Not surprisingly then, a 'capacity for critical reflection on the learning process' requires '*learning how to learn*' as a key ingredient. Thus, responsibility

cannot be transferred directly but conceded progressively when EFL learners feel ready to assume it through a period of training and preparation. This is made explicit by Little's words: "Learning how to learn is thus a central component of all autonomous learning schemes" (1991, p.52). In summing up the important implication that 'learning to learn' can play in empowering language learners autonomy, the Council of Europe points out:

In its most general sense, *savoir-apprendre* is the ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary. Language learning abilities are developed in the course of the experience of learning. They enable the learner to deal more effectively and independently with new language learning challenges, to see what options exist and to make better use of opportunities" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.106).

According to the Council of Europe (2001), autonomous learning can be enhanced once 'learning how to learn' is emphasized as a component of EFL teaching learning process. In doing so, EFL learners needs to be increasingly aware of the way they learn. Likewise, they need the scaffolding of the teacher to assist them in selecting the learning strategies that best suit them and help them cope with constraints associated to their learning situation.

Although the underlined conditions argued earlier can prepare EFL learners to gradually control their learning process, a set of influencing factors are reported as crucial in either enhancing or inhibiting learner autonomy.

2.8 Factors Influencing Learner's Autonomy in EFL Context

Learner autonomy is conceptualized as a complex construct that overlaps with a number of other constructs such as learners' beliefs, metacognition, language awareness, strategy use, and motivation (Benson, 2001). Being considered as factors through which learner autonomy can be affected, motivation, readiness for autonomy, and learners' culture need then to be clarified. The possible relationship existing between these constructs and learner autonomy are emphasized.

2.8.1 Learner Autonomy and Motivation

Motivation is one of the most powerful factors triggering successful learning (Zoltan, 2001). Being derived from the Latin verb '*movere*' meaning 'to move', motivation is defined as "What moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action" (Ibid, p.3).

Furthermore, motivation as a 'psychological abstract' involves "the direction and magnitude of human behavior" (Ibid). 'Choice', 'persistence', and 'efforts' are the three predictors that can determine 'why', 'how long', and 'how hard' are learners likely to pursue and sustain a given activity (Zoltan, 2001, p.4). Not surprisingly then, as a psychological construct, motivation is likely to stimulate EFL learning as a long-term behavior.

In highlighting the relationship between learner autonomy and motivation, Zoltan (2001) argues that "those who study a language because they have to are not as autonomy-conscious as those who do it of their own free will" (p.104). From this perspective, researches on motivation and learner autonomy have provided evidence that being forced to act according to someone else, direction is likely to inhibit motivation. However, the freedom to choose both the direction and the content of one's foreign language learning process is identified as one of the most powerful motivational strategies triggering intrinsic motivation. This is likely to be developed by EFL learners' sense of personal autonomy (Decy and Flaste, 1995), which is counted as "one of ten commandments for motivating learners" (Benson, 2011, p 84).

More than any other type of learners, autonomous and intrinsically motivated ones are most likely to take decisions related to what and how to learn EFL. Because their perceptions toward themselves and the task they study tend to be positive, they may display not only the desire to achieve a personal growth (Maslow, 1970) but also a satisfaction to further their learning activities in a self directed way. Consequently,

considerable importance is potentially attributed to EFL learning tasks by intrinsically motivated learners, and extensive efforts are likely to be exhibited.

Parallel to motivation, learner readiness for autonomy is another prerequisite for self-reliant learning.

2.8.2 Readiness for Autonomy

Readiness and willingness to act autonomously are two factors that can determine the degree of energy, the perseverance, and the time EFL learners are likely to devote to their learning process (Little, 1991). Willingness to assume responsibility over one's own learning process requires both a belief and acceptance that this task should not be entirely accomplished by the teacher. If EFL learners display reluctance to the idea of responsibility in learning, they are unlikely to be autonomous. In emphasizing this point, Holec (1981) argues:

After all, autonomy implies a readiness to subject our certainties to continuous challenge, and that can be very unsettling. As a rule of thumb, the older learners are when they first meet the idea of autonomy, the harder the teacher will have to work to persuade them that it makes sense (Cited in Little, 1991, p.48).

In other words, an understanding that the responsibility can be shared with the teacher is a prerequisite to the idea of learner autonomy. If this condition is not met, EFL learners cannot take control of important aspects related to their EFL learning process. Parallel to this, even though acting as facilitators, teachers will find it challenging to foster autonomy in reluctant EFL learners.

Cotterall (1995) has assumed that three broad factors showing learners' readiness for autonomy have emerged in her study on EFL learners' metacognitive knowledge. In addition to learners' beliefs about their independence and about their teachers' roles, Cotterall (2009) adds self-confidence (often termed as 'self-efficacy') as another factor influencing learner autonomy development.

As a characteristic that EFL learners bring to the learning situation, self confidence can be displayed through learners' positive perceptions toward their roles and their teachers' roles. With this attribute, EFL learners are more likely to approach difficult learning situation better than their counterparts, the insecure classmates. This is mainly because when believing in their own capacities, self confident learners have potentially more tendencies to rely on their efforts and less on their teachers. This can enhance their independence, sense of achievement, and academic success.

Because self confidence breeds autonomy, the two constructs are interrelated. Put more simply, EFL learners with strong sense of self efficacy can apply a great deal of efforts to acquire knowledge. In contrast, Zoltan (2001) points out that feelings of insecurity and doubtfulness can be detrimental to learners' learning.

If one lacks self-confidence [...] People with a low sense of self-efficacy in a given domain perceive difficult tasks as personal threats; they dwell on their own personal deficiencies and the obstacles they encounter rather than concentrating on how to perform the task successfully. Consequently, they easily lose faith in their capabilities and are likely to give up. (p.87).

This suggests that if EFL learners have serious doubts concerning their study abilities, the most creative motivational methods and strategies will fail to promote their self-efficacy and autonomy. As Zoltan (2001) puts it, self confidence is like building foundations; if the basis is weak, the most sophisticated technology will fail to construct solid and secure walls around it. The perception of one's autonomy is then likely to be influenced by variations and differences in someone's readiness for autonomy, encompassing willingness to learn the language, capacity for independent learning, and sense of self-confidence.

Apart from the educational context, the cultural aspect is also argued to be closely linked to the enhancement of learner autonomy. Then, any attempt to explore the construct of learner autonomy and learners' readiness for autonomous learning is conditioned by the investigation of learners' perceptions of their responsibilities within their actual cultural learning context. That is, focus needs to be put on how ready EFL

learners are to be autonomous within the conditions and opportunities provided in their cultural context by their teachers and academic learning institutions.

2.8.3 Learner Autonomy and Culture

As a significant factor influencing the development of learner autonomy, culture has received many definitions. For Hofstede (1980), culture refers to “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another” (pp.21-23). Thus, culture tends to converge in shared ideas, norms, values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior transmitted from one generation to another. It can also mean according to Mead (2002) a kind of traditional behavior relevant to a specific society or a given period of time. Culture plays a focal role in influencing learning process in general and EFL learning in particular (Ivanovska, 2015).

Being grounded in Western Discourse on philosophy of education and in educational psychology, learner autonomy with relevance to culture becomes a much-debated concept. Viewed as a ‘Western cultural construct’ (Little, 1999) where ‘active participation’ and ‘independence’ of individuals in their societies is promoted, learner autonomy is argued as an exclusively appropriate pedagogical goal in Western societies and inappropriate in non-western context. This cultural inappropriateness of autonomy in EFL learning, within non-Western Societies, was raised by various thinkers ranging from Riley (1988) to Holliday (2003).

In his social autonomy, Holliday (2003) claims that “Autonomy resides in the social worlds of the students, which they bring with them from their lives outside the classrooms” (2003, p.117). The underlying assumption holds that since considerable attention in Western Societies is attributed to independence as an institutional learning objective, Western EFL learners are more likely to be provided with optimum opportunities and platforms to take control over their own learning. In contrast, non-native EFL learners and teachers, who are acquainted with traditional lecturing and respect for authority, may potentially find the idea of autonomy in EFL classrooms

challenging. Hence, their teaching and learning practices are influenced by the particular culture they belong to (Ivanovska, 2015).

Unlike Riley (1988) and Holliday, Little (2009) views autonomy in relation to culture as ‘a universal human capacity and drive’ rooted in the psychology of learning rather than a ‘culturally-specific concept’ (Benson, 2001). Essentially, autonomous learners are for Little (1999) successful ones. However, this success and autonomy cannot always be attributed to their culture and the pedagogical institution they receive training from. Little (1999) puts the matter as follows:

If the potential for autonomy is a human universal and the purpose of education is to help learners to develop tools for critical reflection, it follows as a matter of principle that learner autonomy is an appropriate pedagogical goal in all cultural settings [...]. Learner autonomy cannot be externally imposed as a form of behavior modification; it must grow, quasi organically, out of the ongoing encounter between the critical goals of the educational enterprise and the particularities of cultural context (pp.15-16).

Within Little’s (1999) outlook, it is argued that although autonomous capacities may be distinctively determined by the socio-cultural factors, it is worth noting that if teachers’ practices in EFL classrooms are contextually appropriate, learner autonomy can be fostered. Put a different way, the development of the appropriate pedagogical methods that are accommodated with the specific cultural formal learning context, is likely to enhance learner autonomy.

In fact, enhancing learner autonomy in EFL context in general and in EFL writing in particular within a culturally-conditioned EFL learning context, is an issue that deserves an exploration in non-Western contexts like Algerian universities.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the reasons behind the growing interest of learner autonomy in both EFL learning and EFL Writing skill acquisition are emphasized. Focus has been put on the underlying principles supporting learner autonomy development in EFL

context. For a better understanding of the kind of attribute it represents, a capacity for autonomy in L1 is unraveled. Based on the works of Holec, Little, and Benson as the most influential advocates of learner autonomy in EFL context, three broad dimensional degrees, namely methodological, psychological, and content, have been displayed. Because of the different definitions learner autonomy receives in EFL learning context, this chapter has been prompted by the need to shed light on the primary conditions that favor learner autonomy promotion. Independence, interdependence, and teacher autonomy as the needed conditions for enhancing learner autonomy have been presented, and both teacher role and learner training have been emphasized. Motivation, readiness for autonomy, and learner culture have been highlighted as the most influential factors affecting the development of learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE:
METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING
EFL WRITING

3.1 Introduction

Along with the development of the new teaching methods, the objective of teaching has shifted away from the passive transmission of knowledge toward the active construction and transformation of that knowledge. Constructing new knowledge requires an awareness regarding one's own cognitive as well as metacognitive processes in EFL Writing. With a view to delineating the vital role of metacognitive knowledge in teaching EFL in general and in teaching EFL Writing in particular, two broad parts are involved in the third chapter.

In the first part, the definition of metacognitive knowledge is presented in relation to EFL Writing. Person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge as the three fundamental dimensions of metacognitive knowledge developed by Flavell (1979) are selected as the framework in the current thesis to distinguish between expert and novice EFL writers.

The second part is concerned with presenting an overview about EFL Writing, its fundamental role in determining learners' academic success, and the broad approaches within which it has been taught. The two primary approaches for scoring and assessing EFL Writing are highlighted, and the major constraints encountered by EFL learners when learning this skill are discussed. Finally, the major conditions that favor the promotion of learners' EFL Writing performance are detailed.

3.2 Metacognitive knowledge

As a complex construct, metacognitive knowledge is defined by Wenden (1995) as "the stable, stateable and sometimes fallible knowledge learners acquire about themselves as learners and the learning process" (p.185). It is, then a specialized knowledge base that learners acquire about their own learning process. Thus, it is stable as it develops early in learners' memory and stateable, for it consists of a system of related ideas (Cotterall, 2009). Researches conducted on metacognitive knowledge

derive not only from Wenden's works but from those performed in the field of educational psychology by John Hurley Flavell (1979) and Ann Leslie Brown (1987) as well.

As the first researcher who provides a detailed account of metacognitive knowledge, John Hurley Flavell (1979) is highly influenced by Jean Piaget's works with respect to developmental psychology. Believing that thinking about one's own thinking is categorized as a higher level than the thinking process itself (Velzen, 2016), Flavell (1979) advances that metacognitive knowledge comprises one's beliefs about one's own knowledge. Given such a definition, metacognitive knowledge is claimed to comprise three distinct but closely related variables: person, task, and strategy knowledge. By interacting with each other, these variables are likely to "affect the course and outcome of cognitive enterprises" (Ibid, p.907).

The major assumption, within Flavell's (1979) view, is that EFL learners can be successful and autonomous once they gain deep insights into their metacognitive knowledge base. In the learning situation, metacognitive knowledge corresponds to the understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses in relation to EFL Writing tasks (i.e., person knowledge); a consciousness of the tasks constraints, purposes, and demands (i.e., task knowledge); and an awareness of the strategies which are instrumental in performing the EFL Writing tasks effectively (i.e., strategy knowledge) (Cotterall, 2009).

Flavell (1979) has originally compared metacognitive knowledge base to a network and a 'mental base' where EFL learners' knowledge can be stored.

Metacognitive knowledge is not fundamentally different from other knowledge stored in long-term memory. Thus, a segment of it may be activated as the result of a deliberate, conscious memory search, for example, for an effective strategy. On the other hand, and no doubt more commonly, the segment may be activated unintentionally and automatically by retrieval cues in the task situation. (p.907).

By this assumption, metacognitive knowledge can be used by EFL learners to add, delete, or revise information they acquire throughout the course of their

cognitive learning process. These information can be recalled consciously whenever needed to assist EFL learners cope with new and unfamiliar learning situations.

Subsequent to Flavell's work, Ann Leslie Brown (1987) is another educational psychologist, whose ideas have been of great significance to the understanding of metacognitive knowledge. Referring to it as the cognitive processes that one has about oneself, metacognitive knowledge can be identified into two types of information. Such information are: the knowledge EFL learners acquire concerning their persons' capacities and needs, and the knowledge they possess regarding the learning context they study in (Velzen, 2016).

In fact, it is important to note that learning theories developed by Wenden (1995) and Flavell (1979) put emphasis on the importance of metacognitive knowledge as an awareness that EFL learners need to acquire in relation to learning process. Responding to questions such as "*what do I need to do to understand the material profoundly and to memorize the material sufficiently?*" (Velzen, 2016, p.17), EFL learners are expected to know not only about their personal needs but also about their learning context if they are to be successful. This kind of awareness is most likely to assist them learn EFL input effectively through helping them monitor, manage, and organize their learning activities relative to their own personal abilities and interests (Velzen, 2016). Thus, in the context of EFL Writing, person, task, and strategy knowledge, as the three important types of metacognitive knowledge, which are depicted from Flavell's taxonomy, need to be unraveled.

3.2.1 Person Knowledge

Person knowledge is defined as the understanding of the knowledge concerning one's own personal characteristics and the characteristics of other people (Cotterall, 2009). Put more simply, it is what Flavell (1979) has conceptualized as "everything that you could come to believe about the nature of yourself and other people as cognitive processors" (p.907). In clarifying his definition, Flavell (1979) suggests a

taxonomy whereby three subcategories appear most likely to illustrate EFL learners' person knowledge. These are mainly: the belief about *intra individual differences*, *inter individual differences*, and *universals of cognition*.

First, what Flavell (1979), terms as *intra individual differences* refers essentially to the awareness that EFL learners have regarding the differences that exist within or inside a group or classmates. A good example of this consists of one's knowledge that learning a foreign language can be achieved better by reading than by listening, or that one's capacity of the memorization of linguistic data is quick compared to other classmates (Velzen, 2016). An additional example would include one's knowledge that writing slowly is likely to preclude them from taking benefit of peer feedback opportunity, or that feelings of stress are likely to hinder one's school test performance (Ibid). In fact, possessing an awareness of one's personal (i.e., strengths and limitations) is of an utmost value in EFL Writing process because it helps learners reinforce the weak aspects in their behaviors as EFL writers (Cotterall, 2009).

In the *inter individual differences*, focus is put on one's knowledge about the differences that exist between or among a given group. A good example of this knowledge may be as Flavell put its "One of your friends is more socially sensitive than another" (1979, p.907).

The last of these sub-categories is closely related to a belief associated to *universals of cognition*. These are understood as mental processes that EFL learners acquire progressively to monitor their learning tasks effectively. Such processes are: remembering, communicating, and problem solving (Flavell, 1979). Coupled with the two first subcategories, *universals of cognition* plays a potent role in determining learners' positive performance in EFL Writing compositions.

In the context of EFL Writing, person knowledge corresponds to the understanding of one's level of proficiency regarding the different forms of writing such as persuasive, argumentative, and descriptive texts. It relates also to EFL learners' awareness regarding the various compositional processes ranging from planning and revising processes, environmental learning preferences such as attitudes toward EFL Writing, levels of writing, self efficacy, to writing motivation. These can be triggered by self-satisfaction with one's own achievement (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010).

Requiring high level of reflection, person knowledge is argued to be less concrete compared to task knowledge. It involves as noted by Cotterall (2009) "a broader kind of reflection incorporating consideration of past as well as present and future experiences" (p.102). It is not surprisingly then, EFL learners find it difficult to talk about their person metacognitive awareness, most notably in EFL Writing.

3.2.2 Task Knowledge

Of all the three metacognitive variables, task knowledge is viewed by Benson (2001) as the most relevant to the idea of learner autonomy and control over ones' own learning processes. Similarly, Wenden (1995) argues that completing specific language learning tasks successfully requires an insight into the necessary task knowledge. She refers to it as "what learners need to know about the purpose of a task, the task demands, and implicit in these considerations, a determination of the kind of task it is" (p.185).

Given such a definition, task knowledge can be understood as any type of information EFL learners need to acquire concerning the purpose and the nature of the task itself (Wenden, 1995). For example, EFL learners can recognize that some tasks are more demanding and difficult than others (Velzen, 2016). Therefore, the importance of task knowledge lies in EFL learners' awareness that some tasks require

abstract thinking, thereby, need further mental efforts on the part of EFL learners . (Flavell, 1979).

Applied to EFL Writing, task knowledge stands for an understanding of a set of information ranging from the purpose of the EFL Writing task, the difficulty of the task, and the demand of the task. Being aware about audience demand is highly recommended for EFL learners to be successful writers (Waters and Schneider, 2010). This is mainly because audience knowledge can determine not only the content but also the structures and the organization of the written assignment. According to Cotterall, (2009), “The more effective writers’ metacognitive knowledge included their concern for the ‘audience’ of their writing, and their dependence on planning as a strategy for organizing their texts” (p.90). Not surprisingly then, writers who address an intended audience are more likely to offer better explanations and further details, yielding good and strong written products. As noted by Wenden (1995):

Expert learners construct mental representations of task demands in order to determine how best to go about completing them. These representations include task goals and sub goals, possible states through which the task will pass on its way to completion and the constraints under which the task is to be done (p.189).

The underlying assumption in Wenden’s idea is that task knowledge may affect the use of planning, drafting, and revising as the fundamental higher processors and strategies relative to successful EFL Writing composition. The more EFL learners have metacognitive task knowledge, the more they are capable of self-monitoring their EFL Writing process. This can be displayed through their ability to carry out writing tasks, progression, and pace. It can also be demonstrated through their successful selection of the appropriate cognitive strategies and the criteria of evaluation (Benson, 2001). In addition to the understanding of task nature and requirement, strategy knowledge is another metacognitive category that EFL learners need to have a good command of.

3.2.3 Strategy Knowledge

Strategy knowledge is defined as the stored knowledge in EFL learners' memories. These involve the types of language learning strategies that are available, and which can assist them in performing cognitive tasks effectively (Goh and Lin, 1999). In this context, focus is put on 'knowing how' (Waters and Schneider, 2010, p.228). In other words, strategy knowledge encompasses information related to the way EFL learners can successfully apply the different accessible learning strategies. It is identified by Raphael (1989) as "the repertoire of behavior available from which the learner selects the one(s) best able to help reach a particular goal" (p.347).

In regard to EFL Writing, strategy knowledge may be interpreted as an understanding of which language learning strategies to use in particular EFL Writing situations. It is, therefore, an awareness about the strategies that assist EFL learners in fostering the higher order processes like planning and revising, which are fundamental in enhancing not only the effective productions of written texts but also the clear readability of these works. Such strategies can include the creation of well structured outline, the correct usage of transitional phrases, the employment of supporting details, and the use of bilingual dictionaries to find the correct spelling of words. In fact, the selection of the appropriate EFL Writing strategies may vary from one EFL learner to another, depending on a cluster of factors such as preferred learning styles, EFL Writing performance, level of autonomy, and EFL language repertoire.

Spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, and hand writing are also reported to play a potent role in developing competence and promoting learners' EFL Writing performance; however, they are considered by many language researchers as lower order skills (Graham, 2006; Graham and Harris, 2000; McCutchen, 2006). Because they require less mental efforts than planning and revising strategies, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and handwriting are thought to be especially targeting the surface-level features of written texts (Cotterall, 2009).

Considering its complex nature, strategy knowledge is argued by many language researchers to be the most abstract of the two metacognitive knowledge factors (i.e., person and task knowledge). Because it incorporates thinking about complex cognitive and metacognitive processes, strategy knowledge, namely in EFL Writing, is the least category that the high as well as the low achieving EFL learners are likely to report statements on (Ibid).

3.3 Expert Verses Novice EFL Writers in Metacognitive Knowledge

A comparison between EFL high achieving and low achieving learners in metacognitive EFL Writing knowledge can reveal a multitude of differences in person, task, and strategy knowledge. With regard to person knowledge, it is widely recognized that the high achieving learners approach EFL Writing with more self-confidence in writing abilities and with high self-efficacy, and motivation. They are more likely to cope successfully with challenges posed by the learning situation, showing more commitment to complete their writing tasks. However, low achieving EFL learners are more prone to negative attitudes, displaying low motivation, and having low self-efficacy.

Concerning task knowledge, EFL high achieving learners are more likely to demonstrate their understanding in relation to the nature as well as the purpose of writing. For them, this task needs to be well structured, encompassing a beginning, middle, and end.

Unlike EFL high achieving learners, low achieving ones are interested in the low order processes of the writing activity such as neatness of the paper, correct spelling of words, and mechanics (Ibid). Much significance is attributed to these processes by EFL low achieving learners, who attach less importance to ideas organization and audience needs (Harris, et al., 2008). Consequently, they are unlikely to have a clear and well determined purpose in writing. Because most of them tend to lack sense of

direction, EFL low achieving learners may fail to perceive any minimal personal relevance or value to their writings (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010).

Concerning writing background knowledge, EFL high achieving learners are thought to be more knowledgeable than their counterparts, the low achieving ones. This can be displayed through their metacognitive understanding of high-quality compositions fundamental components, characteristics, and genre structures such as persuasive and argumentative essays (Harris, et al., 2010). In comparison with their counterparts' the high achieving classmates, the low achieving learners' EFL Writing metacognitive knowledge is reported to be shallow and superficial. Having limited understanding of the fundamental knowledge relative to writing genres and devices, these learners are unlikely to use a starter event or a summative conclusion.

Because meaning over text surface-level is targeted by EFL high achieving learners during composition (McCutcheon, 2006), they are most likely to be reflective by manipulating their ideas (Cotterall, 2009). In fact, this ability can enable them to display an understanding of the targeted audience needs. Hence, focus is put on the consideration of both purpose as well as the cohesion of their written works.

They typically begin planning by critically considering the task. This allows them to formulate goals and delineate conceptual-level plans that reflect crucial elements such as their rhetorical purpose, perceived audience needs, genre demands, appropriate tone, and effective linguistic style (Cotterall, 2009,p.90).

In terms of strategy knowledge, creativity and elaboration in EFL Writing are what characterize EFL high achieving learners. Not surprisingly then, their written work is most likely to be read over and over again to check if the ideas involved in fit the purpose they have set previously (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010). In this way, they can have more tendencies to verbalize the strategies they use in their written texts.

As higher order compositional processes, planning and revising are attributed a potent role by EFL high achieving learners. Hence, taking notes, numbering the

ideas, putting sentences into a given order, and making the end of the written work attracting are all good examples of higher order planning processes they may use in their EFL Writing compositions (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010). With regard to revision, it is conceived as an ongoing activity that is based on coordination and management of several cognitive skills such memorization and attention. Guided by the purpose they fix in their written text, good achieving learners may use reflection as a cognitive process to meet not only the intended audience needs but the writing genre expectations as well. Thus, as both the conceptual and linguistic aspects of their writing are highly considered, the overall quality of their compositions is likely to increase (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; Graham, 2006; Lin et al., 2007; McCutchen, 2006; Saddler and Graham, 2007).

Conducted researches on EFL Writing have demonstrated that the low achieving learners' perceptions with regard to planning and revising strategies are shallow. Unlike their counterparts' the high achieving classmates, who use revision as a process in which conceptual-level improvements are considered, the low achieving ones are more involved in proofreading. Thus, their focus of attention is generally directed toward checking the surface-level features of their written works ranging from the format of their papers to the size and clarity of the letters used (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010). Little if any emphasis, is then, laid on conceptual aspects or depth of ideas (Ibid). For example, stress is likely to be put on mechanical procedures such as checking spelling, following teacher's instructions, and being disciplined in EFL Writing classrooms.

As for planning processes, low achieving learners are rarely involved in. In fact, even if it is a required activity, less time is devoted to it (MacArthur and Graham, 1987; De La Paz, 1999; De La Paz and Graham, 1997; Graham, 1990; Lane et al., 2008; Harris et al., 2006). This means, for many pedagogues and practitioners, that these learners "lack knowledge of important strategies for planning, producing, organizing, and revising text" (Harris et al., 2010, p.236).

Possessing a number of higher order processes such as planning and revising may increase EFL learners' attribution for academic success. Thus, according to Dickinson (1995), "learners who believe that they have more control over their learning –that by accepting new challenge they can increase their ability to perform learning tasks and so increase their intelligence tend to be more successful than others" (p.172). Nevertheless, good achieving learners have more readiness for self-regulation and autonomy.

Coupled with learners' readiness for autonomy, the control over the cognitive processing, most notably metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing is acknowledged as another primary impetus to learner autonomy. Not surprisingly then, readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are argued to form partially overlapping sets. Both of them are part and partial of learner autonomy operational definition as a conscious control in the current study.

Although the relationship between the two constructs (i.e., readiness for autonomy & metacognitive knowledge) in relation to EFL Writing seems theoretically perfect, further investigations are needed to explore the nature of this relationship in different cultural and educational contexts.

3.4 Writing in EFL Learning Context

This part is concerned with providing an overview, definitions, and the significance of writing skill in EFL acquisition.

3.4.1 An Overview of Writing Skill

Etymologically, the word writing emanates from the Greek language (γράφειν) meaning 'to write', 'to crave', 'to engrave', and 'to scratch' (Coulmas, 1999). It is also originated from the Latin language (scriber/scribe), in which it stands for 'painting', 'drawing', and 'outlining a shape on a surface process'.

In ancient philosophy, diverse conceptualizations with regard to writing role have been provided by philosophers and thinkers over centuries. Aristotle, Liu Hsieh, and Plato are the most influential classical thinkers who put emphasis on the role this skill plays in knowledge formation.

Probably, one of the most widely cited theories pertaining to writing in the classical era literature is the ones advanced by Aristotle. His view about writing skill is related to his major focus on logical thinking. Within the Aristotelian view, ideas and concepts are likely to be conveyed through letters, which are displayed through both speaking and writing (Coulmas, 1999).

Given that logical thinking is communicated by means of uttered ideas and words, it is no surprise that writing represents a way through which concepts are conveyed. However, since much of Aristotle's concern revolves around the thinking process, little importance is attributed to writing as an end in itself. His underlying argument was that the individual thinks first, then speaks, then writes. This means that in the Greek practices in general and in Aristotle's outlook in particular, writing was viewed as no more than a means that is subordinate to speaking and logical thinking processes. (Coulmas, 2003).

Closely related to Aristotle's ideas, writing definition finds also its root in the Chinese literary culture with Liu Hsieh. Like Aristotle, Liu Hsieh put emphasis on writing as a vehicle of ideas that are first constructed in the mind, uttered through speaking, and then produced by writing. However, the difference between the two views lies in the equal importance that Liu Hsieh attach to both writing as 'a creative analytic potential' and speaking. For him, both are meant to "record reality" (Ibid, p.2).

Apart from Aristotle and Liu Hsieh's views to writing, Plato, another Greek philosopher, focused attention on the communicative function of writing. According to his view, writing is a tool by which reasoning can be conveyed. Plato has always

considered writing as a dead and silent skill, limiting its function to the image contrasting it to speaking, which can provide immediate clarifications of the speaker's ideas (Coulmas, 2003). Although writing skill was already known in the classical era, it is only in the twentieth century that it has reached momentum.

3.4.2 Definition of EFL Writing Skill

EFL Writing is defined as both a physical and a mental activity. The physical aspect of writing involves transferring words and ideas into mediums such as hieroglyphics or letters, while the mental action includes a construction of new ideas (Nunan, 2003).

EFL Writing is also defined as a productive skill through which learners use a language for communicative purposes. For Keith (2005), EFL Writing “is a highly complex task that requires the coordination of numerous cognitive activities” (p.129). These cognitive activities require an awareness about the supporting details to be involved in a written text, the overall organization of ideas, and the audience expectations.

Another definition relative to EFL Writing is to be found in Rivers's (1981, p.294) definition, considering this skill as a way of “conveying information or expression of original ideas” in a written text. In addition to being a vehicle of authentic ideas, EFL Writing is conceptualized as a thinking process (Brown, 2001), requiring a constant revision of the written ideas. Thus, in addition to revision, writing is a recursive process (Urquhart and McIver, 2005) that entails not only moving back and forth among the writing stages (.e.g. from planning to revision and vice versa) but also acquiring the needed writing strategies.

Based on the definitions stated above, it can be noted that EFL Writing plays a potent role in enabling learners to convey their ideas appropriately. Not surprisingly then, writing in general and EFL Writing in particular have gained a mainstream

importance in both the teaching and learning processes.

3.4.3 The Importance of EFL Writing

As an open window to new sciences and diversified cultures, English is acknowledged as an international and worldwide language through which both scientific knowledge, technological knowledge, Arts, and Humanities are produced and transmitted. Not surprisingly then, because of their ability to communicate and interact with people from all over the world, EFL learners have better opportunities than the other types of learners to widen both their cognitive as well as socio-cultural perspectives.

As quoted by Barton (2013), EFL Writing “matters a lot” (p.121). EFL Writing is, therefore, highlighted as a sign of competence in general and a successful academic achievement in particular. Given that it is through writing that EFL learners can express their ideas, opinions, and theories, it comes as no surprise that this skill represents “the main way that most knowledge is assessed, whether in exams or controlled assessment or coursework” (Barton, 2013, p.121). Thus, compared to other skills like reading, speaking, and listening, writing is the most examined skill in EFL classes, helping to determine EFL learners’ academic scope and levels (Hyland, 2003). In other words, it is through writing that learners’ academic performance in almost all levels of education is evaluated. (Afrin, 2016).

Additionally, due to its diversified uses in different contexts and backgrounds, EFL Writing can significantly determine according to Hyland, 2003) EFL learners’ life chances. Put in a different way, through this skill, EFL learners have the opportunity to empower not only their academic capabilities but also their professional as well as their personal lives. Furthermore, it is now widely recognized that EFL Writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information but also in transforming knowledge to create a new one. (Weigle, 2002).

3.4.4 Contemporary Approaches to Writing in the Educational Context

Considering the significant role of EFL Writing in the academic context, a cluster of approaches emerged as an attempt to delineate the major function of this skill. Highlighting different objectives relative to EFL Writing, the most broad approaches in EFL language learning are: the Product-based Approach, the Process-based Approach (or expressive approach), and the Cognitive-based Approach.

- **The Product-based Approach**

Based on the stimulus-response theory of Pavlov’s behaviorism (Ting, 2010), the Product- -based Approach involves imitating, copying, and modifying the written texts as the major methods of teaching EFL Writing. Thus, the major focus, in this approach, is put on “the tangible, analyzable aspects of writing” (Hyland, 2009, p.8) as the final product of the text, including formal surface elements. Not surprisingly then, the major interest is laid on the linguistic resources that enable EFL learners to produce good quality content texts. As posited by (Kroll, 1990, p.130), EFL Writing is closely related to the “presentation of rules for writing, demonstration of a text for discussion, analysis, having learners write based on the text, and correction of the learners’ paper” (Kroll, 1990, p.130). The benefit of this approach lies essentially in helping learners acquire rhetorical patterns, using appropriate vocabularies and grammar, and developing awareness of the correct usage of EFL Writing structures.

However, as posited by Kroll, teaching EFL Writing within the Product-based Approach is more likely to be teacher-based where stress is put on a set of rules that are taught and imposed on learners. In this context, EFL learners are required to display their knowledge of these rules through writing. Hence, their audience is limited to the teacher as the only examiner of their written works (Hyland, 2009). Within this perspective, focus is put on the grammatical accuracy as the major criteria of a good piece of writing in English. In this regard, Hyland (2009) explains:

Writing improvement can be measured by counting increases in features such as relative clauses, modality and passives through successive pieces of writing [...] increases in the number of morphemes, words and clauses in student essays (p.9).

The major shortcomings of this approach is due to its excessive focus not only on habit formation and behavioral theory of learning but on language accuracy as well. Within this approach, writing teachers are expected to teach learners the learning-to -write process by emphasizing English language accuracy. This implies teaching them the correct usage of lexicon, grammar, and transitional words. In this situation, little if any interaction among learners and teachers and among learners themselves takes place, hence no scope for creativity is encouraged. Also, insufficient feedback is provided to learners. This is mainly because the teacher's role is limited to the provision of a topic to be developed, requiring from learners to write their ideas individually then submit them in assignments that are assessed as final products.

The Product-based Approach is considered as a traditional approach because EFL learners are passively guided to follow and write similar writings based on standard model texts. Due to these limitations, the Process-based Approach emerged as a reaction to the Product-based Approach objectives and teaching methods.

- **The Process-based Approach**

With the advent of the Process Approach to EFL Writing in the 1970s, EFL teachers started to respond to this skill as a process rather than as a one-time activity, ending with the submission of a final product (Zamel, 1985; Hafez, 1996).

The traditional view of EFL Writing that functions primarily as support patterns of oral language use, grammar, and vocabulary is being supplanted by writing as an “enterprise in itself” (Weigle, 2002, p.1).

Unlike the Product-based Approach, the Process-based Approach is a learner-based approach steaming basically on the communicative approach principles that

originate with the work of Elbow (1998) and Murray (1985). Accordingly, focus is put more on the process rather than on the final product of the writing activity. The underlying argument of this approach is that thinking process precedes writing, and self-discovery of one's ideas is likely to be sustained through one's free expression. Therefore, promoting learners' creative thinking and encouraging teachers to seek the best methods that help learners foster their writing skills constitute the starting point of this approach. Moffett (1982) expresses in this regard:

This view encourages writers to find their own voices to produce writing that is fresh and spontaneous [...] Writing development and personal development are seen as symbiotically interwoven to the extent that 'good therapy and composition aim at clear thinking, effective relating, and satisfying self-expression (p.235).

Rejecting the Product-based Approach excessive focus on language accuracy, the Process-based Approach major advocates (e.g., Elbow,1998; Murray,1985) highlight EFL Writing as a 'creative act of discovery' (Hyland, 2009) that is learned and acquired rather than taught to and imposed on learners.

Thus, within this approach, the teacher's role shifts toward being the creator of an optimum and positive learning space for EFL learners to practice their writing activity freely. Since EFL Writing is considered as a developmental and a self-discovery process, a non-directive role and a minimal interference on the part of the teacher is required. He/she is not expected to either impose his /her view nor to provide models or topics. His/her major tasks consist in both stimulating EFL learners' thinking through pre-writing tasks and responding to their ideas (Hyland, 2009).

However, although the Process-based Approach is a learning context where focus of attention shifts away from language accuracy to ideas, a cluster of criticism were directed to it. The first of these is closely related to assessment. A good piece of writing for this approach "does not reflect the application of rules but that of the writer's free imagination" (Hyland, 2009, p.19). Thus, as posited by North (1987), no

clear criteria and theoretical as well as practical foundations are provided on how to evaluate a good piece of writing in English. In doing so, assessment of learners' written works is more likely to be a subjective process. Hence, by encouraging EFL learners' spontaneity, creativity, and originality, a vague definition relative to good piece of writing is provided by this approach.

Furthermore, by stressing EFL learners-writers as the center of attention, the Process-based Approach provides an "extreme learner-centered stance" (Ibid, pp.19-20). According to many experts, this places all learners in similar intellectual and potential position, admitting few distinctions in the writing processes between experts and novice writers. These limitations stated above paved the way to a more cognitive view of EFL Writing learning process to emerge.

- **The Cognitive-based Approach**

Drawn from the theories of Cognitive Psychology (Neisser, 1967) , the Cognitive-based Approach objective goes beyond promoting creativity and self-expression to putting emphasis on the mental functioning of the human's mind ranging from perception, remembering, problem-solving, to attention. As the name indicates, the Cognitive-based Approach highlights the cognitive aspect of writing as a challenging process, being not only linguistically but also cognitively demanding. This involves stressing EFL Writing as a problem that requires a resolution on the part of learners (Hyland, 2009). In this context, EFL Writing represents a complex than a simple production of simple sentences as it requires the use of strategies (e.g. planning, organization), creativity, and the aesthetic aspect as well (Remzi, 2018).

Based on Flower and Hayes' (1981) model, the writing process within the Cognitive-based Approach is claimed to be affected by a cluster of factors that are stored in the learners' long term memory. Accordingly, EFL learners are expected to make a better use of all what they have learned and stored in their long-term memory to express their intended meaning precisely. The focus on long-term memory

particularly is associated to its stable functioning as “an active processing capacity” in comparison with the short term memory. As posited by Swain, “Producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning” (1985, p.249).

Consequently, EFL learners write with objectives in mind, using EFL Writing strategies in a recursive and simultaneous way. This is achieved by “shifting back and forth between planning, generating text, probing their memory for new content, revising their writing [...] and coming up with appropriate language to convey their precise message” (Keith, 2005 PAGE). Additionally, within the Cognitive-based Approach, EFL learners are required to be concerned with the audience expectations (i.e., how to attract the reader), the content (i.e., how to make it interesting), and the logical organization of their ideas.

In this approach, EFL learners are not required to follow the same model and write in the same way, hence they can potentially approach the process of writing differently (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). This helps to distinguish between skilled and novice writers (Hyland, 2009) in a number of ways. Skilled writers are identified thanks to their use of more effective planning and revising strategies than their counterparts, the novice ones. In contrast, the novice learners are claimed to use a knowledge-telling approach, involving telling “what they can remember based on the assignment, the topic, or the genre” (Ibid, p.24). Unlike the novice writers, the skilled ones are seen to use more a knowledge transforming approach, encompassing the transformation and change of ideas through reflection, content problem resolution, audience consideration, and ideas development and organization (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987).

3.4.5 The Assessment of EFL Writing Skill

Since EFL Writing is of an utmost importance in the academic context, testing this skill is of equal significance (Weigle, 2002). Given this importance, a growing demand to find valid and reliable ways to test learners' EFL Writing performance is stressed in the educational context.

Designing EFL Writing tests requires well defined criteria regarding the attributes of the writing task to be performed. This involves three primary steps. In the first step, the assessment needs to be high value, encompassing the identification of the types of skills and knowledge EFL learners are expected to learn by the completion of the writing task. The second step consists of designing "performance task which requires the students to demonstrate these skills and knowledge" (Nodoushan, 2014, p.131). The task needs to be both challenging and achievable to enhance learners' motivation. The third and final step consists of selecting the performance criteria that enable the instructor to measure the extent to which learners have a command of the predetermined skills and knowledge. To achieve this, a cluster of scores are explicitly used to define learners' performance. This can help EFL learners be aware about the kind of processes they are required to master. Similarly, this can help the teacher use 'objective scoring guide' to assess EFL learners' written works.

According to Brown (2001), six categories need to be considered when assessing EFL learners' writing compositions. Such categories are: content, organization, discourse (i.e., involving paragraph unity, transitions, transitional markers, cohesion, rhetorical conventions, fluency, economy, and variation), syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics. In writing assessment, holistic and analytical are the two major and most common approaches used in the academic teaching context.

3.4.6 Approaches to EFL Writing Assessment

Scoring EFL Writing falls into two major approaches, encompassing the holistic-based approach and the analytic-based approach. As Weigle (2002) claims,

while the holistic approach stems on a general impression of a writing task, the analytic approach is essentially based on separate scales of overall writing features.

- **The Holistic Approach**

As the name indicates, the major objective of a holistic scale is the assessment of learners' overall proficiency. It follows that teachers use their general individual impression to decide about the quality of the writing task. Within this approach, writing is seen as “a single entity which is best captured by a single scale that integrates the inherent qualities of the writing” (Hyland, 2003, p.227).

The instructors rate learners' written assignments for errors using red pen (Nodoushan, 2007). Emphasis is put on what learners need to improve in writing or what they ‘can do well’ rather than on their incompetence and deficiencies (White, 1994).

Because of its impressionistic and subjective view, the holistic approach received criticism by scholars and pedagogues, namely because it “reduces writing to a single score” rather than attributing a careful consideration to writing “details by providing a score for each of them” (Nodoushan, 2014, p.134).

Furthermore, being required to respond to learners' texts as a whole, the instructors, need training and guidance on how to assess learners' writing. This is because different teachers are prone to disagree on the specific features of the quality of the paper they are appealed to assess. Reliability of scores is more likely to be achieved only when two trained assessors rate the same paper (Hyland, 2003).

Holistic approach fails to provide teachers with obvious and reliable basis for scoring on the one hand and on the other hand, it doesn't identify the main text features and components that need to be rated. Thus, as a response to the limitations of this approach, the analytic Approach develops.

- **The Analytic Approach**

The Analytic scoring emerges as a response to the weaknesses of the holistic scoring, highlighting that features of a good piece of writing should not be combined

into one single score (Nodoushan, 2014). Within the analytical approach paradigm, teachers employ procedures that involve a cluster of criteria and features relevant to good writing. These features are classified into separate categories whereby each one is attributed a score in the form of numerical values.

Contrary to the Holistic Approach, where features of good writing are all assessed into one single score, the Analytic Approach provides teachers with the opportunity to assess the quality of learners' writing based on features that are not only weighted and separated but also clearly defined. Based on this procedure, teachers can distinguish between the stronger and the weaker texts.

Unlike the holistic rubric, the analytic one uses separate scales for content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Hyland, 2003) as the one created by Jacobs *et al.*, (1981). Learners' scripts are rated using five aspects ranging from content that is highly emphasized (e.g., 30 points) to mechanics, which is the least weighted aspect (i.e., 5 points). In this way, EFL teachers are encouraged to "pay close attention to the specific features of writing quality captured in the rubrics for analytic scoring" (Nodoushan, 2014, p.135). This provides them not only with the chance to gain insights into weaknesses in learners' pieces of writing but also with the opportunity to diagnose their limitations, thereby enabling them to use remedial instructions to cover these limitations precisely (Nodoushan, 2007).

3.4.7 Challenges of EFL Writing Learning for Non-native Learners

Based on the development of one's communicative and linguistic competence, learning EFL Writing is considered as a laborious and a daunting task for learners and less rewarding for teachers. More than the native speakers, EFL learners in general and Arab learners in particular encounter a wide range of difficulties in EFL Writing process. Such constraints are: learners' attitudes toward EFL Writing, limited EFL background knowledge, and EFL Writing learning context.

- **Attitudes to EFL Writing Learning Process**

Past research studies (Petric, 2002; Jabali, 2018) stress the influence that learners' attitudes play in determining the success or failure of their EFL Writing learning process. Beliefs about EFL Writing are claimed to be closely related to learners' writing self-efficacy and performance (Pawlak et al., 2018). More particularly, negative beliefs and attitudes to one's writing abilities represent one of the major constraints that inhibit effective acquisition of EFL Writing skills.

The Belief that writing is an innate gift can also be detrimental to self-esteem and self-confidence. With such a negative attitude in mind, EFL learners are more likely to view writing as far reaching, hence use this belief as an excuse for their poor performance. This belief is, therefore, one of the reasons that affect the way learners approach their EFL Writing learning process. This is because it can determine the efforts these learners are ready to invest in their learning process (Palmquist and Young, 1992).

Additionally, attitudes towards EFL Writing can affect learners motivation, which is considered as the essence of fruitful learning. Extrinsically motivated learners are found to apply less efforts in learning EFL Writing than the intrinsically motivated ones. Similarly, high writing apprehension and low writing self-efficacy are two significant factors that are conducive EFL Writing failure (Abdelhamid, 2018). Put simply, apprehensive learners are likely to have lower performance in EFL Writing than the self-confident and the less anxious ones. This is mainly because their negative evaluation of their writing skills affects negatively the quality of their performance (Wolcott and Buhr, 1987). This view is evidenced by the findings of research studies of a cluster of researchers (e.g., Erkan and Saban, 2011; Kirmizi and Kirmizi, 2015), who highlight the difference in the quality of EFL Writing compositions produced by apprehensive and non-apprehensive learners. (Weigle,

2002, p.37). In addition to negative attitudes, limited background knowledge is another factor that impair learners' effective performance in EFL Writing.

- **Limited Background Knowledge**

For non-native learners, acquiring Writing skills in English language is extremely challenging and highly demanding due to an array of fundamental differences that distinguish their native language from English one. In addition to both the orthographic and grammatical systems, the structure, style, and organization that are grounded in EFL rhetorical conventions may constitute a problematic for EFL learners.

One major difficulty in EFL Writing can be associated to learners' limited background knowledge and linguistic difficulties (Solikhah and Surakarta, 2017). Such difficulties can result from the lack of “mastery of sentence maturity” (Ibid, p.39) and the imperfect mastery of English grammar, syntax, mechanics, and sentence structure. Based on past research findings (Abdelhamid, 2018), it is noted that EFL learners are likely to use sentence errors in EFL Writing like fragments, choppy sentences, and run-on sentences because of their poor command of EFL rules. Apart from the linguistic difficulties, poor vocabulary repertoire is another significant constraint associated to EFL learners' writing difficulties.

Additionally, EFL Writing is likely to be more difficult and less effective than L1 because of EFL learners' limited language proficiency. In other words, less attention can be attributed to content because EFL learners' can be lost in searching for the “appropriate lexical and syntactic choices” (Weigle, 2002, p.35). As a result, their written ideas are unlikely to match their intended meaning. This is mainly because EFL learners have the tendency to use less planning, less revision for content, and less fluency and accuracy, which can impair the quality of their EFL Writing (Weigle, 2002).

More than other EFL learners, Arab learners seem to be more prone to EFL Writing difficulties. This skill can be highly demanding for them because of the wide differences that exist between English language and Arabic in terms of orthographic, grammatical systems, and rhetorical conventions. Past research study conducted by Abdelhamid (2018) revealed that EFL Writing constraints for Arab learners are closely related to “syntactic features, semantic errors, lack of cohesion, coherence and organization, ineffective composing strategies, lack of lexical repertoire and collocations, grammatical accuracy, and morphological and mechanical problems” (Ibid, p.13).

Particularly in Algerian universities, the above mentioned research study revealed that the major difficulties encountered by Algerian learners of English are associated to their “lack of mastery of basic syntactic structures, knowledge of writing mechanics, vocabulary and useful composing strategies” (Abdelhamid , 2018, p.3). Additionally their imperfect mastery of writing strategies affects negatively the quality of their EFL Writing (Boumediene and Hamzaoui-Elachachi, 2017), yielding to sentence errors, lack of command of writing mechanics, grammatical mistakes, word choice mistakes, and finally lack of cohesion and coherence (Ibid).

- **The Teaching and Learning Contexts**

In Regard to the teaching and learning contexts, the most common challenges encountered by non-native speakers in general and by Arab learners in particular are related to identity, assessment, and culture of memorization.

First, when writing in English, EFL learners are likely to fail to detach themselves from their L1 identity and be integrated into EFL culture. In this context, they may end up by thinking in L1 and writing in English language. This can also be associated to their lack of awareness regarding the social as well as the cultural uses of EFL Writing. According to Shen, EFL learners should create to themselves a new distinctive identity to be able to think as EFL writers rather than as L1

writers. In this regard, he asserts : “In order to write good English, I knew that I had to be myself, which actually meant not to be my Chinese self. It meant that I had to create an English self and be that self” (Shen, 1989, p.461).

In addition to identity constraint, EFL learners in general and Arab learners in particular may be disadvantaged by teachers’ assessment. Due to large class size that characterize most of Arab countries , assessment practices are found to be rooted in the cultural specifics of Arab context (Abdelhamid, 2018). In this context, learners are likely to be examined on what they have memorized in their classrooms. The teaching of EFL Writing in such a context can largely be test-driven and product-oriented. In this regard, Abdelhamid (2018) posits that this assessment can negatively affect learners’ writing progress because it can involve “repetitive writing topics in final examinations and students’ reliance on memorization of formulaic expressions” (p.3). Thus, the culture of evaluation and assessment in Arab countries can be defined as traditional and can still be in its rudimentary and undeveloped stages because it may rarely involve the use of rubrics in assessing learners’ writing and “does not follow standardization in terms of unified analytical or holistic rubrics” (Ibid, p. 13).

Thus, teachers’ assessment practices represent one of the major causes for the absence of the critical thinking in learners’ EFL Writing productions. In this context, Arab learners are unlikely to be encouraged to both produce authentic pieces of writing and learn how to attract real audience. Their written texts may generally be featured with “a linear, straightforward process [2], compared to relatively passive assembling of ideas, putting them into the necessary order” (Livitska, 2019, p.525). Hence, EFL learners’ most commonly reported motives in writing, namely in final exams can be to get high grades. This can explain also the reason why learners’ writing assignments can be based essentially on showing and telling the information they retained in their classrooms rather than transforming and creating new knowledge, where their distinctive identity as writers appears.

3.4.8 The Conditions for Effective Acquisition of EFL Writing Skills

A successful EFL Writing acquisition is likely to be influenced by a range of conditions. Learner autonomy and learner metacognitive knowledge are acknowledged by many research studies (Ismail, 2015; Haque, 2018; Haque, 2019) as the major factors leading to effective EFL Written productions.

- **EFL Writing and Learner Autonomy**

Writing skill implies more than just a good mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures (Zimmerman and Risemberg, 1997). As a difficult skill, writing involves creativity and reflection. This requires serious commitment on the part of EFL learners, who need to be self-planned, self-initiated, and self-sustained. Thus, in enhancing the quality of their writing texts, EFL learners are highly appealed to be actively involved in self-managing and mediating their writing tasks.

Unlike the traditional teaching methods of writing where EFL learners were conformed into a passive role, autonomy-based approach has the advantage of encouraging EFL learners to play an active role, taking control for practical decisions with regard to their learning process. Holec (1981) states that:

To take charge of one's learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, ie: determining the objectives; defining content and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc); evaluating what has been acquired (p.3).

Such a responsibility is advantageous to learning EFL Writing since it encourages learners to practice this task autonomously with minimum interference on the part of their teachers. Contemplating Holec's (1981) definition of autonomy as the capacity to set objectives, select methods and techniques, and monitor and evaluate the progress of one's learning process, it can be deduced that these actions are highly needed for an effective acquisition of EFL Writing skills; This is because they cover

the major steps of writing skills ranging from planning, monitoring, revising, and editing.

Past research studies on learner autonomy and EFL Writing (Murry, 1999; Thang, 2001, 2003, 2005; Lavasani, 2008) revealed a significant impact of practicing autonomy on learners' writing abilities and achievements. The same results were pronounced within the experimental research studies conducted in Iran (Bagheri and Aeen, 2011), revealing that the experimental autonomous groups outperformed the non-autonomous group. Similarly, promoting autonomy in Vietnamese learners positively influenced their writing accuracy (Pham and Iwashita 2018), and Japanese learners appreciated (Ruegg. 2018) being actively self-reviewing their works before submitting them.

Rather than relying passively on their teachers, autonomous learners are more likely to participate actively in the building of their writing learning process. Hence, they can work collaboratively with teachers to fix objectives and self-evaluate their writing performance. Contemplating Little's (1991) definition of autonomy as a conscious control of one's learning, it can be noted that more than the use of effective learning strategies, learners need to be metacognitively aware of the use of these strategies and of the requirement of their learning process if they have to be autonomous. Hence, fostering metacognitive knowledge in EFL learners is another major condition that can help sustain their EFL Writing skills.

- **EFL Writing and Metacognitive Knowledge**

As a constructive process (Vygotsky, 1987), writing requires an analytical thinking through which learners can construct meaning, relating previous knowledge to a new one (Flower, 1989). Such a complex construction can best be achieved if learners possess metacognitive knowledge (Pugalee, 2001). This is mainly because EFL Writing is a mental activity, which is "integral to employing appropriate strategies to produce intended written output" (Teng, 2019, p.4). This means that learners with high metacognitive knowledge, can determine when and how to write,

hence, achieve their pre-determined goals. Thus providing learners with insights into metacognitive knowledge where they learn how to effectively use cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Weigle, 2002) can help improve the quality of their EFL Writing compositions.

Within this outlook, metacognitive knowledge is viewed to be closely related to the development of both learner autonomy and EFL Writing. This is mainly because autonomous learning behavior is unlikely to be fostered if EFL learners do not possess a minimum of awareness regarding their capacities, learning process, strategy use and knowledge (Cotterall, 2009). They are autonomous and “self-regulated to the degree that they are metacognitively...and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process (Zimmerman and Schunk 1989, p.4). With regard to this view, Wenden (2001) points out that metacognitive knowledge is “ a prerequisite to the deployment of ... self-regulatory processes”. It is also fundamental for fostering writing because EFL learners who have limited and inadequate metacognitive knowledge in writing are unlikely to have rich learning strategies. This can, by consequence, have a negative effect on their EFL Writing performance (Cotterall, 2009).

3.4.9 The Learning Strategies Used in EFL Writing

As it has been argued earlier by Little (1991), learner autonomy has been conceptualized as a construct embracing a conscious control of the learning situation as well as a “purposive use of language learning strategies” (Zimmerman and Schunk 1989, p.4). Learning strategies are, therefore, potent catalysts for promoting EFL Writing performance (Dickinson, 1992). Not surprisingly then, EFL learners can be defined as successful writers to the extent to which they can exert control over the learning strategies that assist them direct their learning process in an autonomous way (Benson, 2001).

Learning strategies are stressed also as behaviors that are likely to facilitate the development of an ongoing autonomous attitude. This is because autonomy of EFL learners highly depends on a good command of these strategies (Dickinson, 1992). In her definition of learning strategies, Oxford (1990) points out that these are specific actions, steps, or even techniques that are consciously selected by EFL learners to enhance their own language progress and skills.

Thus, in the area of EFL Writing, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies are directly associated with the idea of learner autonomy (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Ranging from repeating, analyzing, to summarizing, these cognitive strategies are considered to be crucial not only for learning a new language (Oxford, 2011) but also for helping EFL learners cope with the obstacles associated to the new and unfamiliar notions, structures, or essays in EFL Writing learning context.

Particularly, EFL Writing cognitive strategies are classified by Wenden (1991) as including: *clarification*, *retrieval*, *resourcing*, *deferral*, *avoidance*, and *verification*. First, *clarification* involves processes such as self-questioning, hypothesizing, defining terms, and comparing. *Retrieval*, however, consists of reading what has been written whether aloud or silently, rereading the question until the idea is clear, keeping on writing till the idea is found, and finally summarizing what has been written. As its name indicates, *resourcing strategy* is about using outside resource such as asking a researcher or making use of dictionary.

If cognitive strategies are essentially important to control cognitive processing in EFL Writing, metacognitive strategies relate mainly to higher-order skills (Goctu, 2017) through which EFL learners can control the cognitive strategies and regulate their learning process (Benson, 2001). They involve “understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish language tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions” (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.138).

More specifically, from Wenden's (1991) outlook, metacognitive writing strategies are concerned with thinking about the writing process itself (Goctu, 2017). Thus, *planning*, *monitoring*, and *evaluating* taxonomies are the most common classifications suggested in the literature.

Being considered as the first step EFL learners take before the writing process, planning requires setting appropriately the purpose, the audience to be addressed, the ideas to be involved, and the strategies to be used in the writing process. Additionally, planning may involve both brainstorming of some key words that may enrich the written texts and selecting adequate tenses that fit the purpose set previously in the writing composition (Wenden, 1991).

Closely related to *planning*, *monitoring* is another metacognitive writing strategy that includes checking EFL Writing progress. This involves verifying content and organizing and checking grammar and mechanics "in terms of local features" (Goctu, 2017, p.86). As the last step in the writing process, *evaluation* refers to a reconsideration of a written work. This reconsideration needs, then to address both "global and local writing aspects" (Ibid, p.86), involving both contents and language structure. The evaluation of the strategies to be used in performing the written work are highly required in evaluation strategy (Ibid).

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the growing importance of the role of metacognitive knowledge in EFL learning in general and in EFL Writing learning in particular has been delineated. Hence, this chapter has been devised into two major sections. In the first section metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing is reviewed in the light of Flavell's perspectives. The arguments supporting the use of metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing are highlighted. The second section of this chapter is devoted to providing an overview of writing in education and the potent role it plays in enhancing EFL learners' academic development in EFL learning context. Hence, the most

predominant teaching approaches of EFL Writing are presented. Because EFL Writing is revealed as the daunting language skill to teach and assess, both the holistic and analytic scoring approaches to assessing EFL Writing are presented and described. Learner autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are presented as the two appropriate frameworks that are required for promoting learners' EFL Writing performance. Finally, the major learning strategies relative to EFL Writing are stressed.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The central premise of this thesis is that readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge play an utmost role in promoting learners' EFL Writing performance. Although this idea has support in literature, it requires empirical support in the Algerian educational context. Hence, to achieve a deeper understanding of the reality, a mixed methods methodology is used in this study. The fourth chapter describes the exploratory sequential mixed methods design in the sequential way in which it was conducted in the current study. Involving both qualitative and quantitative methods, this thesis is a two-phase study. Thus, the chapter is divided into three sections. In section one, the research questions of the two phases are presented, and the exploratory sequential mixed methods methodology is described. The second and the third sections consist of separate methodology parts of both the qualitative and the quantitative methods. These are described along with their procedures of data collection and data analysis.

4.2 Research Questions

Given that the current study is a two-phase design, the two phases involve different research questions.

- **Research Questions for Phase One**

The first phase of this study encompasses the following qualitative primary and secondary research questions:

RQ 1 what are the underlying categories of readiness for autonomy reported by ENSB high, average, and low achieving students?

Sub-questions

- 1. a** How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their roles as EFL writers?

2. b How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their EFL Writing teacher's role?
1. c How do ENSB students perceive their EFL Writing learning process?

RQ 2 What are the underlying categories of metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing reported by ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving participants?

Sub-questions

2. a What are the emerging sub-categories of person knowledge revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students in EFL Writing?
2. b What are the emerging sub-categories of task knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?
2. c What are the emerging sub-categories of strategy knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?

• Research Questions for Phase Two

The following quantitative research questions are addressed in the second phase:

RQ 1 What is the level of ENSB students' readiness for autonomy in EFL Writing?

RQ 2 To what extent do ENSB students have metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing?

RQ 3 Are there any differences in ENSB students' readiness for autonomy regarding their proficiency levels?

RQ 4 Are there any differences in ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge regarding their proficiency levels?

RQ 5 Is there any relationship between ENSB students' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels?

RQ 6: Can ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy?

4.3 Research Context and Sites

This exploratory sequential mixed methods design is a single-site study, encompassing Third Year EFL students from ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah) as the population that fits the scope of the current study.

Founded and structured on August, 18th, 1984 by the executive decree 84/206, ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah), is a Public Higher Educational Institution, which started its professional and pedagogical practices at Bouzareah, in the metropolis of Algiers, during the academic year 1998-1999. The school comprises five departments (i.e., Arabic, English, French, history and geography, and Philosophy), one library, and three research laboratories. Academic training is offered, at ENSB to prepare the students toward their future jobs as elementary and secondary teachers. In the academic year 2018, English Department consisted of 1238 students, out of which 293 were the total number of the Third Grade students. The rationale for selecting this site can be summarised in the following points:

- ENSB School is 'information rich' for the current study because it consists of a number of high rated students in English. Hence, it provides the opportunity for exploring the perceptions of the students from the three proficiency levels (high, average, and low).
- Being a teacher in the selected site (i.e., ENSB), the researcher is provided with a free access to conduct this exploratory mixed methods study.
- The selection of Third Year students for both phases (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) is twofold. First, EFL Writing is studied at ENSB for three

years only. Hence, Third Year students are in a better position to report on their metacognitive knowledge regarding EFL Writing skill, thereby providing the researcher with the chance to collect actual information. Second, Third Year students can potentially verbalize their perceptions toward their readiness for autonomous learning in EFL Writing skill better than First and Second Years students.

4.4 Review of Mixed Methods Literature

Mixed methods research can be traced to the early 1980s, where it was defined as a ‘quiet’ revolution’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) due to its focus on both quantitative and qualitative methodological movement. The Mixed Methods Research Movement emerged as a reaction to the excessive use of both the QUAN (i.e., quantitative) and QUAL (i.e., qualitative) camps. Combining the two methods, Mixed Methods Research Movement paved the way to researchers to take benefits of both the QUAL and QUAN designs (Cameron, 2009).

Four types of typology that mix both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in one single study have been developed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). These are mainly: convergent design, explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, and embedded design. Each method comprises different methodology, including diverge timing/sequence (i.e., concurrent or sequential), mixing, and priority/weight (See table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Major Mixed Methods Designs and Characteristics

Design Types	Timing	Mixing	Weighting
Convergent	QUAN + QUAL data are collected simultaneously	Merge the data during analysis and interpretation	QUAN + QUAL
Embedded	QUAN or QUAL embedded within QUANT or QUAL)	Embed one type of data QUANT (qual) within a larger design using Or the other type of data	QUAN (qual) or QUAL (quan)
Explanatory	(QUAN followed by qual)	Connect data between the two phases	QUAN ► qual
Exploratory	(QUAL followed by quan)	Connect data between the two phases	QUAL → quan

4.4.1 Rationale for Using Mixed Methods Design

The major focus in this mixed methods design as ‘a new style of research’ (Sieber, 1973) is put on “converging or triangulating different quantitative and qualitative data sources” (p.1337). It is, therefore, likely to result in different kinds of data about the same phenomenon, providing “rich and comprehensive picture” (Jick, 1979, p.606) on the one hand. On the other hand, it can be appropriate when the integration of two separate approaches helps to provide ‘complementary strengths’ (Johnson and Turner, 2004). In the current study, this design provides much more detailed picture of the phenomenon under study (i.e., the participants’ perceptions to readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge).

4.5 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

As shown in table 4.1, exploratory sequential mixed methods is a mixed methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a sequence of phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the first phase, researchers collect qualitative data. The results of this data are analysed to direct the next quantitative phase. More particularly, the qualitative analysis provides critical fodder for developing specific research questions for the quantitative phase, which involves a questionnaire, survey, or other form of quantitative data collection.

4.5.1 Rationale for Using the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

The sequential exploratory model is proceeded in this thesis by means of qualitative data collection and analysis, which is undertaken prior to quantitative data collection. According to Creswell (2012), the exploratory sequential design is appropriate in case the researcher intends to explore a phenomenon and then expand on the qualitative findings through quantitative data collection and analysis.

The first rationale for this choice is that this design is relevant to the present thesis because research questions require first an exploration (i.e., qualitative) of Third Year ENSB EFL students' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. Then the empirical validation of the qualitative data (or emerging categories) is tested through the investigation of the statistical relationship between them (i.e., quantitative). Thus, collecting qualitative then quantitative data in a sequential way can provide a better understanding of the topic being explored than either qualitative or quantitative data alone.

The second rationale is that learner autonomy and learner metacognitive knowledge are new concepts in the Algerian educational context. They have been empirically tested in Western Contexts. In the current thesis, an attempt to explore if these phenomena fit to the new setting (i.e., Algerian educational context) is undertaken. Moreover, the literature reveals few findings to guide this research, and insufficient academic research studies are available in the current literature in terms of readiness for autonomy and its relationship with metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing in Algerian schools. Hence, a combination of qualitative method that is sequentially followed by quantitative one is likely to enable the researcher to obtain a detailed understanding of the phenomenon within the context of this study.

Additionally, as explained by Creswell (2012), exploratory sequential design can be useful in case “measure or instruments are not available, the variables are unknown, or there is no guiding framework or theory” (pp.543-544). The existing instruments (i.e., questionnaire) are not enough to identify the variables that better describe the profile of ENSB informants relative to autonomous learning. Accordingly, the researcher, in this thesis, didn't start with a questionnaire before deciding what categories need to be measured. According to Merriam (2009), the advantage of the qualitative phase lies in helping to explore first the variables that explain how the participants frame their understanding regarding the topic before being measured. Thus, the qualitative phase helps the participants to “interpret their experiences, how

they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p.5). Creswell (2012) explains:

A popular application of this design is to explore a phenomenon, identify themes, design an instrument, and subsequently test it. Researchers use this design when existing instruments, variables, and measures may not be known or available for the population under study (pp.543-544).

Hence, the current study starts with an in-depth focus group interview to gather qualitative data first and explore a phenomenon with few participants. Based on qualitative data, a quantitative survey instrument is constructed, in the second phase, to collect data from a larger population. This offers the researcher the opportunity to explain relationship between variables that are actually grounded in the qualitative data.

4.5.2 Stages in the Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

In the current exploratory sequential mixed methods study, the selection of the population as well the procedures are described.

- **Population**

In the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the informants who participate in the qualitative initial phase of exploratory sequential mixed methods design are not typically the same as those who are chosen in the second phase (i.e., quantitative). Since the quantitative phase requires larger population to generalize the results, the researcher can use different participants in the two phases. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) posit in this regard:

For Exploratory Designs, there is a different procedure. The individuals in the first stage of the data collection are typically not the same participants as those in the second stage. Because the purpose of the quantitative stage is to generalize the results to a population, different and more participants are used (p.123).

However, according to Creswell & Creswell (2018), “A good procedure is to draw both samples from the same population but make sure that the individuals for both samples are not the same” (p.307). In the current thesis, the researcher conducted both the qualitative and the quantitative phases with the same population , but different participants were selected for both phases. Hence, ENSB Third Year students enrolled in the academic year 2018 were selected to participate in this exploratory mixed methods study.

- **Procedures**

As conceptualized by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), exploratory sequential data collection design encompasses a two-phase approach. The data collection procedures need to be independent of each other and presented as separate subsequent phases:

- First, the current study comprises qualitative data being collected first (Phase 1) from a focus group interview with a small number of purposefully selected participants (n=24). Next, the data are analysed to explore the emergent themes that describe the participants’ profile relative to readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing.
- Second, the analysis of the transcribed interview is conducted to develop an instrument (i.e., Likert Scale survey). This has been subsequently administered to a large stratified randomly selected number of participants (n=121). The objective of this stage is to extend the understanding of the qualitative data by explaining statistically the relationship between the qualitative variables obtained from phase one (See figure 4.1).

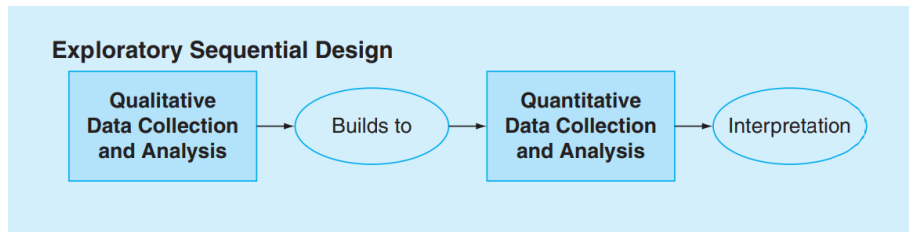


Figure 4.1 Exploratory Sequential Design Model (Creswell, 2007)

According to Creswell (2012), the procedure of the Exploratory Sequential Design entails three major aspects, involving timing, weighting, and mixing (See table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Planning Mixed Method Procedures

Timing		Weighting	Mixing
Sequential first→quantitative second	Qualitative	Qualitative	Connecting

➤ **Timing**

According to Creswell’s (2012), timing in Mixed Methods stands for the sequence of data analysis, which takes place sequentially. In other words, the researcher needs to determine whether the qualitative/quantitative data collection comes first and is second followed by the quantitative/qualitative data collection (e.g. Exploratory and Explanatory Designs in table 4.1). In the present thesis, the researcher started first by collecting qualitative data in phase one. The analysed qualitative findings are used to identify the categories and subcategories to be involved in building the Likert Scale instrument to conduct the second quantitative phase.

➤ **Weighting**

Weighting refers to the priority attributed to either qualitative or quantitative research or to both of them equally. Creswell (2012) posits that “The researcher places more emphasis on one type of data than on other types of data in the research and the written report” (p.549).

This priority depends on the objective and interests of the researcher that can range from an inductive approach where emphasis is put on exploring the generating themes or a deductive approach where focus is laid on testing a theory. Additionally, the priority attributed to one of the methods (i.e., qualitative or quantitative), can be displayed in the data collection process or the lengthy number of pages. In the current study, priority is attributed to qualitative data analysis.

➤ **Mixing**

When combining two different types of data sets in one single research study, the researcher needs to consider how to mix the qualitative and the quantitative methods. According to Creswell (2012), mixing the qualitative and quantitative methods in a mixed methods can consist of connecting the qualitative and quantitative data during the two phases of the research. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) “A mixing of the quantitative and qualitative research are connected between a data analysis of the first phase of research and the data collection of the second phase of research” (p.208). This connection is known as ‘point of interface’ (Creswell and Clark, 2018) or the connective point between the two types of methods (See figure 4.2).

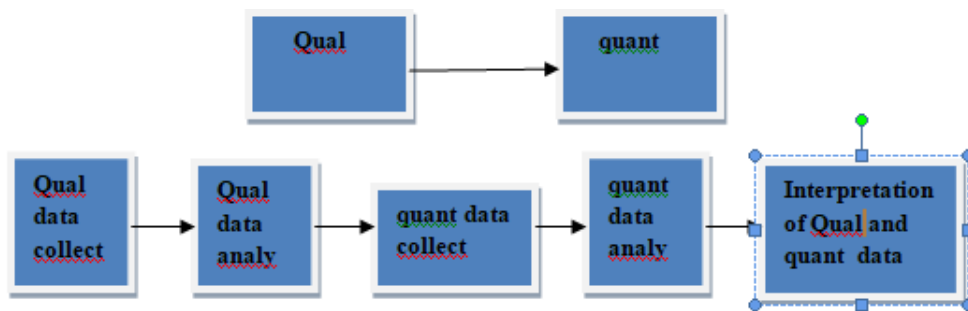


Figure 4.2 Mixed Methods Mixing : Sequential Exploratory Design

In the current study, mixing is achieved by connecting the qualitative data analysis of phase one to data collection of the second quantitative phase. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain:

The qualitative data analysis will yield quotes, codes, and themes. The development of an instrument can proceed by using the quotes to write

items for an instrument, the codes to develop variables that group the items, and themes that group the codes into scales (p.208).

Following Creswell and Creswell’s (2018) procedure, the Scales of Likert instrument used in the quantitative phase are grounded in the views of ENSB Third Year participants obtained from the focus group interview. Thus, the qualitative data collection informed the development of a new instrument. In other words, the participants’ quotes and verbatim are used to write items to build Likert Scale questionnaire.

For example, one of the significant emerging themes in the qualitative phase, in the current thesis, is self-confidence in EFL Writing abilities. Being informed by the literature, self confidence in study ability is highly related to feelings of being talented in a subject matter. In expressing this, one high achieving participant says: «*Well I think I'm a good writer. I think it's something talented. It's someone a good writer is talented. We born with being talented in writing* » (TH2). The participant’s verbatim is used to create an item in the 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, (See table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Sample of Participants’ Verbatim Used as Item in Likert Scale

Item	I believe I am born as a talented writer in English language.				
Options	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Scales	1	2	3	4	5

According to Creswell (2012), another example of this connection can be achieved by combining “categories of information from an exploratory qualitative data collection with continuous data in a statistical analysis” (p.552). In the current thesis, some categories obtained from qualitative content analysis like ‘learner anxiety’, ‘self-confidence’, and ‘identity’ are integrated in correlation statistical analyses. Although, the qualitative and quantitative data sets are connected during the building of Likert

Scale questionnaire, the findings of each phase are analysed and interpreted separately.

4.6 Qualitative Design for Phase I

Qualitative design is described as ‘latent level analysis’ since focus is put on interpreting the underlying deeper meaning of the data. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the qualitative phase in a mixed methods is ‘exploratory’ because it is driven from data of a qualitative study rather than from a conceptual framework. Qualitative design, therefore, is a process through which a collected data is put into order and structure and is attributed meaning. This involves exploring the emerging themes from purposefully selected participants, identifying meaningful quotations, coding them with relevant topics, and developing them into categories and subcategories. These are used to develop a new instrument for the quantitative phase (See figure 4.3).

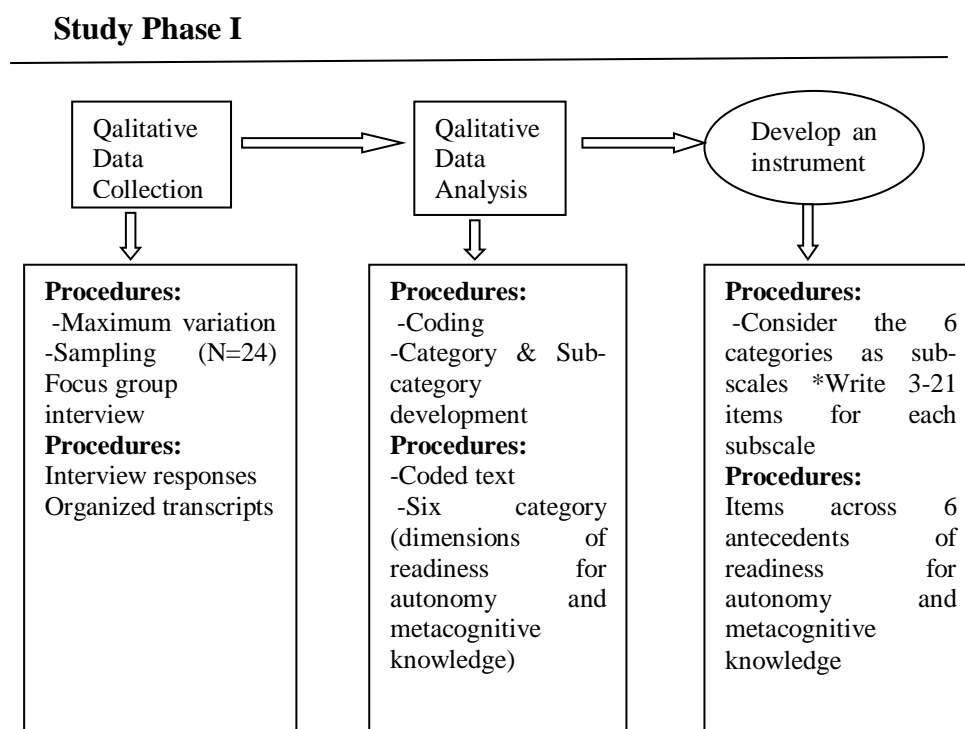


Figure: 4.3. Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design for the Study

4.6.1 Sampling Design:

Purposeful sampling is a technique that is required in the qualitative phase of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, twenty four participants are purposefully selected from the English department at ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah). They are selected based on their different levels of proficiency in EFL Writing as one major criteria in the current thesis. They are classified into three categories of high achieving, average, and low achieving students. This is because readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge of the high performing learners might potentially vary from the low performing ones (Little, 1991; Victori, 1999). The participants are composed of eight high achieving, twelve average, and four low achieving writers (**See Appendix G**).

The rationale for this choice is twofold. First, the participants with different proficiency levels can better help the researcher understand readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge from different perspectives, views, and experiences. Second, the researcher can gain further insights into the profile of the participants from different proficiency levels regarding the topic being explored (See figure 4.4).

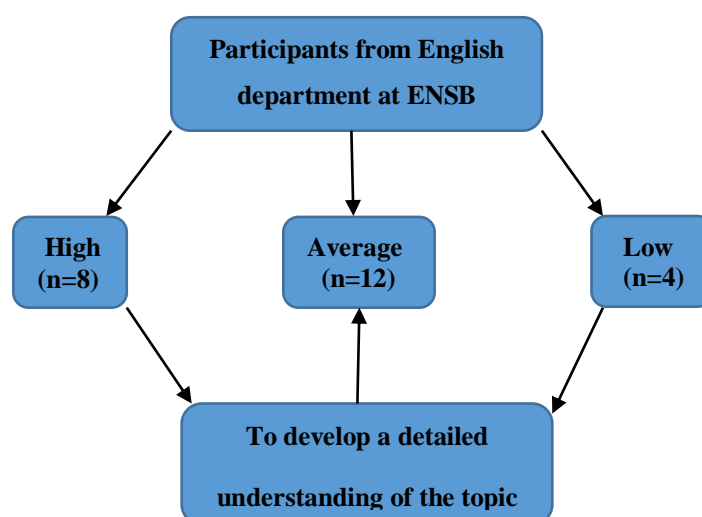


Figure 4.4 Purposeful Sampling in the Study (Phase I)

4.6.2 The Description of the Participants

The twenty four participants comprise twenty two females and two males. They all come from four different areas in Algeria (e.g. 18 are from the North, 2 are from East, 2 are from the West, and 2 come from the South). All the participants have studied English for eleven years. Twenty one participants speak Algerian dialect, and only three of them use Berber as a mother tongue .Their age is between 19 and 23 years old.

4.6.3 Maximum Variation

According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative study needs to be based on maximum variation sampling strategy to provide “multiple perspectives of individuals and represent the complexity of our world” (pp.207-208). This can help to explore the variation within the participants. One major way to achieve maximum variation is to purposefully select the participants that “differ on some characteristics or traits” (Creswell, 2012, pp.207-208). Such traits can be learners’ different age groups and developmental levels. Zoltan (2007) notes that this helps to provide “varied and rich data that covers all angles” (p.144). Hence, the twenty four participants involved in phase one are considered maximum variation cases because they differ in their proficiency levels. Therefore, they are likely to share different experiences and views. The participants’ background table can be found in **Appendix G**.

4.6.4 Proficiency Test

The participants of both qualitative and quantitative phases have taken a standardized University test, along with the other Third Year students, at the end of their first semester in early January 2018-2017. The test consists of pedagogical trends questions that need to be answered within a period of two hours. Given the philosophical nature of the module, the questions are closely related to philosophical

ideas of Plato and Aristotle. The participants are assumed to have insights into the ideas of these thinkers because they have studied the lessons within a period of three months. The exam questions can be found in **Appendix D**.

The essays are graded by the researcher, who is their English University teacher of pedagogical trends module. Thus, this test has been adopted as the English proficiency test for the current study, and the students' scores have been collected as an indicator of their current English proficiency levels.

Based on the results gained from the proficiency test, the participants are divided across three proficiency levels. The tool used to achieve this division is the analytic rubric in which the students are represented within a range of ability levels from high-average to low-average.

4.6.5 Analytical Rubric

To determine the difference in proficiency levels between ENSB EFL Third Grade students, the researcher selects critical thinking as the major criteria, which is attributed the highest score. An analytical rubric is used as an appropriate assessment instrument because of the advantages it offers in targeting the different aspects of learners' writing assignments (Saxton et al., 2012). More particularly, the rubric helps to meet the researcher's objective in measuring the participants' written ability from the perspectives of their critical thinking, content, organization of ideas, and the language used. This helps also to differentiate between the high, the average, and the low performing students in terms of the quality of their written texts.

Following Hyland's view (2003), the analytic rubric, in the present study, is designed by the researcher using explicit and clear descriptors that are closely related to the module being taught. The analytical rubric is adapted from Jacobs et al., (1981) that is Cited in Weigle (2002). The Rubric used in the present study can be found in **Appendix F**.

4.7 Procedures and Data Collection

The procedures relative to phase one involve the organization of focus group interview instrument and data analysis of the participants' transcripts.

4.7.1 Focus Group Interview Instrument

In phase one of this study, data collection is conducted by means of a focus group interview. As the name suggests, a focus group interview is the process of gathering information from a group of people using interviews. This instrument is relevant to this study because in the qualitative method the participants are required to overtly express their thoughts, attitudes, and understandings about the topic area of the study. In explaining focus group advantages, Creswell (2012) notes:

Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other. They are also useful when the time to collect information is limited and individuals are hesitant to provide information (some individuals may be reluctant to provide information in any type of interview (p.218).

Focus group interview is particularly advantageous in the current study for three major reasons.

- First, it enables the use of probes, hence explore the participants' answers in depth through eliciting further information from them, asking them to clarify some of the ambiguous ideas in their answers, and having them expand on their ideas by explaining them in details.
- Second, focus group interview is "an economical way to gather a relatively large amount of qualitative data" (Zoltan , 2007, p.144). Therefore, it is easier to collect a wide range of information in a short period of time from a group of students than from each individual student apart. In the current study, data are collected within a period of 21 days.
- Third, focus group interview is likely to create a dynamic atmosphere, yielding 'high-quality data' (Zoltan, 2007), interaction, and discussion. The different

composition of the group (i.e., high, average, and low) in the current study is likely to encourage the reluctant and shy participants to speak and react to the emergent ideas.

Zoltan (2007) suggests that a “focus group interview can last as long as three hours” (p 145). In the present study, the interview is conducted with five groups , and has lasted within the length of two hours and a half with each group.

Concerning, the number of the groups to be used, it is recommended that the interview encompasses 4-5 groups as minimum “to achieve adequate depth of information” (Zoltan, 2007, p.145). In the present study, the twenty four participants are divided into five groups.

Based on Creswell’s (2012) methodology, the number of the participants in the focus group interview should be “typically four to six” (p.218). Thus, in this study the first group involves six participants, the second group comprises four informants, the third group includes four participants, the fourth group encompasses five participants , and the fifth group contains five participants.

4.7.2 Focus Group Interview Procedures

To overcome the challenges that may be posed by conducting a focus group interview, a cluster of steps were adopted in the current study.

- Following Creswell’s (2012) procedure, the interview is conducted in classes and sometimes in the University gardens to have a quality audio taping. These settings are selected because they are more isolated from distractions, noise, and interruptions than other places.
- Second, to identify the individual participants’ voices and make it easy for the researcher to transcribe the interview, the participants are required to say their names before starting the interview.

- Third, a relaxing atmosphere is created to encourage the participants to answer the entire questions. They are informed that the focus is put on achieving their personal views and experiences. Hence, there is no wrong or right answer to provide.
- The participants are assured about the confidentiality of their answers.
- Probes like ‘say more about it please’, ‘can you explain more please?’, and “can you explain please?” are used to illicit in-depth information from the participants and encourage them to explain their answers.
- The interview is held audio taped.

Focus group interview questions are divided into two sections. In the first sections, focus is put on collecting the participants’ perceptions about their readiness for autonomous learning. The purpose of the second section is, however, to obtain information relative to the participants’ metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. For this purpose to be achieved, a timed essay is used as an adequate instrument in section two.

- **Timed Essay**

Before being interviewed, a timed essay is handed to the participants. They are required to write a comparison/contrast English composition on the topic : “autonomous verses dependent learners” within thirty minutes. No reference book is allowed, and the composition should be no less than 100 English words.

In a Mixed Methods Design, the qualitative part should focus on individuals’ experiences (constructivism). Hence, to collect the participants’ beliefs regarding their actual practices, a timed essay is judged to fit the purpose of this phase for two main reasons:

- One major rationale for this choice is that a written activity can prepare the ground for an appropriate climate to assess metacognition (Gunstone, 1994).

This view provides the researcher with insights that timed essay activity may potentially be a fit instrument for the current study.

- Given the complexity of metacognitive knowledge, a timed essay can help the participants to relate their knowledge to a concrete writing task. Put simply, the informants can refer to the timed essay as an example to answer the interview questions involved in metacognitive knowledge section. This may provide more room to answer what they truly know, providing the researcher with actual information. Timed essay question can be found in **Appendix E**.
- **Timeline**

Upon the approval of the proposal by ENSB head of department, the first focus group interviews were conducted in early January of the academic year 2018-2017. The twenty four participants were divided into five groups. This process continued until the five groups were interviewed. The transcription process of the interviews was conducted using Sonix application. The rationale for using this transcription service is twofold:

- Sonix application helped the process of the transcription to be performed in a short period of time. In the present study, the transcription of the focus group interview was performed within a period of one month only.
- Sonix provided opportunities for checking and editing the transcribed data many times by listening to the record and reading the transcriptions simultaneously. In this way, the researcher could correct himself the words that were not transcribed correctly (**See Appendix T**).

4.7.3 The Structure of Focus Group Interview

In the qualitative part of this study, in-depth focus group interview questions are developed and adapted from Maftoon, et al., 2014 and Cotterall, 2009. Both researchers have carried out their studies to explore learner autonomy and learner

metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. The interview protocol conducted in the current study with the twenty four participants can be found in **Appendix A**.

Zoltan (2007) posits that a good focus group interview should not “contain more than 5-10 broad, open-ended questions accompanied by a few closed-ended questions” (p.145). In the present study, the first section of the interview “Readiness for Autonomy” consists of six open-ended questions and one closed-ended question, while the second section “Metacognitive Knowledge in EFL Writing” comprises eight open-ended questions and one closed-ended question.

The rationale behind using more open-ended questions than yes/no questions in this study is threefold:

- First, open-ended questions are more likely to provide “the participants with freedom to discuss some broad topics” (Zoltan, 2007, p.144).
- Second, when using open-ended questions, a lot of content can potentially emerge from the discussion. In the current study, the use of probes in open-ended questions can not only facilitate the control of the flow of the discussion but also help to avoid dealing with broad and irrelevant topics.
- Third, unlike yes/no questions, open-ended ones encourage the participants, in the present study, to report what they believe and what they usually do when composing. Thus, the researcher’s presumptions are unlikely to interfere and influence the scope of the research.

In Readiness for autonomy section, questions **#1** to **#4** and **#6** to **#7** are designed to assess the informants’ perceptions to teachers’ roles. Question **#3** examines their beliefs regarding their role in monitoring their progress and the kind of steps they use to improve their EFL Writing skill. Finally, question **#5** explores the participants’ perception of EFL Writing task.

In metacognitive knowledge section, questions **#1** to **#3** are asked to assess the participants’ person knowledge, namely their motivation, their self-efficacy, and the

constraints associated to their EFL Writing learning process. Questions #4 to #6 are asked to explore the participants' task knowledge through examining their understandings regarding EFL Writing task demand, task purpose, and audience. The two last questions #8 and #9 are asked to inquire the participants' knowledge about EFL Writing strategies, more particularly planning, revising, and editing.

4.8 Data Analysis for Qualitative Phase

To make a general sense of the data obtained from the qualitative method, data analysis requires “preparing and organizing the data for analysis; engaging in an initial exploration of the data through the process of coding it; using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data— descriptions and themes” (Creswell, 2012, p.237). In the current study, data analysis consists of data preparation, data coding, and data presentation.

4.8.1 Data Preparation

In data preparation, the qualitative data interview protocol is reviewed and prepared prior to the focus group interview. After data collection, three steps are undertaken.

- First, the audiotapes of each group are transcribed separately using specific titles and Sonix application.
- Second, the transcribed interview of each group are checked and revised for content and spelling errors.
- .The questions in the interview are then highlighted because this enables the researcher to clearly differ between the interviewer's statements and the interviewee's responses (Creswell, 2012).
- Finally, data are imported into the computer and are organized into files to be prepared for the coding process.

4.8.2 Coding the Text

An inductive process (Creswell, 2007) is applied to the transcribed text whereby a coding process is carried out. This consists of narrowing the data into few themes through “the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data.” (Creswell, 2012, p.243). Hence, the codes can adhere to words, phrases, or sentences and serve the purpose of answering the research questions of the qualitative part (Merriam, 2009). The coding process used in this study is similar to that described by Zoltan (2007), encompassing three-steps coding. Such steps are: *pre-coding*, *initial coding*, and *second-level coding* (See figure 4.5).

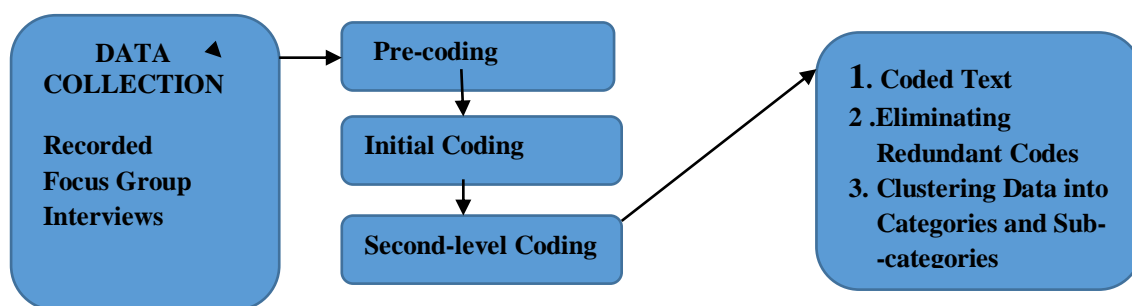


Figure 4.5 the Steps of the Coding Process

• Pre-coding

The purpose of the pre-coding step consists of “giving meaning to the first impression” of the data (Stake, 1995, p.71). This first step in the coding process prepares the ground for a “more formal and structured coding” (Zoltan, 2007, p.250) to take place. This is important since it can influence the way the text will be coded (Zoltan 2007). In this regard, Richards (2015) explains:

There is no alternative to reading and reflecting on each data record, and the sooner the better. This is purposive reading. Aim to question the record and to comment on it and to look for ideas that lead you up from the particular text to themes in the project (p.87).

In the current study, the pre-coding is used by reading the transcription carefully to get a general sense of the text (Creswell, 2012). Then margins are used to write notes and identify the researcher's preliminary thoughts about the data. The codes are written using a computer (See Appendix L).

- **Initial Coding**

In the initial coding, Zoltan (2007) suggests to code the passages that are “relevant to your topic [...] and add informative label on the margin” (p.251). In the present study, *in vivo codes*, *structured codes*, and *predetermined codes* are used as the initial coding.

First, *in vivo codes* are derived from the actual language used by the participants' themselves (Saldaña, 2009). This is recommended in methodology (Zoltan, 2007) to make the initial codes more authentic. Second, *structured codes* are research questions-based codes. As suggested by (Saldaña, 2009), these types of codes are required for the exploratory research as they help the researcher categorize the data according to a relevant analysis. To make more sense of the collected data, a *predetermined coding* is used in the initial coding study. This involves approaching the data by using a developed system of codes that are informed by the literature and the theory being examined (i.e., learner autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing) (See table.4.4).

Table 4. 4 Examples of the Three Types of Coding Used in the Study

Type of codes	codes	Samples from the coded data
In vivo codes	Constructive feedback	Participant’s quote: ‘I always seek for feedback; a constructive feedback ; I would like the teacher to highlight the mistakes I made’
Structured codes (research-questions-based codes)	Perceptions to their roles	Sub-research question: ‘How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their roles as EFL writers?’
Predetermined coding	Task constraint	Literature review: Flavell’s metacognitive knowledge taxonomy Task constraint Task demand } Task Knowledge Task Purpose }

These types of codes are relevant to the present exploratory research because they help to “maximize coherence among codes” (Creswell, 2012, p.271). To achieve this coherence, Creswell (2012) points out that a codebook should be used where the researcher writes “ a list of codes, a code label for each code, a brief definition of it, [...], and an example of a quote illustrating the code” (p.271). Thus, the coding process, in the current study, has been guided by the prepared codes noted in a codebook. An example of the codebook used in the current study can be found in **Appendix Q**.

• **Second-level Coding**

The initial coding resulted in 43 codes in Readiness for Autonomy data and in 193 codes for Metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing data. These data were too lengthy to be presented in the current study. Hence, a second-level coding was conducted where codes were reduced by first examining and revising the identified initial codes and second by listing them to “capture more abstract commonalities” (Zoltan, 2007, p. 252).

Since focus in this the second-level coding was put on constructing categories and subcategories, the redundant codes, the codes which were not relevant to the analysis, and the codes which were not enough to be grouped into one category were omitted. The other codes were examined in meaning and number of occurrence. Hence, the codes that represented a common idea were clustered together under the same categories. Decisions about which code to omit and which one need to be categorized were based on reading relevant literature. The data were organized into key categories, subcategories, and subcategories for the subcategories.

The second-level coding resulted in 29 coded categories and subcategories for Readiness for autonomy section and 30 ones for Metacognitive knowledge section. Since data of the two sections were analysed separately, it was by coincidence that the two sections were assigned approximately the same number of codes. The categories and subcategories constructed for each section are listed in **Appendix M**.

- **Nvivo Software Program**

In the present study, Nvivo software program (version 12 Plus) is used for coding the qualitative transcripts. Nvivo is recommended by Creswell (2012) as an effective software of qualitative data analysis in case of large data sets. This is because it can “assist with organizing and analysing your data” (p.14), making the qualitative data process “easier than ever before and yields more professional results” (Hillal and Alabri, 2013, p.185). In this regard, Creswell (2012) explains:

Nvivo offers a complete toolkit for rapid coding, thorough exploration, and rigorous management and analysis. Especially valuable is the ability of the program to create text data matrixes for comparisons. It also provides for visually mapping categories identified in your analysis. (p.243).

In the present study, prior to the coding process, data are first imported into the software program as files where all the texts can be recognized using document browser (**See Appendix J**). In the second-level coding, tree nodes (i.e., codes) are created in Nvivo software. This is achieved by producing a hierarchy of nodes that are

useful in showing categories and subcategories of qualitative data in this study (**See Appendix M**).

In addition to its ability to rapidly import the transcribed data and provide rapid coding (i.e., nodes in Nvivo software), Nvivo software has the advantage of providing “visually mapping categories” (Creswell, 2012, p.243). Access to a chunk of the coded texts can be done easily via Nvivo software. When clicking on a particular node (i.e., code), all the relevant texts show up on the Coding Strip where the researcher can see all what the participants have said about this particular coded theme. This can help to locate easily the participants’ verbatim with relevant codes then use them in data analysis. Additionally, in Nvivo software, codes are “organized to facilitate querying the data” (Creswell, 2012, p.14). Thus, the emerging themes can easily and rapidly be identified thanks to the number of nodes that code into particular documents (**See Appendix H**).

4.8.3 Data Presentation

To provide an organized presentation of the qualitative findings, Bernard (1988) suggests that visual displays like tables, figures, matrix form, and flow chart or map be used. In the present study, the emerging categories and subcategories are represented in tables and figures to help organize the data and communicate the researcher’s ideas.

As posited by Creswell (2009) “the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process—they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (p.150). Thus, as a way to illustrate the main categories and subcategories that emerge from the transcribed interview, the most representative verbatim quotes of the research findings are selected, presented, and analysed. Finally, personal discussion of the data is the last step in qualitative data analysis. This is particularly informed by the literature and is based on the researcher’s personal reflection on the qualitative data.

4.9 Quantitative Design for Phase II

Being defined as a descriptive research (Creswell, 2012), the quantitative design is a collection of data from a large population to construct quantitative descriptors of their attributes. Thus, this section is concerned with (a) putting focus on phase two quantitative, b) data collection procedures, c) survey development procedure, and d) data analysis (See figure 4.6).

4.9.1 Quantitative Data Collection Procedures

The quantitative design involves the collection of survey data as part of the second sequential phase methodology. Using the qualitative data sets of phase one, the survey questionnaire is constructed by the researcher in phase two to statistically measure the relationship between the emerging categories and subcategories.

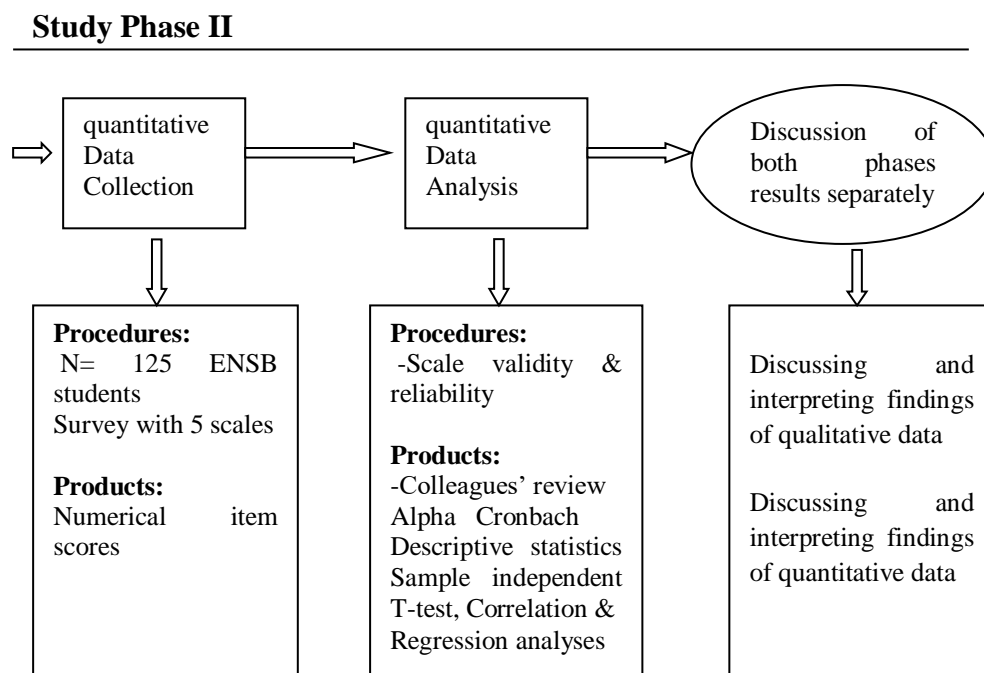


Figure 4.6 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design for the Study

- **Sampling Design**

Out of a 293 Third Year EFL students at ENS Bouzareah-Algiers enrolled in the academic year 2018, 125 (42, 6%) participants are selected. Since the participants are from different proficiency levels, a stratified random sampling is used as the appropriate sampling design to select the students participants in the current study.

According to Creswell (2012), this kind of sampling consists of “dividing the population by the stratum [...] so that the individuals selected are proportional to their representation in the total population” (p.144). It is, therefore, relevant to the current study because there is an imbalance on proficiency levels of the Third Year population in the English department at ENSB (i.e. the number of the population consists of more average than both low and high achieving students). The use of simple random sampling might potentially result in “the dominant and exclusive view” (Ibid) of the majority (i.e., average students). It can possibly yield to too small number of high and low achieving participants to be analysed statistically.

Thus, the rationale for using stratified random sampling is to ensure that “the stratum desired will be represented in the sample in proportion to that existence in the population” (p.144). In the present study, a stratified simple random sampling has resulted in the selection of proportional division of the participants to their representation in the Third Year students. Thus, three strata or subgroups are identified. The first involves mostly the average students (n=83) since these constitute the majority (n=194), the second subgroup comprises the low achieving students (n=35), and finally the third subgroup encompasses the high achieving students (n=7) (See figure 4.7).

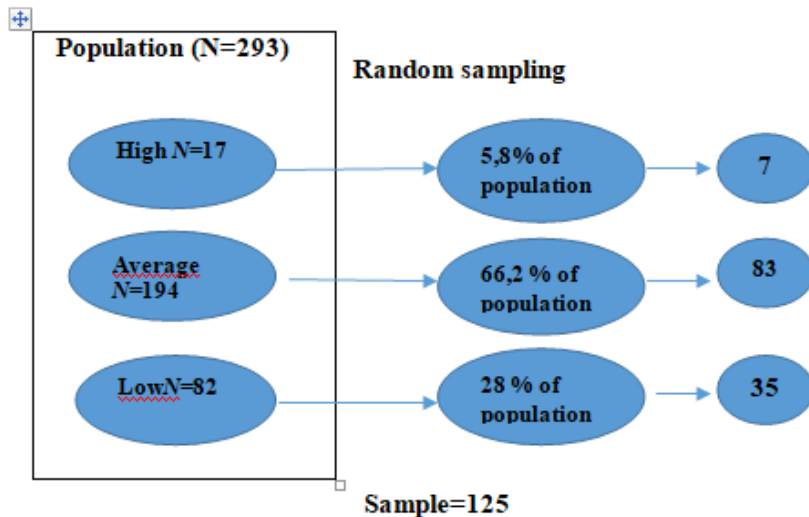


Figure 4.7 Stratification Sample of the Population of the Study (Phase II)

One email was sent to the population via their delegate’s mail during the second semester of 2018 (See Appendix K).

- **Data Collection Instrument**

In the present thesis, data collection instrument involves a Likert Scale being divided into two sections. Section one includes Learner Autonomy Readiness Questionnaire (LRAQ), and section two consists of ‘Learner Metacognitive Knowledge Questionnaire (LMKQ); For the first questions (LRAQ), the objective is to investigate the readiness for autonomy of Third Year EFL students at ENSB Bouzareah University. Hence, it comprises three separate parts: (1) perceptions of their role (2) perceptions of teacher’s role, (3) perceptions of EFL Writing.

Regarding the second questions (LMKQ), the purpose is to investigate the participants’ metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing, involving three parts: 1) person knowledge, 2) task knowledge, and 3) strategic knowledge.

- **Instrument Validity**

Once the survey is developed from the qualitative findings, it needs to be tested for validity. As posited by Groves et al., (2004), three major standards need to be met in all survey questions ranging from content standard, cognitive standard, to usability standard.

First, content standard refers to whether or not the questions asked conveyed the intended content. Second, cognitive standard involves checking if the respondents are likely to understand the questions addressed to them. Finally, usability standard consists of checking if the interviewers can complete the questionnaire easily. To examine the three validity standards, colleagues review and pilot study were used in the present study.

- **Colleagues Review**

To refine Likert Scale questionnaire as a valid research instrument, five academic EFL teachers enrolled in doctoral study at the ENSB reviewed the items and provided recommendations regarding: a) the clarity of the items, b) the wording of the questions, and c) the structure of the questions.

The colleagues' main criticism focused on the wordings of some items involved in the questionnaire. They checked whether these items were worded clearly and effectively enough in English to measure the traits purportedly measured. Minor rewording of a few items were suggested. The colleagues' advanced comments were used to revise (LRAQ) and (LMKQ) sections in the questionnaire, and the necessary changes were made regarding redundant, unclear, and ambiguous items, resulting in a decrease of the numbers of items from 65 to 64. The changes in the questionnaire items can be found in **Appendix N**.

➤ Pilot Study

To check the usability of the Likert Scale questionnaire, a non-random sampling of students were surveyed to test the questionnaire for items clarity. Also, feedback about the time it took them to complete the questionnaire was required in piloting. Only a sample of 10 ENSB students out of 30 chosen students provided their feedback about the administered questionnaire for a pilot study. All the participants indicated that the wording of the questionnaire were clear enough, and none of the questions were confusing to them. It was also indicated by most of the students that the questionnaire took them 10-15 minutes to complete.

• Reliability of the Survey

According to Zoltan (2007), reliability (internal consistency) of survey instrument can be calculated using statistics known as Cronbach alpha. This refers to “the variance of two or more scores and serves as an ‘internal consistency coefficient’, indicating how the different scores ‘hang together’” (p.51). In the present study, the instrument is found to be valid within the context, with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.84$. It is rated as ‘good’ because it exceeds the minimum required threshold of ($>0,70$) (See table 4.5). All the items on the scale survey are tested for alpha reliability and are found as good-performing items ($>0,70$) (See **Appendix O**).

Table.4.5 Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.848	64

Both the values as well as the descriptions on internal consistency relative to Cronbach Alpha are detailed in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Cronbach Apha Internal Consistency.

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/statistics-definitions/cronbachs-alpha-spss/#google_vignette

• Survey Development Procedures

Learner Autonomy Readiness questionnaire (LRAQ) and 'Learner Metacognitive Knowledge questionnaire (LMKQ) are the two sections used as the quantitative data collection instrument in this study. The instrument is constructed by making use of the related qualitative data. Likert scale questionnaire was posted to the participants to indicate their agreements or disagreements with the statements on five-point Likert Scales ranging from 1 indicating 'strongly disagree', 2 indicating 'disagree', 3 indicating 'neither agree nor disagree', 4 indicating 'agree', and 5 indicating 'strongly agree' (See tables 6.1 and 6.2).

Since the purpose of the survey is to measure only the most potent constructs obtained from the qualitative data sets, only the participants' most represented and frequently mentioned items in the qualitative data sets are selected as survey response items. The development of the final survey items draw on from:

- a) The findings from the qualitative analysis of focus group interview.
- b) The results of the colleagues' comments and pilot survey.
- c) A review of the relevant literature.

From the analysis of the qualitative data sets, six categories have emerged regarding learner readiness for autonomy and learner metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. These categories are used as the six headings for the Likert Scale sections in the instrument.

➤ Learner Readiness for Autonomy Section in the Likert Scale Questionnaire

In the first section of the questionnaire (LRAQ), Likert Scale is designed to measure the participants' perceptions of their (a) Roles (b) teachers' roles, and of their (c) EFL Writing. Accordingly, a cluster of items have been classified in the Likert Scale. The items and their objectives are detailed in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Learner Readiness for Autonomy Items and Purposes

Likert Scale Questions		The Purpose of the Questions
Perceptions of their role category	Items : 1-7	-The items investigate the steps that the participants use to make progress in EFL writing learning process.
	Items: 9-11	-The items investigate the steps that the participants use to assess their progress.
Perceptions of their teachers' role category	Items : 16-18, 23	-The items examine if the participants' perceive their teacher's role as a technical support.
	Items: 20-22	-The items examine if the participants' perceive their teacher's role as a psycho-social support.
	Items : 12-15, 19	-The items examine if the participants' perceive their teacher's role as an imparter of knowledge.
Perceptions of EFL Writing	Item : 24	-The item investigates if EFL writing is perceived as a different subject matter.
	Item : 25	-The item investigates if EFL writing is perceived as a complementary module.
	Item : 26	- The item investigates if EFL writing is perceived as a difficult skill.

➤ Learner Metacognitive Knowledge Section in the Likert Scale Questionnaire

The second section of the instrument (LMKI) is developed to collect data concerning the respondents' perceptions of their (a) Person knowledge, (b) Task

knowledge, and (c) Strategic knowledge. Hence, the items and their corresponding purposes are presented in table 4.8

Table 4.8 : Learner Metacognitive Knowledge Items and Purposes

Likert Scale Questions		The Purpose of the Questions
Person knowledge	Items 35-37	The purpose is to examine the participants' anxiety
	Items 27-28,31	The purpose is to examine the participants' self-confidence
	Item: 29	The purpose is to examine the participants' task enjoyment
	Items: 30, 32-34	The purpose is to examine the participants' identity
Task knowledge category	Items: 38, 49, 50-51	The purpose is to investigate the informants' task constraint
	Items : 40, 48, 59	The purpose is to investigate the informants' knowledge that are relative to task purpose .
	Items : 39, 47, 35-55, 58	The purpose is to investigate the informants' audience understanding
	Items : 41-46,56	The purpose is to investigate the informants' knowledge about task demand
Strategy knowledge	Items : 60-62	The purpose is to investigate the participants' metacognitive knowledge regarding planning
	Items : 36-64	The purpose is to investigate the participants' metacognitive knowledge relative to revision strategy.

➤ Positively and Negatively Worded Items

In both Likert Scale sections (i.e., LRAQ and LMKQ), positively and negatively worded items are included. According to Zoltan (2007), the positively and negatively worded items can help to “avoid a response set in which the respondent mark only one side of a rating scale” (p 109). The inclusion of both values can help to reduce the ‘*acquiescent response bias*’ where the participants tend to agree with almost the items involved in the questionnaire.

The first section of the questionnaire (LRAQ) includes nineteen positively worded items that are given the weight of 1,2,3,4, and 5 respectively for scoring purposes. The

participants are required to rate from ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘agree’, to ‘strongly agree’. Those who agree with these positively worded items are likely to subscribe to the profile of autonomous learners who are ready to initiate inquiries and seek help from more competent people to gradually move towards autonomy.

In the same section (LRAQ), seven items are negatively worded. The scores of these items are reversed or recoded being attributed the following weights: (1=5) (2=4) (3=3) (4=2) (5=1). The affirmation of these statements indicates a dependent attitude on the part of the participants. Table below shows both the positively as well as the negatively worded items concerning (LRAQ).

Table 4.9: Positively and Negatively Worded Items of LRAQ

Perceptions of Their Roles					
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Reversed scores		
(1),(2),(5),(6),(7),(8),(9), (11), (14)	1,2,3, 4,5	(4), (3)	5,4,3,2,1		
Perceptions of Teachers’ Roles					
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Reversed scores		
(10), (12), (13), (15) (16), (17), (18), (20)	1,2,3, 4,5	(19), (21), (22), (23)	5,4,3,2,1		
Perceptions of EFL Writing					
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Reversed Scores		
(24), (26)	1,2,3, 4,5	(25)	5,4,3,2,1		

In section two, the instrument (LMKQ), consists of fourteen negatively worded items and twenty four positively worded ones. The participants who indicate the negatively worded items are likely to fall in the category of novice writers. However, the cluster of the positively worded items reflect the perceptions of the high performing writers. Both items for (LMKQ) are detailed in table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Positively and Negatively Worded Items of LMKQ

Person Knowledge				
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Worted	Reversed scores
(28),(31),(32),(33),(34),(35),(36), (37)	1,2,3, 4,5	(27), (29), (30)		5,4,3,2,1
Task Knowledge				
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Worted	Reversed scores
(39),(40), (48), (49), (50) (51), (52), (53), (54), (57), (58), (59), (60),	1,2,3, 4,5	(38), (41), (42), (43), (44), (45), (46), (47), (55)		5,4,3,2,1
Strategy knowledge				
Positively Worded Items	Scores	Negatively Worded Items	Worted	Reversed scores
(56), (61), (64)	1,2,3, 4,5	(62), (63)		5,4,3,2,1

The evaluation criteria of the five-point Likert Scale adopted in the current study are illustrated in table 4.11

Table 4.11: Grading Criteria for the Questionnaire

Level	Mean	Options
Very high	4.51-5.00	Strongly agree
High	3.51-4.50	Agree
Average	2.51-3.50	Neither agree nor disagree
Low	1.51-2.50	Disagree
Very low	1.00-1.50	Strongly disagree

Likert Scale Survey is created using Google form, an online data design and collection software . The link can be found in **Appendix P**.

- **Data Analysis**

In this study, the questionnaire is the main tool through which the quantitative research questions are answered. Thus, descriptive statistics, sample Independent T-test, Spearman’s Rho correlation, and linear regression statistics are all used to analyze quantitative data.

➤ Descriptive Statistics Analysis

For research questions 1 and 2: ‘What is the level of ENSB students’ readiness for autonomy in EFL Writing?’ and ‘To what extent do ENSB students have metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing?’ descriptive statistics are conducted to measure the level of the participants’ readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing.

To investigate responses to the research questions, the scores of five-point Likert Scale questionnaire are computed to find the mean scores and standard deviations (SD). The higher the mean, the higher the participants’ readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge and vice versa.

According to Creswell (2012), standard deviation (σ) is “an indicator of the dispersion or spread of the scores” (p.182). It is achieved by calculating the variation relative to the variables means. The formula which was used to calculate the means and the SD of the participants’ readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing in the study is as follows:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(x_i - \mu)^2}{n}}$$

- (σ), x_i is equal to Value of the i^{th} point in the data set.
- \bar{x} stands for the mean value of the data set,
- n represents the number of data points in the data set.

➤ Sample Independent T-test Analysis

To answer the third and the fourth quantitative research questions ‘Are there any differences in ENSB students’ readiness for autonomy regarding their proficiency levels?’; ‘Are there any differences in ENSB students’ metacognitive knowledge regarding their proficiency levels?’ Sample independent T-test is used.

Independent T-test is an inferential statistics carried out to measure the statistical difference between two independent groups. In the present thesis, the means of the

participants with the three proficiency levels are compared and tested using the following pairing : (average-low), (high-low), and (high-average).

Levene's Test is used in the Independent Sample T-test to test the Equality of Variances and the Equality of Means between the groups. $\alpha = 0.01$ is the threshold significance level used to calculate whether a test result is significant or not.

The statistical mean difference between the three groups (i.e., average-low, high-low, high-average) in readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge is significantly different if $p < 0.01$ (i.e., p -value large). The mean, however, is not significantly different if the $p > 0.01$ (i.e., p -value small).

➤ Correlation Statistics

To answer the fifth research question: 'Is there any relationship between ENSB students' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels?' correlation coefficients (Spearman's Rho) is calculated to measure the strength of association between the variables in the data set (i.e., readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge , and proficiency levels). The correlation is statistically significant if Sig. (2-tailed) < 0, 05. Spearman's correlation coefficient is represented in the following formula $-1 \leq r \leq 1$

It is denoted that the closer r is to ± 1 , the stronger the relationship between the variables is. The strength of the correlation between the variables in this study was interpreted using the following guide:

- .00-.19 "very weak"
- .20-.39 "weak"
- .40-.59 "moderate"
- .60-.79 "strong"
- .80-1.0 "very strong"

➤ **Linear Regression Statistics**

In answering the sixth research question: ‘Can ENSB students’ metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy? a linear regression is calculated to predict the value of a dependent variable based on the value of an independent one. In the current study, the dependent variable is readiness for autonomy and the independent one is metacognitive knowledge.

The linear simple model can be calculated using the formula: $Y = a + bX + \epsilon$, where: **Y** represents the dependent variable, **X** stands for the independent or the explanatory variable, and **a** means the intercept or the value of the dependent variable (**Y**) when the independent variable (**X**) is zero. **b** stands for slope (i.e., the average rate through which the dependent variable (**Y**) changes with 1-unit change in the independent one (**X**)) (Creswell, 2012). The model, in the linear regression, is globally significant if **Sig** of F Test $< 0,05$.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter describes the exploratory sequential mixed methods design used in the current study. Research questions and research context and sites were presented first. Definitions, stages, as well as rationales for using this design were highlighted using visual representation of the overall study design. In section two, qualitative design (phase I) was described first along with its sampling, data collection and procedures, and data analysis. The second section presented the quantitative design (phase II) of this study. Focus was laid on the description of the design, data collection procedures, survey development procedure, and finally data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE:

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS OF PHASE ONE

5.1 Introduction

This qualitative chapter reports on the findings of Phase one yielded by content analysis of the focus group interview and the students' background questionnaire. Two broad sections are included in this chapter. The first section presents the results pertaining to ENSB participants' perceptions of their readiness for autonomy. In section two, focus is put on reporting on the informants' metacognitive knowledge in relation to EFL Writing learning process. Based on the coding process, the emerging categories and subcategories pertaining to the participants' perceptions of their readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are described, and their instances of occurrence among the participants with the three proficiency levels are detailed. The findings of the analysis are presented in the form of tables and participants' verbatim quotations.

Section One: The Findings of the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy in EFL Writing

The open coding analysis is adopted in readiness for autonomy section. Open coding is achieved by approaching the data without considering any predetermined framework. Therefore, the data are sorted out through the coding analysis to find out the emerging categories and subcategories.

This section is guided by the first primary research question in this thesis: 'What are the underlying categories of readiness for autonomy reported by ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students?'

The findings concerning this section are presented in terms of the most frequently mentioned categories identified in the focus group interview. These key categories are to describe the profile of the participants in terms of readiness for autonomy.

To provide an answer to the research question, the findings are categorized under three emergent categories revealed by the coding process. Such categories are a) *learners' perceptions of their roles*, b) *learners' perceptions of teachers' roles*, and c) *learners' perceptions of EFL Writing* (See table 5.1).

Table 5.1

The Framework for Students' Readiness for Autonomy

- A. Perceptions of their Roles**
 - 1. Steps for progressing
 - 2. Assessing progress
 - B. Perceptions of Teacher's Roles**
 - 1. Technical support
 - 2. Psycho-social support
 - 3. Imparter of knowledge
 - C. Perceptions of EFL Writing Task**
 - 1. Different from other modules
 - 2. A difficult skill
 - 3. Complementary to other modules
-

Out of the three key categories, eight sub-categories emerged. Concerning *Perceptions of their own roles* key category, two sub-categories emerged from the coding process, involving *steps for progressing* and *assessing progress*. Regarding the participants' *perceptions of teachers' roles* key category, *technical support*, *psycho-social support*, and *imparters of knowledge* are the three sub-categories that emerged from data analysis. The last category key encompasses the participants' *perceptions of EFL Writing as a different module*, *as a difficult task*, and *as a complementary subject matter* to the other modules.

5.1.1 Perceptions of their Roles

Learner autonomy can be displayed through the extent to which learners perceive their roles in the writing learning situation. This perception can either sustain or impede their readiness for autonomy. It can either influence the efforts they are willing to invest in their EFL Writing learning process.

The findings in this section were presented based on the first sub-research question:

Sub- question 1 ‘How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their roles as EFL writers?’

The participants’ interview accounts showed that they perceived their roles in terms of two aspects; *Steps for progressing* and *assessing progress*. The major steps the participants used to progress in EFL Writing learning process were *reading, writing, listening and watching to audio-visuals, online experts, and speaking*. In terms of progress assessment subcategory, the recurrent steps were mainly: *comparing old and new writings* and *feedback from significant people*. The frequency of occurrence of these subcategories among the participants with the three proficiency levels are illustrated in table 5.2. The statements are quantified according to their frequency of occurrence in data interview

Table 5.2 Perceptions of their Roles among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants

Categories and Sub-categories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N mentions	%	N mentions	%	N mentions	%
1 Steps for progressing						
Reading	10	28,5%	20	57,1%	5	14,2%
Writing	9	64,2%	3	21,4%	2	14,2%
Listening and Watching to Audio-visuals	4	36,3%	7	63,6%	0	0%
Online experts in Writing	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%
Speaking	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2 Assessing Progress						
Comparing old and new writings	6	50%	6	50%	0	0%
Feedback from Significant People	5	45,4%	6	54,5%	0	0%
Total of mentions and percentages:	38	42,2%	45	50%	7	7,7%

Table 5.2 indicates that the total number of the coded statements reported by the participants is 90. Making over (67) codes, the coded statements in *the steps for progressing* subcategory is more frequently mentioned compared to *assessing progress* sub-category with (23) codes. For a better understanding of the numeric instances involved in table 5.2, the participants' verbatim will be reported and analysed.

- **Steps for Progressing**

When asked about the actions they usually performed to promote their EFL Writing skills, the participants indicated a range of steps. Based on the frequency of occurrence, reading was the most frequently mentioned activity. 87, 5% of the high achieving, 91, 6% of the average, and 50% of the low achieving participants agreed on the idea that their improvement in EFL Writing was closely related to reading books and articles. One of the low achieving participants explained: "For me writing is linked to reading the most you read the most your writing develop" (KR1).

Reading was also viewed as a good source of style and vocabulary acquisition, which is instrumental in fostering their EFL Writing performance. The following extract is an example of an average participant's reflection on the point:

[...] Practice and read books in order to improve your vocabulary and learn new terms and. Learn even the way to how other writers actually use to write. When it comes to their own style we can also grab a lot of detailed information (SR2).

The examination of the participants' transcription revealed *writing* as another frequently mentioned step used to enhance their EFL Writing performance . As shown in table 5.2, the higher number of codes relevant to *writing* was produced by the high achieving participants (75%) in comparison with the average (25%) and the low achieving ones (50%). In particular, one average participant highlighted the role

of writing as a means through which she could discover her English weaknesses: “ [...] the more you write, the better writer you become because you are going to discover your mistakes when you write especially when you have an evaluation of your essay (SB1).

For another high achieving participant, learners themselves should create opportunities to practice writing rather than doing it when they are required to:

I would like to create these opportunities because I highly believe that practice makes perfect for now; I mean we shouldn't just write because we have an exam ; we should create these opportunities where we are going to explore our potentials, our ideas, and make connexion between the theoretical and practical part (LY1).

As shown in table 5.2, another emerging subcategory was concerned with *listening and watching audio-visuals*. While this knowledge seemed to be lacking in the low achieving participants' repertoire, 37% of the high achieving and 33, 3% of the average participants considered it as an activity that promotes the quality of their EFL Writing compositions. In this regard, one average participant pointed out: “What am I ready to do is do, a lot of listening because as I said before I think that listening is the key. I mean there is so many words you can learn while listening” (FD2).

This step was also viewed by one high achieving participant as crucial in terms of ideas and culture acquisition: “Watching documentary films and movies having more culture. Making our background spread and wide” (TH2).

Steps for progressing category was also reflected through the participants' reliance on *online expert writers* as a good source of motivation and guidance. This common concern was illustrated clearly by one high achieving participant: “If I want to improve. I can just make efforts and be motivated by the writers by the readers by some websites I check by some applications I have on my phone [...] make me learn it so easily” (DJ2).

Additionally, *speaking* was the least mentioned subcategory in the *steps for progressing* category. As shown in table 5.2, only 25% of the high achieving participants highlighted the significance of *discussion with native speakers* as a major way to promote their EFL learning in general and their EFL Writing performance in particular. The following extract of one high achieving participant is an example of reflections on the importance of this point: “Reading is not the only source of improvement in terms of writing but also discussion with people; when you discuss with people you are exposed to different perspectives and different views and this open your mind” (RM1).

Knowledge about the participants’ perceptions of their roles was also represented in their attitudes to their *progress assessment*.

• **Assessing Progress**

The examination of data analysis revealed two major frequently mentioned subcategories with regard to *assessing progress* key category. These were : *comparing old and new writings* and *feedback from significant people*. When asked about how they assessed their progress in EFL Writing, 75% of the high achieving and 50% of the average participants commonly indicated the comparison between their old and new pieces of writing as the most frequently used tool of self-assessment. The extract below of an average informant is illustrative of such a perception:

I do a lot of editing because I have my journals since the middle school , and I always go years,, how I was writing before years ago, and I see that I have done a lot during those years, so this is encouraging for me (SR1).

The importance attached to this kind of assessment by the participants lies essentially in enabling them to be aware about the mistakes committed in their old

writing productions. Thus, correcting and overcoming these mistakes become easier in their future writing compositions as one high achieving participant expressed:

I can see if I'm improving or not let's say if you compare my previous writings to my recent writings I guess see the difference between I can see the way I overcame those difficulties those mistakes I used to do the acquisition of new vocabulary (SB1).

The commonly provided answers revealed that seeking feedback from more competent people like teachers was another way reported by the participants to assess their EFL Writing progress. Only 37% of the high achieving and 50% of the average participants relied on feedback from expert persons in EFL Writing like teachers, professionals, and classmates. In this regard, one average participant expressed:

I think it is important to know you are progressing in writing. For that, you should give your writings to someone as someone who is competent to assess it. [...] he can give you your weaknesses in writing so he can improve it later (IM8).

The participants' readiness for autonomy was also reflected in their perception of their teacher's role.

5.1.2 Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

To explore the participants' readiness for autonomy, the twenty four participants were asked question two in the focus group interview 'how do you think the teacher can help you learn writing skills effectively?' This question, about the kind of help they need to receive from their teachers, helps to explore whether the participants possess a dependent or an independent attitude toward their teachers' role. The obtained results in this section were reported based on the second sub research question.

Sub-question 2: How do ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students perceive their EFL Writing teachers' role?

Content analysis unraveled three recurrent mentioned perceived teacher's roles, involving technical support, psycho-social support, and imparter of knowledge. Following the coding process, these three categories broke down into eleven subcategories.

As a *technical support*, the teacher was expected to perform six tasks. Such tasks are: providing constructive feedback, affording model writings, monitoring students' progress, teaching EFL Writing strategies, catering for students' needs, and providing challenging learning atmosphere.

In regard to the participants' perceptions of teachers' role as a *psycho-social support*, two main tasks were required. Teachers were appealed to both motivate learners and encourage their self-expressions in EFL Writing activities. The last subcategory related to teachers as *providers of knowledge*. This subcategory indicates the participants' reliance on their teachers in *teaching them how write*, in *correcting their mistakes*, and in *showing their progress*. The findings are illustrated in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Perceptions of Teachers' Roles among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants

Categories and Sub-categories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N mentions	%	N mentions	%	N mentions	%
1 Technical Support						
Constructive Feedback	11	36,6%	17	56,6%	2	6,6%
Sample Writing	5	62,5%	3	37,5%	0	0%
Monitoring Progress	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%
Teaching Strategies	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
Catering for Students' needs	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%
Positive & Challenging learning Atmosphere	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2 Psycho-social Support						
Motivator	8	66,6%	4	33%	0	0%
Encouraging self-expression	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
3 Imparter of knowledge						
Showing how to write	0	0%	8	72%	3	27%
Checking and correcting mistakes	1	12%	3	37%	4	50%
Showing progress	0	0%	3	50%	3	50%
Total of mentions and percentages:	35	38,0%	45	48,9%	12	13,0%

Based on the frequency of mention, table 5.3 demonstrates that the coded statements produced by both the high achieving and the average participants are more consonant with the conceptions of EFL teachers' roles as a technical as well as the psycho-social supports. However, the perception of the teacher as the imparter of knowledge was reported mainly by the average with 14 coded statements and the low achieving with 10 coded statements. Only one coded statement relevant to this subcategory was found in the high achieving participants' repertoire.

• The Technical Support

Based on the frequency of mention, 87, 5% of the high achieving, 75% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants expected their EFL Writing teachers to afford them *constructive feedback* that enables them have deep insights into their strengths and weaknesses in EFL Writing. The following extract from a high achieving participant reveals such a perception: “I always seek for feedback; a constructive feedback; I would like the teacher to highlight the mistakes I made in my piece of writing and also give us a chance to review our work” (LY1).

For another high achieving informant , reflection on one’s own written work and capacities can be sustained by teachers’ constructive criticism: “Constructive criticism is highly important because you know it helps you improve yourself. It helps you reflect on what you've written and your own abilities as a writer” (AB7).

Closely related to *constructive feedback* was the affordance of *model essays*. This was reported by 50% of the high achieving and 16, 6% of the average participants as a good guide, showing their teachers’ expectations and helping to foster their EFL Writing performance. The following extract from high achieving participants is illustrative in this regard: “Well giving a sample by a teacher is very important because it may help us like in improving ourselves” (SL1).

Another emerging subcategory relative to *teachers’ technical support* was concerned with *monitoring students’ progress*. In fact, only 12, 5% of the high achieving and 25% of the average participants emphasized ongoing teacher assessment as a salient way to help them overcome their own limitations in EFL Writing. The point was highlighted by one average participant: “I think what teachers should also do is continuously assess their students’ works; ongoing assessment by giving them homework by increasing their practice of the language of the writing” (ZB7).

Furthermore, the use of peer edition was believed to trigger learners' reflection on their own written productions, thereby assisting them to monitor their own progress.

Peer to peer learning edition is very important. And also like writing the final essay on the board. But like make the collection from like each and every essay so the entire class would participate and the entire class would like reflect on themselves (AB7).

The teacher's role as a *technical support* also included the *teaching of writing strategies and skills* as indicated by 37% of the high achieving and 8, 3% of the average participants (See table 5.2). The participants expressed their constant need to be equipped with effective writing strategies for a better performance of EFL Writing tasks. "I would like the teacher to provide me with tips to follow while writing [...] so from the very first session, I would love the teacher can just explain us clearly what he is expecting from us" (LY1).

In addition to teaching EFL Writing skills, *catering for the students' needs* was another role required from EFL teachers. As recorded in the focus group interview, 12, 5% of the high achieving and 25% of the average participants agreed on the significance of a teaching method that meet EFL learners' needs and expectations in EFL Writing. The following extract of a high achieving participant is illustrative in this regard:

I think relevance is key when it comes to helping your students grow and become better writers or better students. For example when you propose something that is relevant to their interests and their hobbies and needs they will find a lot they will find a lot of ideas to write about. And even though the style is not really adequate you can help them. But how to help them is really crucial (AB7).

In addition to the *technical support*, the *psycho-social one* was another role required from EFL Writing teachers to assume. Accordingly, they were appealed to act as powerful motivational tools in EFL Writing classrooms.

• **The Psycho-social Support**

It is worth noting that only 75% of the high achieving and 33, 3% of the average participants addressed this psychological side of their teachers' role, with particular emphasis on their personality traits. However, no statement from the low achieving participants was provided in this regard. In the following extract, a high achieving participant expressed her need to be motivated and encouraged by her teachers for a better performance in EFL Writing.

There are a lot of speaking from the technical side; I want to speak from the psychological side; I would like the teacher to be modest enough to complement us; I think that reward; I mean verbal reward is important; honestly does work and modesty of the teacher being around every one and giving attention to the student is primordial before tips (RM1).

Seeking opportunities to *express themselves freely* through free topics was also the demand of the high achieving participants as expressed by TH2; "I'm expecting from the teacher to start giving us free topics so that the student will be comfortable. They will be in a situation where they are not concerned or confused about the topic they will be dealing with".

Apart from the technical and the psycho-social supports, another emerging subcategory was concerned with teachers as imparters of knowledge. In this role, teachers were viewed as the main responsible for many aspects pertaining to participants' EFL Writing learning process.

• The Imparter of Knowledge

The examination of content analysis revealed that 58, 3% of the average and 50% of the low achieving participants subscribed to learners' dependent role, viewing their teachers as the main responsible agents for their successes and failures. The three frequently mentioned tasks relative to *imparter of knowledge role* were showing EFL learners *how to write, correcting their mistakes, and showing them their own progress*.

41, 6% of the average and 50% of the low achieving participants expected their teachers to show and tell them how to write well. In the following extract, an average participant expressed her dependency on the teacher for effective acquisition of EFL Writing skills.

I think that you cannot learn writing by yourself. You need a teacher [...] a teacher know better [...] You need him first and then you do research you cannot do research by yourself because you will be lost in the huge information you find, so you need to be restricted (MR8).

The participants' dependency on their EFL Writing teachers was also indicated through the function assigned to them as the only *assessors of learners' works*. In doing so, a full responsibility for diagnosing EFL learners' limitations and strengths was attributed to teachers. 8, 3% of the average and 50% of the low achieving participants commonly expressed their reliance on their teachers to spot their own mistakes. In this regard, one low achieving participant expressed: "So if the teacher check my writings in each time I write I will like two less mistakes in grammar related to the structure of further sentences so he must check the list of mistakes I do" (KR1).

The examination of the participants' transcripts had also uncovered instances of their dependency on teachers as the only *indicators of their own progress* in EFL

Writing learning situation. No statements on the part of the high achieving informants was revealed in this regard. This subcategory was, however, mentioned only by 25% of the average and 25% of the low achieving participants. Illustrative examples of these patterns can be found in the following extracts where two participants related their progress to their teachers' tasks. One low achieving participant claimed: "So if the teacher tell me how I improved, I will progress and I will keep writing and improving much more than that (KR1)".

Another comment relevant to the point was stated by an average respondent: "They [teachers] would identify the weakness points and points where you progressed where you still lack something. Outside of school. I don't write a lot. I rarely write (RM2).

The participants' readiness for autonomy was also reflected in their perceptions towards EFL Writing task;

5.1.3 Perceptions of EFL Writing

Attitudes to EFL Writing learning process is crucial in influencing EFL learners' approach to learning this skill. Learners' awareness of the cognitive as well as the affective aspects of EFL Writing is likely to foster the quality of their task engagement, involvement, and efforts. Such a perception can uncover the extent to which EFL learners have both willingness and readiness to cope with difficulties associated to their learning process. The findings in qualitative phase were examined based on the third sub-research question that guided this section.

Sub-question 3: How do ENSB students perceive their EFL Writing learning process?

Content analysis of the transcribed interview revealed three primary emerging categories relative to EFL Writing perceptions. These categories are *writing as a different*

module, writing as a *complementary to other modules*, and writing as a *difficult task*. The frequency of mention of these categories are presented numerically in table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Perceptions of EFL Writing Skills among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participant

Categories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N mentions	%	N mentions	%	N mentions	%
1 Writing as a Different module	4	21%	15	78%	0	0%
2 Writing as a complementary to other Modules	5	62,5%	3	37,5%	0	0%
3 Writing as a difficult skill	1	20%	0	0%	4	66,6%
Total of mentions and percentages:	10	31,2%	18	56,2%	4	12,5%

Obviously, table 5.4 shows that the most frequently mentioned category is *writing as a different module* with about 19 codes. This is followed by *writing as a complementary to other module* category with 8 codes, and the least mentioned category is *writing as a difficult skill* with 5 reported codes only.

Based on the table findings, learning EFL Writing skill is perceived by the high achieving and the average participants as a different subject matter in comparison with the other modules. Interestingly, it is only the high achieving and the average participants who appreciated EFL Writing as a complementary subject matter to the other modules. Looking at the low achieving participants' column with respect to these two categories, it can be noticed that it is completely empty. What is clear from the data is that the low achieving participants perceived EFL Writing more as a difficult skill to learn compared with the high achieving and the average participants.

To explore the findings involved in the table 5.4 in more details, the description of each category was conducted.

• Writing as a Different Module

50% of the high achieving and 83, 3% of the average participants believed that EFL Writing skill is different from any other modules studied in their university. This difference was attributed to a cluster of factors related essentially to the nature of the skill itself, to the content studied in each module, and to the language being used. More particularly, unlike the other modules that were described as content-based, EFL Writing module was mostly viewed as a technical subject matter, implying not only the teaching of language but of the skills as well. One high achieving participant stated in her own words:

There is a huge difference between the two. Writing has to do with the language itself. If compared to civilization or other modules, writing is the basic because it affects all modules. If you know how to write then basically writing is going to be used in all of the other modules (SB1).

EFL Writing was viewed as prerequisite in the acquisition and enhancement of the other content modules. As pointed out by SB1, success in language learning highly depends on the good mastery of EFL Writing skill: “I think if we can't improve in writing, we can't we can't improve in other modules because it's all about writing all of the exams are expressed through writing” (SB1).

Another aspect that distinguishes EFL Writing from the other modules is closely related to its technical nature as a skill through which the participants' could express their personal ideas freely. This idea was illustrated in one average informant's quote:

Writing is different from other subjects in many ways the first is that [...] I feel myself free. I have a lot of freedom because I am talking about my ideas [...] in comparison with other subjects I am more restricted to the content (AZ8).

The examination of the transcribed interview had also unravelled the participants' perceptions to EFL Writing as crucial to the effective acquisition of the other types of learning.

- **Writing as a Complementary Subject Matter**

In addition to being seen as a different subject matter from the other types of learning, EFL Writing was also perceived as a complementary skill to the other modules as stated by one average subject: "I regard writing as complimentary and fulfilling mean to the other disciplines" (ZK8). This belief had been manifested by 37% of the high achieving and 16, 6% of the average participants.

According to one high achieving informant, EFL Writing "is incorporated in each module" (SL1). More particularly, ideas and content in the other modules are communicated through this skill.

So in all subjects whether literature or scientific modules; they all require writing. Yes. Expressing ideas and answering and writing whatever it is a theory a poem a story I don't not a historical events they all need to be written and read (HN8).

Additionally, perceptions of EFL Writing also involves the participants' view to this skill as being a difficult and challenging.

- **Writing as a Difficult Skill**

Writing was conceived as a difficult skill by 12, 5% of the high achieving and 50% of the low achieving participants. The reasons for such a perception varied from the high achieving to the low achieving informants. For example, one of the high achieving subjects attributed this difficulty to her motor capacities as a slow writer, which inhibited her from writing effectively.

I find writing the most challenging skill because it has to do with the cognitive and motor, let's say coordination; I have a problem with writing; I am really slow at writing, so sometimes, I miss all the best ideas (LY1).

The difficulty of EFL Writing as perceived by the low achieving participants was mainly associated with the discrepancy between their L1 and EFL Writing, namely in terms of English and sentence structure. Thus, this skill was viewed as daunting, requiring tremendous efforts. In this regard, KR1 noted:

It is difficult to write it in a your second language or third language which is the English and the mother tongue, which is in a way or another totally different from what you write especially the structure of the sentence it is different from language to another.

In addition to the participants' readiness for autonomous learning, content analysis revealed findings obtained from the participants' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing learning process.

Section Two: Findings of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge in EFL Writing

Based on the second primary research question in this research, 'What are the underlying categories of metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing reported by ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving students?', the second section presents findings of the full data set concerning the participants' reported metacognitive knowledge of EFL Writing.

The threefold frameworks of metacognitive awareness derived from Flavell's taxonomy : person, task, and strategy knowledge were adopted in the current thesis as an overall scheme for organizing the categories and subcategories emerging from the focus group interview accounts (See table 5.5).

Table 5.5

The Framework for The Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge

D. Perceptions of person knowledge

1. Self efficacy
2. Motivation

E. Perceptions of task knowledge

3. Task constraints

F. Task purpose

G. Task demands

H. Perceptions of strategy knowledge

I. Planning and generating

J. Evaluation and revision

K. Perceptions of person knowledge

The coding process resulted in nine key categories, seven of which (*self-efficacy, motivation, task constraint, task purpose, task demand, planning and generating, and evaluation and revision*) were sorted out from the data. Based on the coding process, person knowledge findings among the high achieving , the average, and the low achieving participants will be presented first.

5.2.1 Perceptions of Person Knowledge

Person variable concerns the knowledge learners acquire about themselves as individual EFL writers with some distinctive personal features. These are likely to operate either as facilitators or inhibitors of their academic learning success (Flavell, 1987). The findings of this section will be presented based on the sub-research questions of section two.

Sub-question 1: What are the emerging subcategories of person knowledge revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students in EFL Writing?

Content analysis of the participants' interview accounts revealed the emergence of *self-efficacy* and writing *motivation* as the two primary categories that influenced

the informants' person knowledge. Additionally, subcategories related to each of these two primary categories emerged from the coding process (See table 5.6).

The participants' *self-efficacy* refers to their perceptions regarding their writing abilities. *Writing anxiety* and *confidence* in writing abilities were the two emerging subcategories reflecting the participants' self-efficacy. The participants' *motivation* concerns the interest they attach to the writing activity. Their motivation was derived from their sense of EFL *Writing task enjoyment* and *identity* knowledge. The results are summarized in table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Person Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants

Categories and Sub-categories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N mentions	%	N mentions	%	N mentions	%
1 Self-efficacy Writing anxiety Confidence and satisfaction	5	16,6%	13	43%	12	40%
	9	42,8%	12	57,1%	0	0%
2 Motivation Sense of Task enjoyment Identity	8	33,3%	16	66,6%	0	0%
	9	90%	1	10%	0	0%
Total of mentions and percentages:	31	36,4%	42	49,4%	12	14,1%

Based on the number of occurrence with which these subcategories appeared in the data analysis, it can be noted that the total number of the coded person knowledge statements reported by the participants is 85. The coded statements for self-efficacy

are higher, making over 51 (60%) statements compared to motivation with 34 (40%). The primary categories as well as the subcategories will be reported and analysed using the participants' verbatim.

- **Self-efficacy**

In response to the question two in the focus group interview protocol, *'Do you think you are a good writer in English? What makes you think so?'*, the participants reported their evaluative judgement regarding their own capacities in EFL Writing. As it can be drawn from the data, an increase in the reported answers (49,1%) to the subcategory *writing anxiety* was noted among the average participants with 43,3%. This is followed by the low achieving with 40%, and finally reported by the high participants with 16,6%.

- **Writing Anxiety**

The first variable affecting the participants' person knowledge was *writing anxiety*. This was expressed in terms of two major aspects, encompassing anxiety towards EFL Writing and a negative attitude towards EFL academic writing.

Writing skill was viewed by 75% of the low achieving participants as a daunting complex task. 25% of them considered this skill laborious not only in EFL but also in L1 and L2. Part of the answer was found in their lack of lexical resources and their limited background language, namely in vocabulary. In showing such a perception, one low achieving participant used L1 (i.e., Algerian dialect) and sometimes L2 (i.e., French) (the verbatim was translated to English).

To be honest, I hate all kinds of writing because most of the times, I do not find the words and expressions that express my ideas [...] I think I am not good in writing, not only in English but even in Arabic or French [...] I cannot extend ideas ; I can only give exact answers (DJI).

Coupled with poor EFL language background, the *lack of practice* was also found to trigger *writing anxiety* in 50% of the low achieving participants. Thus, in

contrasting her positive attitude to L1 writing with her negative perception to EFL Writing abilities, KR1 asserted:

I feel like not comfortable when I write because I am not used to write. I used to write in Arabic but in English I never write in my home [...] I find difficulties when I write in English [...] I do spelling mistake and grammar mistakes a lot (KR1).

Another salient reason for *writing anxiety* among the participants was associated with the lack of the adequate EFL Writing techniques. This was claimed to impair their successful writing productions. One low achieving participant displayed an account of awareness of this point: “So I like writing but in my first language Arabic because I have the techniques of writing, but in English I miss the techniques. I don't know how to write a good phrase or a paragraph and essay” (MR2).

The findings from the current qualitative data analysis revealed also an increase in *writing anxiety* and negative attitude with respect to academic EFL Writing. This was demonstrated by 37% of the high achieving informants and 75% of the average participants. Their reported statements were commonly connected with their reluctance towards teachers' authoritative approaches and practices that were imposed on their self-expression and creativity such as using their preferred sophisticated and idiomatic written language. One high achieving participant noted:

I've met a teacher; she used to tell me to stop writing metaphor to stop writing a beautiful language just keep it simple [...] She used to kill the sense of creativity in me and this make me feel disappointed and hopeless (TH2).

For 25% of the average participants, teachers' assessment in the academic writing was associated with external evaluative judgement and criticism of their endeavours. Not surprisingly then, this was perceived as triggering both pressure and

stress. Such a perception was revealed in the following extract expressed by an average participant: “I just have a kind of negative idea because I always use an academic writing while having a test or something; we are always under pressure like time, and we know we are going to be evaluated” (FD2).

Anxiety to EFL academic Writing was also represented in the participants’ negative perceptions of EFL Writing rules. 12,5% of the high achieving and 16,5% of the average participants considered EFL Writing rules in terms of introduction, thesis statement, and punctuation as restricting, mechanical, and lacking novelty. Consequently, a sense of boredom grew among the participants as noted by one average subject: “I have a very negative reaction towards writing. I don't like writing in the way that it is restricted with rules. You have to respect rules especially the introduction thesis statement. Punctuation oh all these” (YS2).

In addition to writing anxiety, self-efficacy was also relevant to *confidence and satisfaction* as a recurring subcategory.

➤ **Confidence and Satisfaction**

As indicated in table (4.6), *confidence and satisfaction* in EFL Writing was a pre-dominant subcategory among the high achieving participants with 10 codes and the average ones with 9 codes. This knowledge, however, seemed to be missing in the low achieving respondents’ repertoire.

A cluster of aspects emerged as boosting the participants’ confidence in EFL writing abilities. These were commonly related to *perceived talent and capacities, sense of making progress, good vocabulary and grammar, good ideas, and willingness to publicize written works*.

As the most recurrent subcategory, *confidence and satisfaction* subcategory was manifested by the good mastery of English. This account of awareness was displayed by 25% of the high achieving and 58% of the average participants. One

high achieving participant commented on her good mastery of sentence structure as follows: “I like my writing in terms of the structure; also, punctuation”. Another average participant associated her confidence in EFL Writing abilities to her satisfaction with her correct usage of grammar: “I use like a good grammar, I don’t make a lot of mistakes, and I love English even more than Arabic, my first language; I feel myself more comfortable in English than in Arabic” (RW7).

Another salient reason for the participants’ increased confidence and satisfaction was associated with their sense of task achievement. 25% of the high achieving and 16, 6% of the average claimed that their EFL Writing abilities grew steadily during assessment. This was revealed by the positive feedback they received from their EFL Writing teachers. In this regard, one average subject defined his writing style as attractive: “I am a good writer. I can use the language that would attract you when you read and also when the teacher assessed my writing it's always a good mark. It's always a good mark” (AZ1).

The participants’ confidence was also reflected in the degree to which they viewed themselves having the capacities to make progress. 12, 5% of the high achieving and 16, 5 of the average respondents expressed this aspect vividly as one high achieving informant asserted: “One thing I like the most about writing comparing to the other skills is that we the chance to review our piece of writing and see the progress each time” (LY1).

Likewise, confidence in EFL writing abilities was displayed by 25% of the high achieving respondents with regard to their perceived talents and mental capacities. Such a reflection was expressed by one high achieving participant who claimed having inborn talent in EFL Writing: “Well I think I'm a good writer. I think it's something talented. It's someone a good writer is talented. We born with being talented in writing” (TH2).

Regarding the mental capacities, an account of awareness towards her analytical writing capacities and its impact on her EFL Writing performance was positively viewed by one high achieving informant: “What makes me think I am a good writer, I think that it’s my analytic spirit [...], therefore, the organization of ideas, the way I link each idea with another makes my ideas good” (RM1).

Besides, *confidence and satisfaction, willingness to publicise written products* was manifested by 8, 33% of the average participants’. The prospect of sharing one’s own writings with people and a desire to influence them reflected the confidence and satisfaction the participants had toward their EFL Writing abilities. Such a reflection was noted by one average participant: “I can like consider myself being a good writer in the near future for the simplest of reason that if I'm going to be publishing a book [...] I'm going to be more focusing on the influence” (SR).

Closely related to self-efficacy, motivation was another salient aspect of person knowledge that was developed by the informants.

• **Motivation**

Being considered as one of the most powerful factors triggering academic success, motivation can determine the persistence the learner is ready to invest in a given task (Zoltan, 2003). The participants’ willingness and readiness to apply efforts in their learning were assessed through their attitudes towards EFL Writing. As indicated by the frequency of mention in the qualitative data analysis, the informants’ motivation for EFL Writing appeared to derive from two sources; *a sense of task enjoyment*, and *identity knowledge*.

➤ **Sense of Task Enjoyment**

Sense of task enjoyment was a recurrent subcategory in the respondents’ focus group interview. 100% of the high achieving and 91,6% of the average participants expressed their sense of task enjoyment to EFL Writing as a skill with distinctive

features. The participants' overall statements evolved around *relief in expressing ideas* and *practicing free writing*.

As indicated by the frequency of mention in the interview, one important aspect of the *sense of enjoyment* was associated with the feeling of *relief in expressing ones ideas*. This was mentioned by 62, 5% of the high achieving informants and 33, 3% of the average participants (See table.5.6). EFL Writing was positively viewed as a means of *relaxation*. AB7's words were illustrative of this point: "[...] definitively positive, you just write whatever comes to your mind, it's a big relaxing; it helps you get of some stuff; it helps you relax" (AB7).

The same idea was highlighted by another high achieving participant who compared EFL Writing to a therapy, "I'm fascinated about writing. It's kind of a therapy. Also it makes me feel better because I'm letting out all my emotions and all my thoughts" (DJ2).

EFL Writing was also considered as a means of communication and self-expression used by high achieving shy participants like DJ2, "Writing is a way about how I explain my thoughts how I feel inside of me. It helps me to speak of what I feel and what I can't say in front of others " (DJ2).

As indicated by the frequency of occurrence, positive attitude to *free writing* verses the academic one was another recurrent idea relative to the sense of enjoyment subcategory. Unlike the academic writing, free Writing was regarded by 50% of the high achieving and 50% of the average participants as motivating because it made it easy for them to express their emotions and ideas freely and spontaneously . SL1, a high achieving respondent, expressed the following: "I like free writing because it sets my mind free and also my feelings, my emotions; I express myself freely" (SL1).

Apart from the sense of enjoyment, identity was another emergent subcategory that seemed to influence the participants 'motivation in EFL Writing.

➤ Identity

High intrinsic motivation could be derived from the informants' awareness of their own identity as EFL learners. Identity corresponds to Flavell's (1979) notion of person knowledge, encompassing « everything that you could come to believe about the nature of yourself » (p, 907). It refers, therefore, to the knowledge that learners might potentially hold concerning their cognitive capacities. This can be manifested through the participants' self-awareness of both their strengths and weaknesses as EFL learners . A survey of the literature review shows that the skilful learners display far more awareness than the novice ones about not only their capacities as learners but also about the factors that influence their EFL Writing performance.

The data findings relative to *identity knowledge* revealed evaluative statements produced by 50% of the high achieving subjects and 8, 33% of the average participants, reflecting their self-awareness about their *mental capacities, language repertoire, and inner thoughts*.

25% of the high achieving participants demonstrated an understanding of their own identity in relation to their *mental capacities*. In this regard, one high achieving respondent reflected positively on her rhetorical writing capacities and intelligence as follows:

I have the ability to depict the feelings and my thoughts in such a beautiful way and a beautiful style [...] There's something we call the intelligence of using and choosing the words that exactly refer to your feelings or to the thoughts you are intending to transcribe (TH2).

Thus, in the above extract, TH2's awareness of her cognitive strength represents one clear outcome of her motivation as an aspect of her person knowledge. Another knowledge of one's identity was associated to the awareness of one's own rich language repertoire. This involved notably the possession of enough vocabulary

size as well as a good command of grammatical forms. These two attributes were considered to be enough for a fluent and a free expression of ideas to take place as one high achieving participant asserted: “I can express myself freely and fluently; I have the ideas and even like the vocabulary and how to say the mastery of the structure concerning grammar and mechanics” (SL1).

Identity knowledge was also connected with a self-discovery of learners’ own inner and imbedded thoughts. Thus, as indicated in the transcribed interview of one high achieving subject: “*Writing is a self-discovery*” (RM1). Free writing was stressed as a process that enabled the participants to discover their cognitive capacities. One high achieving participant displayed a self-awareness regarding this point. “When we are home writing poems, I feel like it is a great way to discover ourselves because I find myself writing about things I have never known about myself” (RM1).

In addition to person knowledge, the participants’ metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing was revealed through their task knowledge.

5.2.2 Perceptions of Task Knowledge

As it was argued earlier in the literature review, task knowledge stands for a cluster of information that help to raise learners’ understanding regarding the purpose, the demand as well as the nature of their EFL Writing task (Wenden 1959). In the context of the present research, the findings regarding task knowledge will be presented in relation to the second sub-research question:

Sub-question Two: What are the emerging sub-categories of task knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?

Throughout the content analysis, the participants’ recorded statements were divided into *task constraint*, *task purpose*, and *task demand*. Based on the conducted

coding process, these three primary categories broke down into emergent subcategories.

The emergent subcategories relative to the participants' task constraints are: *rigid text structure, time constraint, topic knowledge, linguistic impediments, and teachers' instructions*. For task purpose, the most frequently mentioned subcategories are: *audience understanding, focus on content and ideas, and focus on essay structure*. The emergent subcategories that broke down from task demand are: *writing process, text content, importance of linguistic resources, and concerns for mechanics*. In table 5.7, the emergent subcategories are illustrated in terms of frequency of mentions and percentage of occurrence in the data interview among the participants with the three proficiency levels.

Table 5.7 Task Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants

Categories and Subcategories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N of Mention	%	N of Mention	%	N of Mention	%
1 Task Constraint						
Rigid text structure	7	58,3%	7	58,3%	2	12,5%
Time constraint	5	35,7%	7	43,7%	2	14,2%
Topic knowledge	5	45,4%	6	54,5%	0	-
Linguistic impediments	2	20%	5	50%	3	30%
Teachers' instructions	5	83%	1	16%	0	-
2 Task Purpose						
Audience understanding	18	45%	16	40%	6	7,5%
Focus on content	5	41%	6	50%	1	8,3%
3 Task demand						
Writing process (paragraph and essay)	22	31,4%	36	51,4%	12	17,1%
Text content	4	30,7%	8	61,5%	1	10%
Importance of linguistic resources	8	53,3%	7	46,6%	0	0
Concern for Mechanics	3	33,3%	6	66,6%	0	0
Total :	84	38,8%	105	48,6%	27	12,5%

What is clear from the data in table 5.7 is that the total number of the coded task knowledge across the participants with the three proficiency levels is 216. Looking at the three categories of task knowledge, task purpose has the lowest occurrence with 52 (24, 07%) codes, followed by task constraint with 57 (26, 3%) codes. Task demand, however, has the highest instances of occurrence with over 107 (49,5%) mentioned codes. To provide a more detailed picture of the participants' understanding regarding this metacognitive knowledge, the categories as well as subcategories will be presented in this chapter based on the participants' verbatim.

• **Task Constraint**

The participants' task constraint was assessed by means of the third question addressed in the focus group interview protocol; '*What are the difficulties you usually encounter when writing English essays?*' The major focus of the question was to explore the participants' knowledge about the factors that impaired their effective EFL Writing performance. Content analysis revealed five major constraints. These were mainly: *struggling with rigid text structure*, *with time constraints*, *with topic knowledge*, *with linguistic impediments*, and *with teachers' approaches and instructions*.

➤ **Rigid EFL Writing Structures**

In terms of frequency of occurrence, the most recording statements of 66,6% of the participants in the focus group interview were concerned with three major constraining aspects – '*rigid essay structure*' (1) '*writing an introduction*' (2), and '*writing a conclusion*' (3).

EFL essay was viewed by both the high achieving and the average participants as a hurdle because it involves *rigid rules and structures*. The rhetorical structure involved in academic EFL essay such as thesis statement in the introductory paragraph and topic sentence in the body paragraph were claimed to impair the

participants' natural and spontaneous flow of ideas. Such a reflection was noted by one high achieving participant: "I like free writing just about giving ideas and following is just the flow of the ideas. But when it comes to correcting ideas and putting up the structure altogether this is a problem that's" (YS2).

Writing an introduction was also viewed as another constraining factor triggering frustration of 12, 5% of the high achieving participants and 8, 3% of the average informants during the writing activity. Their constant dissatisfaction with the final production of their introductions was a salient factor that determined their perception of the writing task difficulty. In this regard, one high achieving participant commented on her struggle to write attractive introductions :“So I have big problems starting an introduction. I want for the paragraph to be attractive [...]. So I'm not satisfied each time by the introduction I take too much time in the introduction” (SB1).

Closely related to introduction constraint was the *concluding paragraph difficulty*. This appeared as a real concern for 12, 5% of the high achieving participants and 8, 3% of the average ones. One of the major difficulties encountered lied essentially in making the concluding paragraph look different from the introduction. In the following extract, one high achieving participant expressed his ignorance about the difference between introductions and conclusions: “The only problem in the essay is conclusion; I find it difficult; I have a problem with concluding my words I make it a lot similar to the introduction, so that is the only difficulty I have” (AB7).

In addition to conclusion constraint , writing transitional sentences was another constraining factor reported in the transcript. 12, 5% of the high achieving subjects displayed a lack of understanding of the function as well as uses of transitional sentences as connectors in EFL essays. In this regard, one high achieving participant commented: “The transition; like I find it weird to put a sentence at the end of another idea and start another idea” (YS1).

Finally, sentence structure problem was the major concern of 25% of the low achieving participants. KR1 reflected negatively on her poor performance of sentence structure as one of the salient impediments she experienced in EFL Writing: “If they ask me now to write something I have very difficulties in academic writing may be for the sentences. So if you assess me may be you give me zero or two”.

Beside rigid EFL rules, another major aspect of task constraint being reported by the participants is associated with time factor.

➤ **Time Constraint**

The examination of the participants’ task knowledge revealed the emergence of *managing the allocated time* as a recurrent subcategory with 14 mentioned codes. This was reported by 37, 5% of the high achieving, 58% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants as a factor with a significant impact on the quality of their EFL Written texts in terms of *ideas collection and organization, imagination and creativity, writing strategies, and semantic resources*. (See table 5.7).

Organizing ideas was the most recurrent aspect being mentioned only by 12, 5% of the high achieving and 41, 6% of the average participants. The overall reported statements involved the participants’ perceived difficulties in organizing and collecting ideas when running short of the allocated time. The use of ideas organization strategy in a well-structured essay was negatively affected by the estimated time management because the strategy itself is time consuming. Particularly, one average participant’s words were illustrative in this regard, “Thinking about how to put my ideas in a structured essay makes me lose a lot of time. So I find myself rushing out in writing and being so scared of not finishing the essay” (SR1).

In addition, 25% of the high achieving participants reported that their creativity and imagination were highly impeded by time constraint. A good example of such a

reflection was what RM1 asserted: “The obstacles is that, first we have timing which makes us a bit under pressure and stress; therefore, our imagination is limited [...] as if all the doors are closed” (RM1).

For 12, 5% of the high achieving participants, effective writing strategies like editing could not be deployed because of the insufficiency of time being allocated, particularly during the examination period. One high achieving participant referred to this point in the following extract: “I rarely review my exam paper because we are most of the time bound by time; we are in a rush trying to finish on time” (LY1).

Poor semantic resources regarding a given topic was another constraint reported by 50% of the low achieving participants. They acknowledged needing more time to develop ideas for their written tasks. The point was highlighted by one of the low achieving participants as follows: “So my obstacles in writing are the first one is the lack of time. I hate being limited by time because I don't have enough time to gather the appropriate information” (KR8).

Following the frequency of occurrence, topic knowledge was another constraining factor in EFL Writing reported by the participants.

➤ **Topic Knowledge**

Awareness of topic knowledge constraint constitutes one of the required metacognitive knowledge that EFL learners need to be aware of according to Karlpan (1983). As a running subcategory, topic knowledge was viewed by 62, 5% of the high achieving participants and 33, 3% of the average ones as a constraint due to two major aspects; *imposed topic and topic familiarity*. (See table 5.7). This knowledge, however, seemed to be missing in the statements advanced by the low achieving informants.

As indicated in the analysis of the transcript, 37, 5% of the high achieving

participants and 16, 6% of the average ones displayed negative attitude toward imposed topic. Most of the reported statements indicated their preference to write about meaningful subjects that stimulate their interests and attention. The following extract is an example of a high achieving participant's reflection on the point: "In the exam, what I fear is what the topic is about. Sometimes when we are asked to write about something that has to be against or with it I sometimes find it difficult to defend something I'm not into it" (DJ2).

According to 25% of the high achieving and 8, 3% of the average participants, those seemingly unfamiliar topics might be difficult to develop into a full text due to their poor background knowledge about. This concern had been experienced by AB7, a high achieving participant: "One of the major difficulties we tend to struggle with is that we don't have many ideas about the subject given to you or the topic; that definitely requires to do some research before hand" .

Based on the participants' statements, it was evident that both the high achieving and the average respondents expected a degree of familiarity and stimulation with the writing topics for a better EFL Writing performance. In addition to topic knowledge, task constraint was also connected with linguistic impediment, a point that triggered many difficulties for the participants.

➤ **Linguistic Impediment**

Linguistic impediment was the next subcategory that 25% of the high achieving, 41% of the average, and 100% of the low achieving participants showed an account of awareness about. Limited linguistic background was viewed as a one of the prime constraining factors that precluded the participants from carrying out their EFL Writing tasks effectively. Expressing doubt regarding their ability to write satisfactorily essays, the participants' answers were commonly related to *limited lexical and vocabulary size, poor command of grammatical rules, and spelling mistakes*. (See table 5.7).

Content analysis revealed a frequency of occurrence regarding vocabulary and lexical constraints among 25% of the high achieving, 33, 3% of the average, and 50% of the low achieving participants. For the low achieving participants, EFL Writing was a constant hurdle because of their limited vocabulary size as remarked by one participant: “May be the obstacles I have is [...] lack of vocabulary strong vocabulary maybe” (MR2).

Concern for vocabulary constraint among the average participants was much related to their focus on using complex and sophisticated vocabularies that are highly required in academic writing tasks. In this regard, one participant commented the following: “The academic words; we read less Academic articles. So we have less academic vocabulary so you find it difficult to find the academic vocabulary so we replace it with normal vocabulary” (MR8).

Concerning the high achieving participants, vocabulary was viewed as a constraint mainly due to their dissatisfaction regarding their lexical background knowledge, which required further efforts. The extract below from a high achieving participant is representative of such a perception: “[...] Sometimes we want much to be like in high level to use an effective vocabulary to try to touch the reader who's going to read our writings to be more effective” (DJ2).

Closely related to vocabulary impediment was the incorrect use of grammatical rules. 8, 3% of the average participants found it difficult to apply grammatical rules in their writings as noted by FD2: “Sticking to grammar rules is another obstacle; sometimes you feel like writing whatever comes to your mind; put it the way you [...] feel like you are writing the way you are thinking”.

As indicated by the frequency of occurrence, spelling mistake was the least mentioned constraint. This knowledge was reported by 12, 5% of the high achieving participants and 8, 3% of the average informants. One high achieving participant provided an account of awareness about the reason why she struggled with few

spelling mistakes in her EFL Writing tasks: “[...] I have obstacles in spelling. I forgot the simple words because I'm not using them anymore it's deleted from my memory. Also I think it refers to my English is acquired from watching more than from reading” (TH2).

Apart from linguistic difficulties, teachers' instructions was another constraint related to task constraint.

➤ **Teachers Instructions**

Teachers' instruction was considered as an impediment in terms of two major aspects. The first aspect was concerned with the different approaches the writing teachers adopted in teaching EFL Writing skill. The second one was much more related to the imposed instructions exerted by EFL Writing teachers on their learners' writing tasks. This was viewed by the participants as a impeding the smoothness of their ideas.

This constraint was reported by 25% of the high achieving, 25% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants. The different approaches used by teachers in teaching EFL Writing was reported to create confusion among learners, who claimed being exposed to different teaching methods and EFL Writing theories. The extract below of a high achieving subject is representative of such a reflection:

Among the obstacles is these differences between assumptions and theories [...] each teacher has followed, and sometimes if I am used to one, and that suddenly the teacher imposes me to ‘ no in the introduction I want you to write like this’, but I can't do like this because I get used to this one (RM1).

Difference between teachers' teaching methods and approaches were reported to affect negatively the participants' flow of ideas as noted by one high achieving respondent:“ The approach of the teacher, concerning not just the organization and

the relationship of ideas, but also in terms of mechanics, punctuation [...] these things stop the flow of your ideas, that's it" (RM1).

The imposed teaching instruction was another aspect relevant to task constraint. 25% of the high achieving informants referred to this point as restricting their free self-expression of ideas. In such a controlled learning environment, they found it impossible to develop their topic the way they intended. Complaining from this teaching practices, LY1, a high achieving participant, commented the following: "Sometimes you want to narrow the topic the way you want based on the ideas and your perceptions towards the topic, but you just can't make it because again you depend on the specific instruction" (LY1).

In addition to task constraint, another most revealing factor of task knowledge is related to the participants' understanding of EFL Writing task purpose.

- **Task Purpose**

Task purpose stands for an understanding of the purpose of EFL Writing task. Content analysis of the interview revealed the following emerging subcategories: *audience understanding, and focus on content.*

- **Audience Understanding**

Audience awareness or "Knowledge of keeping the readers in mind while writing" (Yu-Ling You and Shih-Guey Joe, 2001, p.9) is considered as a key factor in EFL Writing process. This awareness implies keeping in mind that one's own writing is designed to a real and targeted audience. Writing with real purposes in mind is recommended for an effective EFL Writing to be produced. In doing so, learners are likely to attribute equal importance to both content as well as structure of their EFL Writing compositions.

The participants' knowledge about their audience was assessed through question seven in the focus group interview protocol: 'Who do you think will read

your essay?’ .The examination of the participants’ transcripts revealed that attracting the reader’s attention was expressed by 95, 8% of the participants as the primary focus in their EFL Writing compositions. However, when being required to identify ‘their readers’ precisely, 87, 5% of them did not show a keen sense of audience. A low achieving participant’s extract is illustrative of such a perception: “So when I have mentioned reader in my previous records, I mentioned myself as a reader because I most of the time read more than write” (KR8).

The same point was expressed by one high achieving informant who conceived EFL Writing as one shot effort: “I basically write to myself that’s it” (YS1). Thus, the frequent mention of the audience in the participants’ statements does not necessarily mean they possess a metacognitive awareness about it.

As revealed by content analysis, audience understanding was reported with respect to three main aspects: *vague understanding of audience*, *limited understanding of audience*, and *large number of audience*. 12, 5% of the high achieving, 33, 3% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving displayed a vague sense of audience, referring to unknown and anonymous readers. As assumed by one average subject, any person can read what she writes: “I try to use metaphor and some symbols sometimes in order that a foreigner or a stranger, a total stranger, while reading my writing” (SR1).

The same perception was revealed by one low achieving participant: “Sometimes if you will write about something, the audience or the reader would be our society in social media” (KR1).

Limited audience was another recurring aspect of audience understanding. Since 12, 5% of the high achieving, 33, 3%% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving informants viewed their teachers as the primary readers and assessors of their written works, it seemed difficult for these participants to become audience aware. The following extract of a low achieving participant is an example of such a

reflection: “I write only for our teacher who is going to assess this piece of writing” (KR1). Another high achieving participant commented the same idea: “Teachers; all my essays are being read by teachers » (YS1). A similar response was reported by an average respondent: “So when it comes to academic writing I write for the teacher and for a specific person [...] for a specific person to comment or to assess my work” (SR2).

As another potential audience, family, friends, and peers accounted for the most common responses provided by two high, four average, and one low achieving participants. One high achieving participant explained: “I do write poems but for perhaps my close friends, for my family members, for teachers” (SL1).

Concern for a large audience was another recurrent aspect of audience consideration with fourteen mentioned codes. Although five (62,5%) high achieving and three (25%) average participants reported considering different audiences according to situations and contexts.

In addition to audience consideration, task knowledge was closely related to the focus the participants’ put on content and ideas.

➤ **Focus on Content and Ideas**

To assess the participants’ knowledge about their primary focus during their writing activities, they were asked question number six in the focus group interview protocol: ‘Before writing an essay, what do you try to focus on first?’. The findings unravelled that only 75% of the high achieving and 41% of the average participants focused attention on content and ideas in their EFL Writing compositions. This was achieved through selecting the relevant ideas. One average participant commented on this point: “The first thing I focus on is the subject ; I read the subject I am going to write about, and then I focus on [...] what are the main ideas that I should focus on and highlight, and the other stuff comes easily” (ZB7).

The importance of ideas organization was also highlighted by 37, 3% of the high achieving participants. Their responses revealed their focus on the creation of logical relationship between ideas. As one of the respondent interestingly described:

The first thing I focused on before I started writing is ideas in general. So concerning the language or grammar or tenses. I don't have a problem with that [...]. So generally, I just write the ideas randomly and then I start organizing them (SB1).

In addition to task purpose, task knowledge was also connected to task demand.

• **Task Demand**

As a salient component of task knowledge, task demand involves an understanding of the requirements needed for completing a written task successfully (Wenden, 1991). In this context, the skilful learners are expected to have insights into resources, strategies, and conventions needed for an efficient production of EFL Writing activity.

In the context of this study, the coding process revealed the participants' knowledge of task demand with respect to their awareness of *steps of writing process (EFL essay & EFL paragraph), text content, importance of linguistic resources, and mechanics.*

➤ **Writing Process (EFL Essay and EFL Paragraph)**

The most revealing and mentioned aspect of EFL Writing process involved EFL essay structure, thesis statement, organization pattern, paragraph structure, and coherence and unity . Based on the recorded interview, 78, 5% of the high achieving, 58% of the average, and 50% of the low achieving participants showed familiarity with introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion as the main components of EFL essay structure. As one high achieving participant emphasized, these elements were crucial for the achievement of a good piece of writing:

For me the first impact that would attract me about a good and excellent writing is that the structure I would look for the shape of the structure if it is worth if they keep the linear for the introduction the body and the conclusion (DJ2).

In addition to EFL essay structure, establishing a thesis statement was reported by 37,5% of the high achieving, 41,6% of the average, and 50% of the low achieving as one of the writing conventions they acquired by their EFL Writing teachers. One high achieving informant provided an account of awareness of the definition and components of a thesis statement.

A good thesis statement [...] it has to pave the way for the rest of the essay, I need to know, it must give me hints about the body paragraphs, so it must contain a controlling ideas ; it must be clearly stated (RM1).

Another recurrent convention reported by the participants was connected with logical organization pattern. 37, 5% of the high achieving and 41, 6% of the average participants emphasized this significance of EFL Writing aspect. For one high achieving participant, the effective use of logical organization such as block organization was instrumental for a successful EFL Writing composition: “The organization of the essays is very important; block organization or chain organization, and each organization tends to have a specific words and junctions to link between ideas and move towards others” (AB7).

Logical organization of ideas was also associated to the effective use of coherence in creating smoothness between ideas in a written text. In this regard, one average informant expressed : “The use of transitional signals the coherence concerning the flow of your idea that they should be smoothly. I mean that when you move from one idea to another you should have a smooth shift” (AZ1).

The participants' knowledge regarding EFL Writing structure also encompassed their understanding of the main elements regarding EFL paragraph. 50% of the high achieving, 41, 6% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants expressed their familiarity with topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences as the major building blocks of EFL paragraph. In this regard, one high achieving participant expressed: "The key elements like for a paragraph, you have the topic sentence, you have the supporting ideas, and the concluding sentence" (LY1).

Task demand was also connected with the participants' understanding of the importance of a good content in achieving quality EFL Writing.

➤ Text Content

Regarding the conventions and demands of a good piece of writing, priority was attributed next to content. The overall answers of 41, 6% participants were mainly related to the clarity of ideas and the attractiveness and originality of a written text.

For 12, 5% of the high achieving, 16, 6% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants, clarity of ideas could significantly determine the quality of any written text. The following extract selected from the focus group interview is illustrative of such a perception:

What makes a good essay is that when you read an essay, you understand; [...] it highlights what the author wants you to understand from him. I think that's what make a good piece of writing for me (AB7).

Another low achieving informant provided a general understanding regarding the importance of writing content: "A good content is always a good writing" (MR2).

Good text content was attributed by the participants to the attractiveness of ideas. High attention so far was paid to the notion of attraction in a written text as an appealing and a highly required aspect . 25% of the high achieving and 8, 3% of the average participants stressed this point. For example, SB1, a high achieving informant said in the interview : “A good piece of writing is when a reader starts reading he finds that he has to finish the piece of writing because he feels he is so attracted to that piece of writing. So this is very important for me” .

In addition, authenticity and originality of ideas were viewed as one of the most demanded aspects for achieving high level text quality. This point was noted specifically by one high achieving participant:

I'm looking for an original thinker not follower. I like those who bring and extrapolate their own thoughts and ideas and those who do not copy or imitate others. I look for. Critical Thinkers also those who have that personal touch in an essay (TH2).

From the focus on content as a requisite for good written work, emphasis shifted away toward the emphasis on the linguistic resources as one of the rhetorical aspects of EFL Writing texts.

➤ **Importance of Linguistic Resources**

Based on the frequency of occurrence, it seemed clear that task demand was closely related to the participants’ awareness of the linguistic resources. As an attempt to avoid monotonous style, writers adopt a variety of formulaic linguistic expressions, encompassing sentence structures, sophisticated words, figurative language, and canonical expressions. Emphasis so far was put by 45, 8% of the participants on the crucial role of the rhetorical aspect in promoting EFL learners’ Writing performance.

When queried about what makes good writing in question four in the focus group interview, 62, 5% of the high achieving, and 50% of the average participants stressed the importance of the *rich diction and sophisticated words* as noted by one high achieving participant: «A good piece of writing is the writing that uses beautiful language » (SB1). A rhetorical language that conveys messages in a beautiful way is as important as the content of a written work itself. The following extract of one high achieving participant is an example of such a reflection:

A good piece of writing should be a mixture of a flow of ideas ; it needs to be backed with a good grammar, words, vocabulary, when you read, you like what you are reading, especially the aesthetic looks of it, not only the structure ones but also the kind of words that are used (AB7).

In the above extract, the linguistic resources were understood as an aesthetic and an artistic form of the text. Stress was mainly put on the selection of the strong and the appropriate wording. As a part of the aesthetic form of written texts, phrasal verbs were believed to enhance EFL Writing quality and attract the audience attention. The following comment from a high achieving participant provides an insight about this point:

One more thing about impression. As we have learned previously with our writing teachers about phrasal verbs and idioms, we can use them so they make our essay beautiful and make it make it has a good content (DJ2).

In addition to linguistic resources, another aspect of task demand mentioned by the participants was connected with concern for mechanics.

➤ **Concern for Mechanics**

As indicated by the frequency of mention (10 codes) in the transcribed interview, a salient subcategory of task demand was connected with mechanics. 29, 1% of the participants had expressed extensively the importance they attribute to mechanics in EFL Writing, namely transitional signals, linking words, and punctuation.

The data showed that 25% of the high achieving and 33,3% of the average participants considered transitional signals and linking words as prerequisites for an effective performance of a coherent and well organized piece of writing. Having such a perception in mind, DJ2, a high achieving participant, explained: “I insist on the linking words also, so they make my essay more effective and let the reader feel that I was confident and that I am competent about when I wrote”.

Closely related to linking words was punctuation. This was reported by 16, 5% of the average and 25% of the low achieving participants as a highly required condition for achieving quality EFL Writing production. In this regard, MR8, an average participant, commented the following: “So we should know how to punctuate a paragraph. Some people use punctuation as a decoration of the paragraph. They don't respect it”.

Apart from task knowledge, strategy knowledge is another category that describes the participants' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing.

5.2.3 Perceptions of Strategy Knowledge

Strategy knowledge refers to the knowledge stored in EFL learners' memories regarding the strategies that can assist them in producing better EFL Writing performance. The learners' level of awareness concerning the strategies that need to be deployed is likely to determine how best they may make a better use of the accessible learning strategies they know. This may enable them to cope with the

difficulties associated to a set of cognitive learning tasks. Not surprisingly then, the more EFL learners have metacognitive awareness about learning strategies, the more they are likely to have a good mastery of them, thereby, produce high quality written texts.

In the context of EFL Writing, this knowledge refers to learners' understanding of EFL Writing strategies like planning and revising. The participants' strategy knowledge was examined by means of questions 8 'What are the steps you usually follow while writing an essay?' and question 9 'if you are given a second chance to re-write this essay, what are the changes you will make?' in the focus group interview protocol.

The results concerning the participants' strategy knowledge obtained from the coding process will be presented to answer the third sub-research question:

Sub-question Two: What are the emerging subcategories of strategy knowledge in EFL Writing revealed by the high, the average, and the low achieving ENSB students?

Planning and revising are the two primary predetermined categories relative to the participants' strategy knowledge. The emergent subcategories pertaining to *planning strategies* are: *planning an essay*, *moving from easy to difficult*, and *writing as telling*. Substantive revision and cosmetic correction of language are the two emerging subcategories relative to the participants' *revising strategies*.

The number of mentions and the percentages of each category and subcategory are detailed in table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Strategy Knowledge among the High, the Average, and the Low Achieving Participants

Categories and Sub-categories	High Achieving		Average		Low Achieving	
	N of mention	%	N of mention	%	N of mention	%
1 Planning and Generating Planning an essay Starting with the most important part. Writing as Telling	25	42,3%	30	50,8%	4	6,7%
	4	23,5%	11	64,7%	2	11,7%
	2	50%	2	50%	0	0
2 Evaluation and Revision Substantive revision Cosmetic correction of language	10	45,4%	10	45,4%	2	9,09%
	6	31,5%	8	42,1%	5	26,3%
Total :	47	38,8%	61	50,4%	13	10,7%

What is immediately clear from this data is that the total codes 121 illustrates the number of times the categories and subcategories were mentioned by the participants. Looking at the total number of codes per participants with the three different proficiency levels, it can be noted that clear differences in the number of instances are shown. More instances of metacognitive knowledge statements were produced by the average informants, making over 50, 4% codes. This was followed by the high achieving participants' number of codes which accounted for 38, 8% mentions. Finally, the lower instances of occurrence with only 10, 7% of all codes were produced by the low achieving participants.

As revealed in the table, an increase in mentions was in *planning category*, which accounted for 66,1% of all coding instances in comparison with *evaluation category* with 33,8% mentions.

To have a better insight into what the numeric instances shown in table 5.8 indicate, the participants' verbatim will be presented based on the frequency of mentions.

- **Planning and Generating**

As a major aspect of strategy metacognitive knowledge, planning constitutes one of the salient areas of differences between expert writers and novice ones. The production of high quality EFL Writing requires a constant use and shift from planning to organization of ideas.

To examine the participants' knowledge regarding planning strategies and how are these used by them, question number 8 was asked in the focus group interview: 'What are the steps you usually follow when writing an essay?'

The participants' reported answers involved a range of steps and actions that are frequently used during the writing process. These involve *planning an essay*, *starting with easiest part*, and *writing as telling strategy*.

- **Planning an Essay**

Planning an essay was the most frequently mentioned subcategory yielded by content analysis of the transcribed focus group interview. Making over 59 mentions in the data, it was found that the participants tended to use eight steps when engaged in planning their essays. Such steps are *organizing an essay*, *brainstorming*, *drafting*, *outlining*, and *linking ideas*.

Organizing an essay was a major planning strategy reported by 62, 5% of the high achieving and 41, 6% of the average participants. The overall common comments reflected by the high achieving and the average informants involved following logical order in planning their ideas. A good example of this was what one average participant asserted about shifting from the weakest points to the strongest

ones or vice versa to organize her ideas: “So I choose the topic, then, I uh, I write ideas about that topic, then, I organize those ideas either from the weakest to the strongest or through chronological order” (YS2).

In another extract, one high achieving participant provided far more than the definition of the strategy as she attempted to explain the reason why she adopted it in her EFL Writing essays: “I will get some of the strongest ideas and the weakest ideas. Yeah. I do them in order. I start with the strong idea to let the reader gets into what I'm writing and I would focus on in the essay” (DJ2).

Moving from general ideas to specific ones was also regarded by two high achieving and one average participants as a needed step for planning their ideas. One average participant commented on this point in details when referring to the timed essay she was required to perform in the focus group interview in the current study:

In my essay, I moved also from general to specific which is obvious. I talked about first the types of students who are going to me during our whole career and then I moved to two specific details or two specific kinds which are the autonomous students and the dependent student and then I jumped to the body paragraph (IM8).

Additionally, numbering was another revealing step adopted by one high achieving participant, who displayed an account of awareness of. The following extract is an example of her reflection on the point:

I don't write directly I put down every idea, and I start numbering, it's weird but I do it; I start numbering all the ideas that are interrelated with one another; I try to link them; number them; this should in the first paragraph, then all the ideas that interlinked but are different from the first, I number them second, second paragraph, and then I start writing directly, the first paragraph and the second paragraph (RM1).

Following the frequency of mention, brainstorming and generating ideas were other salient aspects of planning subcategory. The analysis of the transcriptions revealed that 37, 5% of the high achieving, 41, 6% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participant expressed their familiarity with brainstorming as a strategy that is frequently introduced by their teachers in their EFL Writing sessions. One high achieving participants explains: “I use the methods that my teacher X taught us; for example brainstorming, I write the topic and the subtitles” (DJ1).

Brainstorming was even considered as an action of generating and arranging ideas. An interesting point was that this step was found to be helpful to plan, organize, and structure ideas as remarked by one average participant:

The first step we all do is the brainstorming [...] I brainstorm ideas that I identify which ideas should be in the introductory paragraph and the ideas that should be included in the body paragraphs and the ones that should be including the conclusion. Because I write too much ideas » (IM8).

Listing and free writing were reported as two major steps employed sometimes simultaneously in *brainstorming* ideas. These were perceived as effective strategies allowing the participants generate a cluster of ideas about a given topic and structure them in an essay. Two participants commented on the use of listing and free writing as processes they deploy frequently when being committed to the writing task. SR1, an average participant pointed out: « I actually start by listing ideas, all my ideas, and then but somehow I end up by free writing ».

Another high achieving informant commented the following:

Brainstorming is one of the conventions ; I brainstorm the information using a free writing just write whatever comes to my mind ; I write down then I reorganize what I have written in a form of a well-structured essay (SL1).

As a preliminary stage in developing a cohesive text, *drafting* was reported as another step used by the participants during the writing process. Two high achieving participants viewed drafting as a step through which they could structure their final written products efficiently. As one high achieving informant expressed: “[...] Writing the first draft, in which I will be taking into consideration the structure of the essay” (LY1).

Another high achieving respondent explained the importance of drafting in the organization of her final ideas: « Actually , I asked for three draft papers to write the introduction in one day and the body in the second and the conclusion in the last one » (DJ2).

In the following extract, one low achieving participant was confused between drafting and brainstorming. According to her, drafting was synonymous to eliciting relevant ideas, which, in fact, is a feature of brainstorming strategy: “Then when it comes to write an academic one; like I write down in my draft paper just the important idea and that's one is related to the topic » (KR1).

In addition to drafting, planning and generating category was also connected with *outlining*. Not all the participants could view the benefit of using this strategy in their writing since it was reported to be frequently used by two (25%) of the high achieving and three (25%) of the average participants. The usage of the strategy seemed lacking within the low achieving participants’ transcribed statements. Using an outline was assumed to help the participants budget time as noted by one average informant:

When I have a short time and I have outlined in front of me it's easy for me because it's organized. I just have to write the sentences because I have already the ideas. So the outline really helped me to save time a lot (AZ1).

Another high achieving subject reported using mind map when planning his ideas rather using the draft.

I don't need another sheet of writing (he probably means: draft). In my brain, I just think of the main topic and what 'is going on, the structure of my essay is going to be, how you divide your ideas, your essays; how many paragraphs (AB7).

In another statement, he commented:

I don't know if you call it a strategy since it is weird and out of the norm, but the way we organize our essays, it is definitely done mentally ; we have mental visions of how things are going to be like, so we don't need to write everything on the draft and follow the exact procedures (AB7).

Although AB7 could provide an account of awareness of how, why, and under which situation he was using a mind map in a lengthy explanation, he could not verbalize the strategy. This denotes his lack of awareness regarding the strategies he is using in EFL Writing, which was the case of most of the participants.

Linking the developing ideas through transitions was the next revealing step pertaining to planning and generating category. Two (12, 5%) of the high achieving and one (8, 33%) of the average participants highlighted the important use of these connectors in writing.

In EFL Writing, learners' ability to write effectively is usually assessed in their capacity not only to produce a good and rich content but also to perform a cohesive work. This implies using appropriately discourse markers such as linking words and transitional phrases, which is likely to reveal the relationship between the developed ideas in a written text. Such a conception seemed to be clear for two (12, 5%) high achieving participants. The idea was highlighted by one participant in the following

extract: “I’ll be starting with transition word or expression in order to make it unified not separated” (DJ2).

Another informant commented on the steps she followed to establish clear relationship between ideas, hence produce a cohesive written work:

Before constructing sentences I select the ideas I want to show that are appropriate for the topic. Of course there would be irrelevant ideas which would be omitted. Then I construct sentences after constructing these sentences. I try to relate them using linking words and transition words and then forming of course a paragraph (TH2).

Besides essay planning, starting with the easiest part to efficiently perform a writing task was another mentioned aspect with respect to planning and generating category.

➤ **Starting with the Most Important Part**

The participants’ strategic knowledge about planning and generating also encompassed information regarding the writing parts they preferred to start with for a better EFL Writing performance. The common reported statements evolved around three major essays parts, encompassing frequent concerns for *introduction and body paragraphs*.

The examination of the participants’ knowledge revealed that 25% of the high achieving and four 33, 3% of the average viewed *introduction* as the most important part in essay writing , namely in terms of content. In this regard, one high achieving participant highlighted the necessity to make the introduction attractive for the reader:

[...] The content must be enough and sufficient in writing my introductions. It's kind of in a warming up for the things I'm going to talk about in my body paragraph [introduction] must be so fascinating

and so attractive » (TH2).

Given such an importance, writing introduction was claimed to require both time and efforts. Such a perception was expressed by an average respondent:

I give the introduction a lot of time even if I can't find the words, I make sure it is correct ; it is beautiful to attract my reader and if I write a good coherent introduction, I can move easily to the body paragraphs, and so my ideas get organized in my head very easily (ZB7).

Following the frequency of occurrence, another recorded step used by three participants in their written tasks was concerned with body paragraphs. Three participants, among whom was one high achieving, one was average, and one was low achieving. Three of them expressed familiarity with starting with body paragraphs first as one average participant claimed: “For me, I always start with the body paragraph [...] I write down ideas because I know that if I don't write them at that instant, I will forget them, so I start to write the supporting ideas” (FD2).

For a low achieving subject, the body paragraph was meant to gathering knowledge concerning the topic: « In my in my writing, I start with the body paragraph I start gathering information about the topic » (KA1).

Another subcategory related to planning and generating category was connected to *writing as telling mind*.

➤ **Writing as Telling**

Planning and generating category was also represented in the frequent mention of, *writing as telling mind* as a key subcategory. Being mentioned by 37,5% of the high achieving, 50% of the average, and 50% of the low achieving participants, this knowledge was defined as a spontaneous way of generating ideas whereby learners jotted down all the ideas that popped into their minds in their draft papers. This

involves telling all they knew regarding the required topic instead of transforming the information they had in mind.

Writing as telling reflected the influence of past teaching on the participants' writing behaviours. Thus, the use of this strategy was attributed to the instruction provided by their EFL Writing teachers. The following extracts expressed by one high and one average participants are illustrative in this regard: “ The steps I follow generally just jotting down ideas at first” (RM1); “Like our teachers taught us first. I start by jotting down my ideas” (RM2).

In addition to planning and generating, another major strategy revealed in the participants' transcripts is closely related with evaluation and revision strategies.

• **Evaluation and Revision**

A potent subcategory of strategic knowledge was associated with evaluation and revision. Based on the data analysis, the repertoire of revising being referred to by 83, 3% of the participants was closely related to *substantive revision* and *cosmetic correction of the language* as two broad revealed aspects.

➤ **Substantive Revision**

Substantive revision refers to reading and refining the written text at the level of ideas. 75% of the high achieving, 66,6% of the average, and 25% of the low achieving participants' reported their focus on evaluating the content of their written works through changing some ideas and reorganizing some others. The following extract is a sample of reflection of a high achieving participant on this point: “I would add some ideas and also consider the organization because I have this problem because I'm not I'm never satisfied with the organization” (SB1).

In addition to ideas development, *changing words and vocabularies* was another revealing aspect of substantive revision. 25,5% of the high achieving and

16,6% of the average participants reported that revising the appropriate words served the purpose of attracting the audience as noted by on average participant : “I guess I would add more sophisticated words like fancy words, they attract me as a reader” (FD2).

Another high achieving informant asserted that if her work was performed for an academic purpose, she would add more adequate language: “I will if I'm writing an academic essay, I would look for a more professional and formal words was changing my words my thoughts” (DJ2).

As a major aspect of substantive revision, recursive revision (Kietlinska, 2006) was reported being used by 12, 5% of the high achieving informants. Recursive revision is not performed when the written text has reached its final form. Verifications and necessary changes like crossing out the inappropriate vocabulary and adding others are rather performed during every step of the writing process. . One high achieving participant reflected on this point: “The idea should be changed before you write the proper, the final draft that is going to be given to the teacher” (AB7).

In addition to substantive revision, another revision aspect, which was frequently mentioned, was associated with cosmetic correction of language.

➤ **Cosmetic Correction of Language**

An interesting point was that when being asked about the changes they bring about in their writing products if they were given a second chance, 25% of the high achieving, 50% of the average, and 75% of the low achieving revealed their focus on *cosmetic correction of the language*. This involved particularly editing the surface level of the text by checking language accuracy and mechanics, namely grammar, punctuation, and spelling as noted by one low achieving participant: “If I had a chance to rewrite or edit my essay, I will like revise the structure of the sentences and

also the grammar mistakes, spelling and so on and the punctuation” (KA1).

Stress on the surface level of the text was likely to enable the participants produce grammatically clean texts, namely for the teacher as their main examiner and audience. They commonly attributed their reluctance to revise their written texts to their intention to avoid exploring deeply their ideas. This is mainly because they were afraid to find mistakes such as mismatches between their intended ideas and the actual thoughts already expressed in their essays. In this regard, one average participant commented the following:

I don't do too much revising, just one reading ; it's enough to check some grammar mistakes because when you focus on the ideas, you are going to say like ' I want to change this and that', so I don't do too much revising (RW7).

Regarding text revision, a similar reflection was made by one high achieving informant. However, she claimed being confident in her ideas development, thus less changes regarding the content would be performed in the original plan. Her focus would rather be put on checking spelling mistakes:

May be because when I'm writing an exam, I'll be confused [...] I'll be making spelling mistakes and because of stress, I wouldn't have noticed. So may be spelling mistakes but the structure or may be the ideas or I'll be satisfied about them (TH2).

In summary, content analysis revealed that the participants' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing is represented in three dimensions; person, task, and strategy knowledge. This knowledge seemed to be influenced by the teaching context at ENSB. This influence was displayed by their increased anxiety towards academic EFL Writing and the teaching methods, their limited sense of audience in task knowledge, and their lack of awareness about EFL Writing strategies use, namely planning and revision.

5.4 Conclusion

The fifth chapter explored ENSB EFL Third Year participants' perceptions of readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. By analysing the data collected from a focus group interview, this study has obtained a set of major findings. The participants' perceptions to their roles revealed the use of outdoors activities, namely EFL reading and Writing to promote their EFL Writing performance. Actions such as comparing between their old and new pieces of writing and receiving feedback from expert others were found to be the only self-assessment strategies used, notably by the high achieving and the average participants. Furthermore, data suggests that technical and psycho-social supports as two functions reminiscent of the teacher's role as a facilitator were highlighted by the high achieving and half of the average participants'. However, a more dependent view towards the teacher's role as a supplier of knowledge was displayed by the low achieving and the average informants. Additionally, qualitative findings indicated that the high achieving and the average informants enjoyed the differences and the complementarity existing between EFL Writing learning process and the other types of learning studied at ENSB. EFL Writing skill was, however, conceptualized by the low achieving participants as a laborious process requiring the mastery of language complex structure and writing strategies. The participants' understanding of task knowledge was demonstrated in terms of their knowledge about task constraint, task purpose, and task demand. Participants' constraint in EFL Writing arose from rigid EFL Writing structure, time constraint, topic knowledge, linguistic impediment, and EFL Writing teachers' different approaches and instructions. Concern for task purpose was manifested mainly in the participants' frequent mention of audience understanding, of which most of them didn't show a keen sense. Task demand findings were closely related to the participants' knowledge regarding the conventions of EFL essays and paragraphs, content, linguistic resources, and mechanics. The participants' understanding of strategy knowledge was displayed through essays planning steps,

starting with the most important part, and writing as telling approach. Substantive revision and cosmetic correction were the two major subcategories that define the participants' knowledge about revision strategies.

CHAPTER SIX:

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS OF PHASE TWO

6.1 Introduction:

This quantitative chapter aims at investigating the statistical relationships between the variables obtained from qualitative data in phase one. Therefore, findings of this chapter (phase II) are presented in the light of four sections. In the first section, the levels of the participants' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are examined through descriptive statistics. In section two, independent sample T-test analysis is conducted to investigate any significant statistical difference between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge in terms of their proficiency levels. The third section in this chapter describes the correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) that is carried out to measure the strength of association between the three variables; the participants' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels. To further understand this relationship, a regression analysis is performed in section four. The findings are presented in the same order followed in the research questions guiding phase II of this thesis.

6.2 Findings Concerning the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy Level

The major objective of the first research question is to investigate the level of readiness for autonomy of the 125 Third Year students at ENSB Bouzareah-Algiers. The data concerning this question are collected through section one (LRAQ) in a five-point Likert Scale, involving 26 items. Descriptive statistics are performed to present the overall status of the participants' readiness for autonomy in terms of their perceptions of their roles, their perceptions of their teachers' roles, and their perceptions of EFL Writing. Table 6.1 displays the means and the standard deviations of the participants' responses.

Regarding the participants' perceptions of their roles, it can be drawn from the data that more than one third (39, 5%) of them seldom write in English at home with a moderate rated mean of 3, 03 (SD=1, 16) in (Item 3); whereas, the majority (64, 8%)

of the respondents seem to be highly ready ($M=3,73$, $SD=1,01$) to practice EFL Writing outside their classrooms context (Item 2). The highest rated item with the mean of 4,61 ($SD=0,61$) is item 1, so drawn from the responses of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’, the majority (95%) of the participants attribute utmost value to the reading activity as a major step to enhance the performance of their EFL Writing skills. Item 5 closely follows item 3 with the mean of 4,17 ($SD=1,03$), where the informants’ (80%) state their strong agreement to foster their EFL Writing through watching English movies and documentaries.

Responses to item 6 reflect the considerable importance that the majority (62%) of the informants attach to the effectiveness of communication with native speakers ($M=3,69$, $SD=1,18$) in fostering their EFL Writing performance. On the other hand, in item 7, slightly less than half of the informants (48%) show a moderate willingness to promote their Writing skills through communicating with expert writers in English ($M=3,38$, $SD=1,15$).

Regarding their roles in assessing their EFL Writing production, the mean score in items 8 and 14 are rated high with the means of 3,90 ($SD=0,99$) and 3,71 ($SD=0,88$) respectively; while item 11 is moderately rated ($M=3,46$, $SD=1,05$). This means that although the majority (77%) of the participants value the use of self-assessment as a step that is conducive to effective EFL Writing process, slightly over half of them do not think they are ready enough to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, the overall responses of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ indicate that a large majority of the participants (89,6%) appear to be fond ($M=4,38$, $SD=0,78$) of receiving feedback on their written works from competent people (Item 9).

Regarding the participants’ perceptions of their teachers’ roles, item 18 is rated the highest ($M=4,64$, $SD=0,60$) by the majority (97,6%) of the informants who highly expect their teacher to create a positive learning environment to study EFL

Writing. This is closely followed by item 10 with the mean of 4, 62 (SD=0, 62), showing that 120 out of 125 informants highly desire to receive teachers' constructive feedback on their written works.

As indicated in table 6.1, the two items 12 and 15 are rated high with similar means of 4, 42 (SD=0, 60), 4, 42 (SD=0, 65), respectively. This suggests that the majority (94, 4% and 92,8%) of the participants need to be provided with both sample texts and EFL Writing strategies to foster their written productions.

Also, drawn from the responses of 'strongly agree' and 'agree', the participants' reliance on their language teachers to correct their writing mistakes (Item 21), to help them see their progress (Item 22), and to identify both their strengths and weaknesses in EFL Writing (Item 23) are all rated low with the means of 1,63 (SD=0,71), 1,70 (SD=0,71), and 1,70 (SD=0,69) respectively. This reveals that approximately 89,6% of the informants are ready to rely less on their language teachers. This is shown clearly in the disagreement of approximately half of the participants with the idea of the teacher as the major agent in the learning situation in item 19, falling in the average level (M=3, 20, SD=1, 09).

Nevertheless, 90, 4% of the participants long (M=4,21, SD= 0, 60) to be provided with opportunities to assess their own written works (Item 13). Both of items 16 and 17 are also rated as high with similar means of 4, 31 (SD=0, 77), 4, 31 (SD=0, 83) by the majority of the participants, who expect their teachers to function both as psychological and technical supports. Additionally, 102 out of 125 respondents highly agree (M=4, 10, SD=0, 77) with item 20, which concerns a willingness to be provided with a challenging learning atmosphere in EFL Writing classrooms.

Table 6.1 : Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
1) Perception of Their Role :													
1) I have to read in English (e.g. books, novels, articles) to progress in my writing skills.	0	0,0%	1	0,8%	5	4,0%	36	29%	83	66,4%	4,61	0,61	Very high
2) I usually write in English at home.	3	2,4%	13	10,4%	28	22,4%	52	42%	29	23,2%	3,73	1,01	High
3) I seldom write in English at home.	12	9,6%	33	26,4%	31	24,8%	37	29,6%	12	10%	3,03	1,16	Average
4) I find it difficult to study English writing on my own.	11	8,8%	35	28,0%	30	24,0%	32	25,6%	17	14%	3,07	1,20	Average
5) I watch and listen to English movies and documentaries to improve my writing skills.	2	1,6%	11	8,8%	12	9,6%	39	31%	61	48,8%	4,17	1,03	High
6) I talk to native speakers in English to improve my English Writing.	3	2,4%	25	20,0%	19	15,2%	39	31%	39	31,2%	3,69	1,18	High
7) I use internet in English to communicate with expert writers.	7	5,6%	23	18,4%	35	28,0%	36	29%	24	19,2%	3,38	1,15	Average
8) I assess my progress by comparing my old pieces of writing in English with my new ones.	2	1,6%	9	7,2%	29	23,2%	45	36%	40	32,0%	3,90	0,99	High
9) I like receiving feedback on my progress from significant people (e.g. teachers, family, and mates).	0	0,0%	5	4,0%	8	6,4%	46	37%	66	52,8%	4,38	0,78	High
10) I would like the teacher to give clear feedback about my weaknesses and strengths in English Writing.	0	0,0%	2	1,6%	3	2,4%	35	28,0%	85	68,0%	4,62	0,62	Very high
11) I can identify my own weaknesses and strengths in English Writing.	4	3,2%	22	17,6%	30	24,0%	50	40%	19	15,2%	3,46	1,05	High

Table 6.1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy (Continued)

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
2) Perceptions of Teachers' Roles													
12) I think the teacher should give me opportunities to learn about learning strategies in English Writing.	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	7	5,6%	59	47,2%	59	47,2%	4,42	0,60	High
13) I think the teacher should give me opportunities to assess my progress in English Writing.	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	12	9,6%	75	60,0%	38	30,4%	4,21	0,60	High
14) I think I am able to assess the progress I made in English Writing.	1	0,8%	11	8,8%	32	25,6%	60	48%	21	16,8%	3,71	0,88	High
15) I find it helpful if the teacher provides with me sample essays to follow.	0	0,0%	1	0,8%	8	6,4%	53	42,4%	63	50,4%	4,42	0,65	High
16) I find it helpful if the teacher gives me homework to increase my practice in English Writing.	0	0,0%	4	3,2%	11	8,8%	52	41,6%	58	46,4%	4,31	0,77	High
17) Teacher's motivation (e.g. verbal reward, attention) is the kind of support I need to improve my writing skills.	0	0,0%	5	4,0%	14	11,%	43	34,4%	63	50,4%	4,31	0,83	High
18) I think the teacher should create a positive learning environment in EFL Writing classroom.	1	0,8%	0	0,0%	2	1,6%	37	29,6%	85	68,0%	4,64	0,60	Very high
19) I think it is the teacher's responsibility to show me everything about writing in English.	9	7,2%	26	20,8%	32	25,6%	47	37,6%	11	8,8%	3,20	1,09	Average
20) I like the teacher to create a challenging learning atmosphere in English Writing classroom.	0	0,0%	4	3,2%	19	15,%	62	49,6%	40	32,0%	4,10	0,77	High
21) I need the teacher to correct my mistakes in English Writing.	60	48,0%	54	43,2%	8	6,4%	3	2,4%	0	0,0%	1,63	0,71	Low

Table 6.1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy (Continued)

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
22) I need the teacher to show me how I am progressing in English Writing.	53	42,4%	60	48,0%	9	7,2%	3	2,4%	0	0,0%	1,70	0,71	Low
23) I need the teacher to identify my weaknesses and strengths in English Writing.	53	42,4%	58	46,4%	13	10,4%	1	0,8%	0	0,0%	1,70	0,69	Low
3) Perceptions of EFL writing	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean	Stand Dev	Level
24) Learning writing is different from learning other modules.	0	0%	5	4,0%	11	8,8%	51	40,8%	58	46,4%	4,30	0,79	High
25) Learning writing is more difficult than learning other modules.	34	27,2%	39	31,2%	32	25,6%	18	14%	2	2%	2,32	1,07	Low
26) Writing skills are needed in the acquisition of the other modules.	0	0%	2	1,6%	4	3,2%	32	25,6%	87	69,6%	4,63	0,63	Very high

Concerning the participants' perceptions of EFL Writing learning process, the finding of Item 26 ' *Writing skill is needed in the acquisition of the other modules* ' is rated as the highest (M= 4,63 ,SD= 0,63). This means that the large majority (95, 2%) of the participants attach utmost importance to EFL Writing skills. This is followed by item 24 (M= 4, 30, SD=0, 79) in which 87, 2% of the informants display awareness concerning the difference existing between EFL Writing learning process and the other types of learning. Responses to Item 25 with the mean of 2, 32 (SD=1, 07) reveal that nearly less than three fifth of the participants do not consider EFL Writing as a difficult subject matter. An overview summary of the analysis regarding the means and standard deviations relative to Readiness for autonomy variable along with its components is detailed in table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of Readiness for Autonomy

Domain	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Stand dev	Level
Readiness for autonomy						3,69	0,85	High
1) Perception of their role	4%	14%	19%	34%	29%	3,72	1,00	High
2) Perceptions of teachers' roles	12%	14%	9%	31%	33%	3,60	0,72	High
3) Perception of EFL Writing	9%	12%	13%	27%	39%	3,75	0,83	High

As indicated in table 6.2, the descriptive statistics results demonstrate that the participants' readiness for autonomy status is satisfactory (M=3, 69, SD=0, 85), belonging to the range of high level. Therefore, the hypothesis (ENSB students' level of readiness for autonomy is satisfactory in EFL Writing learning process) is accepted.

Based on the obtained results, the participants' perceptions of EFL Writing ranks the highest (M=3, 75, SD=0, 83). This is followed by their perceptions of their roles as EFL learners (Mean=3, 72, SD=1, 00). Their perceptions of their teachers' roles category falls behind (3, 60, SD=0, 72).

6.3 Findings Concerning the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge Level

To answer the second research question descriptive statistics is designed to investigate the participants' level of metacognitive knowledge base in EFL Writing. Data relevant to this knowledge are gathered through (LMKQ) in Section 2 of a five-point Likert Scale where 39 items are involved. Table 6.3 summarizes the findings pertaining to the informants' person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge that define their overall metacognitive knowledge status in EFL Writing learning process.

Concerning person knowledge, slightly above three fifth of the participants (60, 8%) report enjoying writing in English in item 28 '*I feel myself comfortable when writing in English both inside and outside the classroom*' (M=3, 66, SD=1, 04). This is closely followed by item 27 '*Writing in English is a kind of therapy for me*' with the mean of 3, 54 (SD=1, 03). Falling in the range of the average level with the mean of 2, 61 (SD= 0, 97), item 31 reveals that more than three fourth (74, 4%) of the participants disagree with the idea of being born as talented writers in English; whereas, slightly above one third (30, 3%) of them only demonstrate a neutral view to item 34 '*I know how to write an attractive essay in English*' (M= 3, 03, SD=0, 98).

Additionally, drawn from the responses 'Neither agree nor disagree', writing good essays in English (Item 33), knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses as EFL writers (Item 35), and having the capacity to express their feelings and ideas in a beautiful English style (Item 36) are all rated average with the means of 3,07 (SD=0,98), 3,47 (SD=1,02), 3,42 (SD=0,99) respectively. These responses reveal that one third of the participants display a moderate knowledge concerning their own identity as EFL writers in these specific areas. However, the participants' responses to item 37 suggest that 76 out of 125 respondents possess high identity knowledge concerning their mental capacities (M=3, 61, SD =0, 58).

Table 6.3 shows also that more than one third (36%) of the participants disagree with item 27 '*I do not know how to write good paragraphs and essays in English*' (M=3, 02, SD=1, 08), and slightly less than two fifth (39,5%) of them encounter difficulties in writing English paragraphs. 31% of the informants display a neutral view to this item. Drawn from 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' responses, item 30 demonstrates that 36% of participants do not perceive themselves as good EFL writers, and 36% of them neither agree nor disagree with the item (Mean=2,89, SD=1,08). However, item 29 "*I prefer to write in my mother tongue than in English*" is rated as high (M=3, 51, SD=1, 13), revealing that above three fifth (60%) of the participants enjoy writing in English language.

The results relevant to task knowledge analysis indicate that nearly more than half of the participants encounter some difficulties (M=3,38, SD=1,08) in writing introductions (Item 38). Drawn from 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' responses, 60 out of 125 respondents think (Mean=3, 18, SD=1, 15) they are committing many English language mistakes (Item 41), while only above one fourth (28%) of them perceive the lack of vocabulary (item 42) as their major constraint in EFL Writing (Mean=2, 66, SD=1, 19). More than half of the participants perceive time pressure (items 40 and 39) as a major constraint that not only limit their imagination (M=3, 94, SD=1, 01) but also prevent them from checking their papers (M=2, 98, SD=1, 24) for language mistakes. The highest rated mean (Mean=4,64, SD=0,64) is on item 60, revealing that the majority (96, 8%) of the participants perform better in EFL Writing when the topic is familiar to them.

Additionally, item 55 is rated low with the mean of 1, 58 (SD=0, 72), showing that the majority (92%) of the informants do not attach much importance to spelling and format of the paper while writing in English. Items 49 and 53 with the means of 4, 27 (SD=0, 72) and 4, 17 (SD=0, 68) reveal the majority of the participants' familiarity with English essays components. They all agree on the idea that good English essay should involve original ideas.

Task demand (items 50 and 51) are rated high with approximately similar means of 3, 52 (SD=0, 90), 3, 55 (SD=0, 93). This suggests the familiarity of 56, 8% of the participants with thesis statements and topic sentences as ones of the major conventions in EFL Writing. Drawn from ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’ responses, items 52 and 54 are rated high with the means score of 3, 93 (SD=0, 78) and 3, 76 (SD=0, 93), respectively. This refers to the awareness that the majority of the participants have regarding the different EFL Writing genres, and most of them highly agree with the fact that an attractive language is a feature of a good EFL Writing production. Similarly, responses to items 48 and 59 show that 47, 2% of the participants moderately focus (M=3, 30, SD=1, 08) on the aesthetic language when writing in English, while the majority (82, 4%) of them put high focus on content and ideas (Mean=4, 08, SD=0, 70).

Interestingly, the finding of item 47 “*As I write in English, I focus on spelling every word right, on respecting essay and paragraph format , and on making my paper neat*” is rated as high with the mean of 3,98 (SD=0,96). This suggests that slightly above three fourth (75, 2%) of the participants attach high importance to paper format and spelling.

As shown in table 6.3, the participants display limited understanding of audience. Approximately slightly above one third (38,4%) of them (Item 43) report their teachers (Mean= 2, 66, SD=1, 19) as their major audience, and less than two fifth (64%) of them highly claim (Mean=3,56, SD=1,16) that only members of their family and friends are allowed to read their written works (Items 44).However, item 46 is rated as average (Mean=2,30, SD=1,03), showing that 64% of the informants write for themselves .

In fact, in item 45, only less than three eighth (36, 8%) of the participants address their written assignments to a large audience (Mean=3, 00, SD=1, 05). Additionally, investigations into the participants’ understanding of audience reveal that

approximately half (52, 8%) of them demonstrate a moderated knowledge (Mean=3, 41, SD=0, 98) of a real audience (Item 57), but the majority (83, 2%) of the informants seem to highly (M=4, 05, SD=0, 89) consider the clarity of ideas for the reader (Item 58).

Regarding the participants' strategic knowledge, table 6.3 indicates that items 56 and 61 pertaining to planning knowledge are rated as high with the means of 3,58 (SD=1,12), 3,84 (SD=0,98), 3, 92 (SD=1,01), respectively. This means that 65, 6% of the participants use planning before the writing process, and slightly less than fourth of them use a cluster of planning strategies ranging from numbering, starting from the general to specific, to starting from weak to strong arguments and vice versa. However, item 62 is rated as low (Mean=2, 08, SD=1, 01) since slightly above one eighth (12, 8%) of the participants jot down their ideas when writing in English.

For revision strategies, the lowest rated mean (Mean=2, 03, SD=0, 88) is on item 63, revealing that less than one twelfth (8%) of the participants check their papers for spelling and EFL Writing format. Drawing from 'Agree' and 'Disagree' responses, the findings revealed that slightly more than four fifth of the informants (80,8%) focus attention on checking their writing papers for content and clarify of ideas (Item 64).

Table 6.3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
1)Person knowledge:													
27) I do not know how to write good paragraphs and essays in English.	9	7,2%	36	28,8%	31	24,8%	41	32,8%	8	6,4%	3,02	1,08	Average
28) I feel myself comfortable when writing in English both inside and outside the classroom.	1	0,8%	20	16,00%	29	23,20%	45	36,00%	30	24,00%	3,66	1,04	High
29) I prefer to write in my mother tongue than in English.	8	6,4%	17	13,6%	25	20,0%	53	42,4%	22	17,6%	3,51	1,13	High
30) I am not a good writer in English.	13	10,4%	32	25,6%	45	36,0%	26	20,8%	9	7,2%	2,89	1,08	Average
31) I believe I am born as a talented writer in English language.	11	8,8%	54	43,20%	39	31,20%	15	12,00%	6	4,80%	2,61	0,97	Average
32) Writing in English is a kind of therapy for me.	3	2,4%	16	12,80%	42	33,60%	39	31,20%	25	20,00%	3,54	1,03	High
33) I can write good essays in English because I have good ideas, rich vocabulary, and correct grammar.	7	5,6%	28	22,40%	45	36,00%	39	31,20%	6	4,80%	3,07	0,98	Average
34) I know how to write an attractive essay in English.	4	3,2%	39	31,20%	38	30,40%	37	29,60%	7	5,60%	3,03	0,98	Average
35) I know my own strengths and weakness as a writer in English language.	4	3,2%	21	16,80%	28	22,40%	56	44,80%	16	12,80%	3,47	1,02	Average
36) I have the capacity to express my feelings and ideas in a beautiful English written style.	3	2,4%	18	14,40%	46	36,80%	40	32,00%	18	14,40%	3,42	0,99	Average
37) I know well my mental capacities as a writer in English.	2	1,6%	10	8,00%	37	29,60%	62	49,60%	14	11,20%	3,61	0,85	High

Table 6.3 Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge (Continued)

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
2) Task knowledge													
38) I have difficulties in writing good introductions.	4	3,20%	27	21,60%	29	23,20%	47	37,60%	18	14,40%	3,38	1,08	Average
39) I rarely review my exam paper when I am bound by the allocated time.	18	14,40%	33	26,40%	18	14,40%	46	36,80%	10	8,00%	2,98	1,24	Average
40) My imagination is limited when I write under time pressure.	2	1,60%	16	12,80%	8	6,40%	61	48,80%	38	30,4%	3,94	1,01	High
41) I make many language mistakes in EFL Writing (e.g.spelling, grammar, and sentence structure).	13	10,4%	23	18,4%	29	23,2%	49	39,2%	11	8,8%	3,18	1,15	Average
42) My problem when writing in English is the lack of vocabulary.	23	18,4%	40	32,0%	27	21,6%	27	21,6%	8	6,4%	2,66	1,19	Average
43) All my essays in English are read by my teacher only.	23	18,4%	40	32,0%	14	11,2%	42	33,6%	6	4,8%	2,74	1,24	Average
44) Only family and friends read what I write in English.	8	6,4%	19	15,2%	18	14,4%	55	44,0%	25	20,0%	3,56	1,16	High
45) My audience in English writings can be total strangers.	9	7,2%	37	29,6%	29	23,2%	45	36,0%	5	4,0%	3,00	1,05	Average
46) I basically write for myself.	29	23,2%	51	40,8%	25	20,0%	18	14,4%	2	1,6%	2,30	1,03	Low
47) As I write in English, I focus on spelling every word right, on respecting essay and paragraph format, and on making my paper neat.	1	0,80%	11	8,80%	19	15,20%	52	41,60%	42	33,60%	3,98	0,96	High

Table 6.3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge (Continued)

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
2) Task knowledge													
48) I usually focus on the aesthetic language when I write in English.(e.g. use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and fancy words).	5	4,00%	28	22,40%	33	26,40%	43	34,40%	16	12,8%	3,30	1,08	Average
49) I am familiar with the components of English essays (e.g. Introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion).	0	0,00%	3	2,40%	11	8,80%	60	48,00%	51	40,8%	4,27	0,72	High
50) I know how to write a good thesis statement in English.	3	2,40%	13	10,40%	38	30,40%	58	46,40%	13	10,4%	3,52	0,90	High
51) I am familiar with the components of English essays (e.g. Introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion).	2	1,60%	15	12,00%	37	29,60%	54	43,20%	17	13,6%	3,55	0,93	High
52) I know the different genres in EFL Writing (e.g. expository, descriptive, argumentative, narrative).	0	0,00%	8	6,40%	19	15,20%	72	57,60%	26	20,8%	3,93	0,78	High
53) Good EFL Writing contains clear and original ideas.	0	0,00%	1	0,80%	17	13,60%	67	53,60%	40	32,0%	4,17	0,68	High
54) Good EFL Writing involves attractive language (e.g. use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and fancy words).	1	0,80%	12	9,60%	30	24,00%	55	44,00%	27	21,6%	3,76	0,93	High
55) Good EFL Essay should be correctly formed, neat, and every word should be spelled correctly.	65	52,0%	50	40,0%	8	6,4%	1	0,8%	1	0,8%	1,58	0,72	Low
57) I have a real and specific audience in mind while writing in English.	1	0,80%	27	21,60%	31	24,80%	52	41,60%	14	11,20%	3,41	0,98	Average

Table 6.3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge (Continued)

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Stand Dev	Level
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
Task Knowledge													
58) I stop while writing and ask myself if the ideas are clear for the reader.	1	0,80%	10	8,00%	10	8,00%	65	52,00%	39	31,2%	4,05	0,89	High
59) I usually focus on content when writing in English.	0	0,00%	2	1,60%	20	16,00%	69	55,20%	34	27,2%	4,08	0,70	High
60) I feel more comfortable when I write about the topic I know the most about.	1	0,80%	1	0,80%	2	1,60%	34	27,20%	87	69,6%	4,64	0,64	Very High
3) Strategic knowledge	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean	Stand Dev	Level
56) I usually start with a plan before I start to write in English.	4	3,20%	25	20,00%	15	12,00%	56	44,80%	25	20,00%	3,58	1,12	High
61) I use some strategies when planning my essay (e.g. numbering, starting from general to specific, and starting from the weakest the strongest ideas).	2	1,60%	13	10,40%	20	16,00%	58	46,40%	32	25,60%	3,84	0,98	High
62) I usually start writing by jotting down all the ideas I have in mind.	41	32,8%	50	40,0%	18	14,4%	15	12,0%	1	0,8%	2,08	1,01	Low
64) After I finish writing, I first check my paper for content and clarity of meaning.	1	0,80%	9	7,20%	14	11,20%	60	48,00%	41	32,80%	4,05	0,90	High
63) When I finish writing, I first check the textual features of the paper (e.g. spelling mistakes, grammar, and mechanics).	36	28,8%	59	47,2%	20	16,0%	10	8,0%	0	0,0%	2,03	0,88	Low

Descriptive statistics results pertaining to metacognitive knowledge variables show that the participants' metacognitive knowledge status falls in the range of the average level. On the whole, their level is not satisfactory (Mean=3.29), (See table 6.4). Thus, the hypothesis (ENSB students do not possess enough metacognitive knowledge about their EFL Writing learning process) is accepted.

Table 6.4: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive Knowledge

Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Stand dev	Level
Metacognitive Knowledge:						3,29	0,33	Average
1)Person knowledge:	4%	20%	28%	35%	12%	3,26	0,69	Average
2) Task knowledge	8%	17%	17%	39%	19%	3,34	0,27	Average
3)Strategic knowledge	13%	25%	14%	32%	16%	3,12	0,50	Average

Among the three components of metacognitive knowledge, task knowledge ranks the highest with an average rated mean of 3, 34, SD=0, 27). It is followed by person knowledge, which ranks the second with a moderated mean of 3, 26, SD=0, 69), and finally strategic knowledge ranks the third with the mean of 3, 12 (SD=0, 50).

To explore the findings in more details, a further descriptive statistical analysis of each component of the two variables (ie., readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge) is performed . The results are demonstrated in tables 6.5 and 6.6.

Table 6.5: Means and Standard Deviations of Readiness for Autonomy Components

Perceptions of their Roles	N	Mean	ST. Dev	Meaning
Steps for progressing	125	3,64	0,65	High
Assessing progress	125	3,86	0,58	High
Perceptions of Teachers' Roles	N	Mean	ST. Dev	Meaning
Technical support	125	4,39	0,45	High
Psycho-social support	125	4,35	0,54	High
Imparter of knowledge	125	2,06	0,57	Low
Perceptions of EFL Writing	N	Mean	ST. Dev	Meaning
Writing as a different module	125	4,29	,79	High
Complementary to the other modules	125	4,63	,62	High
Writing as a difficult skill	125	2,32	1,07	Low

Table 6.5 indicates that the participants highly use a cluster of steps to promote and assess their EFL Writing progress. The two components are highly rated with approximate similar means of 3, 64 (SD=0, 65) and 3, 86 (SD=0, 58).

The participants' perceptions of teacher's role (See table 6.2) reveals that they highly require their teachers to function as both technical (Mean=4, 39, SD=0, 45) and psycho-social supports (Mean=4, 35, SD=0, 54). The findings indicate also that the participants have a low dependence (Mean=2, 06, SD=0, 57) on their EFL Writing teacher.

The participants' perceptions of EFL Writing reveal their high consideration to EFL Writing as a subject matter that is completely different from the other modules (Mean=4, 29 SD=0, 79), but which is crucial (Mean=4, 63, SD=0, 62) to the acquisition of the other subject matters. Perceptions of EFL Writing as a difficult skill is the lowest rated component with the mean of 2, 32 (SD=1, 07). Additionally, the means and standard deviations of each component of metacognitive knowledge is detailed in table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Means and Standard Deviations of Metacognitive Knowledge Components

Person Knowledge	N	Mean	STD. Dev	Meaning
Writing anxiety	125	3,14	0,89	Moderate
Self-confidence	125	3,10	0,79	Moderate
Task enjoyment	125	3,54	1,03	High
Identity	125	3,39	0,74	Moderate
Task Knowledge	N	Mean	ST. Dev	Meaning
Task Constraint	125	3,33	0,47	Moderate
Task Purpose	125	3,13	0,48	Moderate
Audience Understanding	125	3,17	0,48	Moderate
Task demand	125	3,54	0,39	High
Strategic Knowledge	N	Mean	ST. Dev	Meaning
Planning	125	3,16	0,64	Moderate
Revision	125	3,04	0,64	Moderate

The findings in table 6.6 demonstrate that the participants are moderately anxious (M=3, 14, SD=0, 89) and self-confident (M=3, 10,SD=0, 79) with regard to EFL Writing learning process. Additionally, the result indicates that although the informants highly enjoy EFL Writing (Mean=3, 54, SD=1, 03), their knowledge of their identity as writers (Mean=3, 39, SD=0, 74) is at an average level.

Data analysis of task knowledge shows that task demand is rated the highest (Mean=3, 54, SD=0, 39), revealing the participants' good knowledge of EFL Writing task demand. This is followed by task constraint, in which the participants display a moderate understanding (Mean=3, 33, SD=0, 47) of their language difficulties. As shown in table 6.7, the participants hold a moderate level of audience understanding with the mean of 3, 17 (SD=0, 48). This is closely followed by task purpose, in which the participants' knowledge is at an average level (Mean=3, 13, SD=0, 48).

Regarding strategic knowledge, data analysis indicates that the participants use of planning strategies is at an average level with the mean of 3, 16 (SD=0, 64).

Regarding revision, the mean score is 3, 04 (SD=0, 64), showing that the participants moderately used revision after writing their papers.

6.4 Findings Regarding the Participants’ Readiness for Autonomy in Terms of their Proficiency Levels

The third research question was stated, as: ‘Are there any differences in ENSB students’ readiness for autonomy regarding their proficiency levels?’

An independent-samples T-test is conducted to investigate any statistical differences between the participants’ readiness for autonomy in terms of their proficiency levels. In the present study, the participants’ proficiency levels are divided into three categories. Such categories are high achieving, average, and low achieving.

6.4.1 Independent-Sample T-test Analysis

An independent-samples T-test analysis is conducted to investigate whether there is any statistical difference between the means of the three pairs: 1) (average-low), 2) (high-low), and 3) (high-average). The finding of the first pair (average and low) is illustrated in table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (Average and Low)

		Independent-sample T-test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
readiness	Equal variances assumed	1,406	,238	1,638	112	,104	,09975	,06091	-,02093	,22042
	Equal variances not assumed			1,746	72,448	,085	,09975	,05713	-,01412	,21361

As shown in table 6.7, the p value of levene’s Test is (F(1,406), p=0.238, > 0, 01). It can be concluded that there is no significant mean difference in the variance of

readiness for autonomy between the average and the low achieving participants. As indicated in the data, there is no statistical mean difference in readiness for autonomy between the two groups since the probability p-value of T-test is $t(1,638) p=0,104 > 0.01$). In conclusion, both the average and the low achieving participants do not differ in terms of readiness for autonomy.

Table 6.8: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (High and Low)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Readiness	Equal variances assumed	1,734	,195	2,392	43	,021	,20897	,08735	,03281	,38512
	Equal variances not assumed			2,737	21,941	,012	,20897	,07635	,05061	,36732

The results drawn from table 6.8, group 2 (High and low) indicates that the variance difference associated to their readiness for autonomy differ by considering the p value of Levene's Test ($F(1,734) p=0,195 > 0,01$). It may be concluded that a no significant difference in the variance of metacognitive knowledge exists between the high and the low achieving participants. There is also evidence ($t(2,392) p=0,021 > 0,01$) to suggest that there is no significant mean difference in readiness for autonomy between the high achieving and the low achieving participants. That is, the high achieving informants do not differ in their degree of readiness for autonomy with the low achieving ones.

Table 6.9: Independent Samples T-test for Readiness for Autonomy (High and Average)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Readiness	Equal variances assumed			-1,132	89	,261	-2,83977	2,50906	-7,82522	2,14567
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,549	17,181	,140	-2,83977	1,83305	-6,70408	1,02453

In table 6.9, the result drawn from the data pair 3 (high and average) reveals that the variance of the two participants bear no significant difference ($F(3,624), p=0,060 > 0,01$). Also, by considering the t value: ($t(1,132) p=0,261 > 0,01$), it is indicated that there is no statistical mean difference in readiness for autonomy between the high achieving and the average participants. This further suggests that the high achieving subjects' readiness for autonomy does not differ significantly from the average ones.

In summary, the hypothesis (High achieving, average, and low achieving ENSB students differ in their readiness for autonomy with regard to their EFL Writing learning process) is rejected.

6.5 Findings Regarding the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge Level in Terms of their Proficiency Levels

Another independent-sample T-test is carried out to answer the fourth research question, which was stated as: 'Are there any differences in ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge regarding their proficiency levels?'

The objective of this analysis is to investigate if any statistical difference exists between the participants' metacognitive knowledge in terms of their proficiency levels. Table 6.10 presents the finding of T-test analysis between the average and the low achieving participants.

Table 6.10: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge (Average and Low)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Meta-cognitive	Equal variances assumed	,458	,500	-1,575	112	,118	-,10505	,06668	-,23716	,02706
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,629	67,252	,108	-,10505	,06450	-,23379	,02369

As can be seen in table 6.10, pair 1 (average and low), the p value of Levene's Test (F (0,458), $p=0,500 > 0,01$) reveals no statistical difference in the variance between the average and the low achieving participants in terms of their metacognitive knowledge. The statistical significance (t (-1,575) $p=0,118 > 0,01$) shows also that there is no significant mean difference in metacognitive knowledge level between the average and the low achieving subjects.

Table 6.11: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge (High and Low)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Meta-cognitive	Equal variances assumed	,005	,944	-3,188	43	,003	-,33809	,10606	-,55198	-,12421
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,219	17,255	,005	-,33809	,10503	-,55943	-,11676

Given that the p value of Levene's Test is (F (0,005) $p=0,944 > 0,01$), it is suggested that the variance between the high and the low achieving participants doesn't not differ significantly. Additionally, the statistical mean difference in T-test (t

(-3,188) $p=0,003 > 0, 01$) indicates that the high achieving participants' metacognitive knowledge level does not differ significantly from the low achieving ones.

Table: 6.12: Independent Samples T-test for Metacognitive Knowledge (High and Average)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Meta-cognitive	Equal variances assumed	,131	,719	-2,198	89	,031	-,23304	,10604	-,44374	-,02235
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,373	13,594	,033	-,23304	,09821	-,44427	-,02181

Based on the finding in table 6.12 between group 3 (high and average), the p value of Levene's Test (F (0,131), $p=0,719, >0, 01$) indicates no difference in terms of variance of metacognitive knowledge between the high achieving and the average participants. Also, the T-test result (t (-2,198) $p=0,031 >0, 01$) demonstrates no significant mean difference in metacognitive knowledge between the two groups. In conclusion, the hypothesis (Metacognitive knowledge about EFL writing differs among ENSB students according to their proficiency levels) is rejected.

6.6 Findings Regarding the Relationship between the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy, their Metacognitive Knowledge, and their Proficiency Levels

In order to answer the fifth research question: Is there any significant relationship between ENSB students' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels? Correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) is calculated. The objective is to measure the strength of association between the variables.

6.6.1 Correlation Analysis:

Spearman's Rho is selected because the data are ordinal. The findings are detailed in table 6.13.

Table 6.13: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy, Metacognitive Knowledge, and Proficiency levels

		read	Meta	Prof
Read	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,652**	,149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,098
	N	125	125	125
Meta	Correlation Coefficient	,652**	1,000	,294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,001
	N	125	125	125
Prof	Correlation Coefficient	,149	,294**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,098	,001	.
	N	125	125	125

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above table, it is found that the participants' readiness for autonomy positively correlates with their metacognitive knowledge ($r = .652$, $p < 0.05$). The correlation for these two variables is statistically significant and can be described as strong. Generally speaking, this means that the students who have high readiness for autonomy strongly tend to use metacognitive knowledge.

Also, a positive correlation is found between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their proficiency levels. As indicated in the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.294$, $p < 0.05$), this correlation is statistically significant and weak. This suggests that the students' metacognitive knowledge is poorly related to their proficiency levels.

Furthermore, a positive correlation is found between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their proficiency levels. Given that the correlation coefficient is ($r = 0.149$, $p > 0.05$), the correlation between these two variables is statistically not significant, hence it can be described as very weak. Since the magnitude of the correlation is weak, this means that the students' high level of readiness for autonomy is poorly related to their proficiency levels.

Thus, the hypothesis (ENSB students readiness for autonomy is strongly related to their metacognitive knowledge) is accepted, while the hypothesis (ENSB students' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are strongly related to their proficiency levels in EFL Writing.) is rejected.

Given that the correlation between readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge variables is statistically significant and strong, further correlation analysis is conducted to explore in details the level of association between readiness for autonomy components and metacognitive knowledge on the one hand and between components of metacognitive knowledge and readiness for autonomy on the other hand. The results and analysis are demonstrated in tables below.

Table 6.14: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Person Knowledge Components

Correlation							
			Readiness for autonomy	Person knowledge	Writing anxiety	Self-confidence	Identity
Rho de Spearman	Readiness for autonomy	Coefficient de corrélation	1,000	,664**	,535**	,568**	,627**
		Sig. (bilatéral)	.	,000	,000	,000	,000
		N	125	125	125	125	125
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

From table 6.14, it is found that the participants' readiness for autonomy positively correlates with their person knowledge ($r = ,664$, $p < 0,05$). The correlation for these two variables is statistically significant and can be described as strong. Moreover, readiness for autonomy is found to correlate positively with the components of person knowledge. The finding shows that the correlation is statistically significant and strong between readiness for autonomy and identity knowledge ($r = ,627$, $p < 0,05$); whereas, it is moderate between readiness for autonomy and the two person knowledge components: writing anxiety ($r = ,535$, $p < 0,05$) and self-confidence ($r = ,568$, $p < 0,05$).

Table 6.15 : Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Task Knowledge Components

Correlation								
			Readin for autono	Task knowle	Task constr	Task purpose	Task demand	Audience Under
Rho de Spea r- man	Readiness for autonomy	Correlat Coefficie	1,000	,459**	,273**	,162	,299**	,276**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,002	,072	,001	,002
		N	125	125	125	125	125	125
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

Table 6.15 reveals a positive correlation between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their task knowledge. Given that the correlation coefficient is ($r = .459$, $p < 0,05$), the correlation between the two variables is statistically significant and can be described as moderate. The participants' task knowledge components; task constraint ($r = .273$, $p < 0,05$), task demand ($r = .299$, $p < 0,05$), and audience understanding ($r = .276$, $p < 0,05$) are found to have a significant and weak correlation with their readiness for autonomy, with coefficient inferior to 0,05. However, a very weak ($r = .162$, $p > 0,05$) and non-significant correlation is found between their readiness for autonomy and their knowledge about task purpose, with coefficient above 0,05.

Table 6.16: Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy and Strategy Knowledge Components

Correlation						
			Readiness for Autonomy	Strategic knowledge	Planning	Revision
Rho de Spearman	Readiness for Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,271**	,235**	,129
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,002	,008	,151
		N	125	125	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

As shown in table 6.16, although positive correlations exist between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their strategic knowledge, this correlation is found to be statistically significant and weak ($r = .271, p < 0.05$). However, a non-significant and weak correlation exists between the participants' readiness for autonomy and planning strategy ($r = .235, p > 0.05$). Also, the correlation between revision strategy and the participants' readiness for autonomy is found to be statistically not significant and can be described as very weak ($r = .129, p > 0.05$), with coefficient above 0, 05.

Table 6.17: Correlation between Metacognitive knowledge and Perceptions of their Roles Components

Correlation			Metacognitive knowledge	Perception of their Roles	Steps for progressing	Assessing progress
Rho de Spearman	Metacognitive knowledge	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,615**	,572**	,438**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000
		N	125	125	125	125
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 6.17 shows that the correlation coefficient between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of their roles variable is significant ($r = .615, p < 0.05$) and can be described as very strong. However, given that the correlation coefficient between their metacognitive knowledge and their readiness for autonomy components; steps for progressing ($r = .572, p < 0.05$) and assessing progress ($r = .438, p < 0.05$) is below 0, 05, the correlation can be described as significant and moderate.

Table 6.18: Correlation between Metacognitive Knowledge and Perceptions of Teachers' Roles Components

Correlation							
			Metacognitive knowledge	Perception of teacher's role	Technical support	Psycho-social support	Imparter of know-ledge
Rho de Spearman	Metacognitive knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,325**	,223*	,184*	,104
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,012	,040	,250
		N	125	125	125	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

The finding (See table 6.18) shows that there is a weak and significant correlation ($r = .325$, $p < 0,05$) between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of teachers' role. However, a weak correlation ($r = .223$, $p > 0,05$) is found between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of their teachers' role as a technical support. Also, there is a very weak and positive correlation between their metacognitive knowledge and the two components; psycho-social support ($r = .184$, $p > 0,05$) and the imparter of knowledge ($r = .104$, $p > 0,05$). The correlation between these three variables is statistically not significant, with a coefficient above 0,05.

Table 6.19: Correlation between Metacognitive Knowledge and Perceptions of EFL Writing Components

Correlation							
			Meta-cognitive knowledge	Perception of EFL Writing	Different module	Complementary to other modules	Difficult Skill
Rho de Spearman	Meta-cognitive knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,177*	-,091	-,025	,302**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,049	,314	,786	,001
		N	125	125	125	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

The correlation result in table 6.19 suggests that no significant and a very weak correlation exists between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of EFL Writing ($r = .177, p > 0.05$). Also, it is found that their metacognitive knowledge positively correlates with their perceptions of EFL Writing as a difficult activity variable. However, given that the coefficient is ($r = .302, p < 0.05$), this correlation is statistically significant and can be described as weak. Moreover, the finding suggests that except for these two variables, a negative correlation associates between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and both readiness for autonomy components; writing as a different module ($r = -.091, p > 0.05$) and writing as complementary skills to other modules ($r = -.025, p > 0.05$). The coefficient is above 0.05 level of significance, and the correlation can be described as very weak.

6.7 Findings Regarding the Role of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge in Affecting their Readiness for Autonomy

The sixth research question was stated as: 'Can ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy?' To investigate a response to this question, a regression analysis is conducted.

6.7.1 Regression Analysis

The results obtained from correlation analyses have demonstrated that readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are positively and strongly correlated with each other. To further examine the relationship between the two variables (i.e., readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge level), a linear regression analysis is calculated by taking the participants' readiness for autonomy as the dependent variable (i.e., explained variable) and their metacognitive knowledge as the independent one (i.e., explanatory variable).

The magnitude of the correlation between the two variables as defined in the thesis is provided by the value of **R**, which is presented in the model summary output of the SPSS in table 6.20.

Table 6.20 : Model Summary Produced by SPSS Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,651 ^a	,423	,419	,22461

a. Predictors: (Constant), , metacognitive

As shown in table 6.20, the **R** value represents the sample correlation between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge. The correlation is 0,651, which indicates a strong degree of correlation. The **R Square** value shows that the independent variable (i.e., metacognitive knowledge) accounts for 42,3% of the explained variable (i.e., readiness for autonomy).

Table 6.21: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	4,553	1	4,553	90,257	,000 ^b
Residual	6,205	123	,050		
Total	10,758	124			

a. Dependent Variable: Readiness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Megtacognitive Knowledge

The fisher test shown in table 6.21 indicates that the model is globally significant (F =90,257; p<0.01).

So, a regression analysis will be carried out by taking readiness for autonomy as the dependent variable and metacognitive knowledge as the independent one. The results are detailed in table 6.22.

Table 6.22: Regression Coefficients^a between Readiness for Autonomy and Metacognitive Knowledge

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1,783	,200		8,929	,000
metacognitive	,575	,061	,651	9,500	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Readiness

Based on the finding in table 6.22, a standard regression equation can be drawn as follows: readiness for autonomy = 0,575* metacognitive Knowledge + A (statistical errors). The equation demonstrates that the participants' metacognitive knowledge can statistically and significantly ($p=0,000 < 0.01$) predict the participants' readiness for autonomy. So, since the regression analysis model is significant, it can be summarised that ENSB students with higher metacognitive knowledge base are more likely to have high readiness for autonomy. Thus, the hypothesis (ENSB students' readiness for autonomy highly depends on their metacognitive knowledge level) is accepted.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, data analyses pertaining to quantitative findings are reported. The descriptive statistics reveal a satisfactory level of ENSB participants' readiness for autonomy and an average level regarding their metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. No mean difference in readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge is found in terms of the participants' proficiency levels in the Independent Sample T-test analysis. Correspondingly, the correlation analysis demonstrates that the participants' proficiency levels have significant but weak correlation with their metacognitive knowledge. Additionally, the association between their proficiency levels and their readiness for autonomy is positive, significant, and very weak. However, a strong, significant, and positive correlation is revealed between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge. Accordingly,

the participants' readiness for autonomy strongly correlates with their person knowledge, namely with their identity knowledge. The participants' task knowledge, however, is moderately and significantly related to their readiness for autonomy. The weakest correlation is found between the participants' strategy knowledge and their readiness for autonomous learning. Furthermore, while the association between the participants' perceptions of their roles their metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing is revealed as strong and significant, the correlation between their perceptions of their teachers' roles and their metacognitive knowledge is statistically described as significant and weak. The weakest correlation revealed in the correlation analysis is relative to the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of EFL Writing. In the regression analysis, the informants' metacognitive knowledge appears to contribute significantly in predicting their readiness for autonomous learning in EFL Writing skill.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE

STUDY

7.1 Introduction

The seventh chapter is devoted to discussing the findings from the analysis of the data collected in the qualitative and the quantitative phases with respect to the topic under study (i.e., readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge among the three proficiency levels participants). Thus, two sections are involved in this chapter. The first section reports on the discussion of the findings yielded by content analysis of the focus group interview in the qualitative phase. Section two is concerned with discussing the findings obtained from the statistical analysis of the Likert Scale questionnaire in the quantitative phase. The research questions guiding this study are answered in the light of the findings.

7.2 Discussion of Qualitative Findings (Phase One)

As speculated earlier in this thesis , the qualitative phase aims at exploring the participants' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in the context of EFL Writing classrooms. Qualitative data are collected through a focus group interview and are submitted to content analysis. The major emerging categories and subcategories relative to the high achieving, the average, and the low achieving participants' readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge are discussed in this chapter.

7.2.1 The Participants' Readiness for Autonomy

The participants' readiness for autonomy is explored in the current study by means of the first research question guiding this study:

Research Question: What are the underlying categories of readiness for autonomy reported by ENSB high, average, and low achieving students?

The qualitative findings provide insights into the emerging variables underlying how ENSB EFL participants perceive their responsibilities in EFL Writing learning

situation. Hence, the participants' perceptions of their roles, of their teachers' roles, and of EFL Writing consist the components that describe their readiness for autonomy profile.

Using outside activities performance and assessing their EFL Writing progress represent the two emerging subcategories that describe ENSB EFL participants' perceptions of their roles category. The results pointed out that of the five steps, reading and writing in English are widely practiced by the participants with the three proficiency levels to foster their EFL Writing performance. Further out-of-class activities used by the participants to achieve successful results in EFL Writing were watching and listening to audio-visuals, soliciting the assistance of online expert writers, and communicating with native speakers.

The use of these out-of-class activities reflects the personal efforts exhibited by the participants, namely the high achieving and the average ones to sustain their EFL Writing productions. A survey of the literature reveals that learners who attempt to act independently of their teachers by seeking less assistance are more likely to apply endeavours to foster the quality of their writing. Applied to the findings of the present thesis, this can be seen as a sign of the participants' positive disposition to learn EFL Writing in a self-reliant way. In similar vein, the finding corresponds to previous past research study on Turkish (Koçak 2003) and on Malaysian students' writers (Thang & Alias 2007).

The participants' answers regarding the way they attempt to assess their EFL Writing progress revealed the use a comparison between their old and new pieces of writings. This was the major means of self-assessment adopted, notably by the high achieving and the average informants. This kind of assessment was reported to help the participants reflect critically on their own improvement and find out their limitations in the learning-to-write process.

The findings were consonant with the literature of the autonomous learner profile and independent behaviour constructed by Little (1991), in which he posited that

autonomous behaviour entails a belief that the task should not be accomplished by the teacher solely. It rather requires learners' willingness to assume responsibility of some aspects of one's learning process like self-assessment.

Seeking feedback from significant people was another out-of class activity used by the participants, and which was reminiscent of the autonomous learner's characteristics. Particularly, the high achieving and the average participants demonstrated an understanding that the progress in EFL Writing required adequate assistance of competent people and expert others such as teachers, mates, and professionals.

This view is in harmony with Vygotsky's (1987) research on the *Zone of Proximal Development* and more particularly with his notion of *assistance assumption* that stresses the kind of help the learner seek to be afforded. ENSB EFL participants' perceptions of feedback was not associated to the teacher's task only . It involved other expert people. The findings unravelled the awareness of the high achieving and the average participants regarding the quality of the scaffolding they needed to facilitate their understanding of their own limitations, hence empower them. The obtained findings corroborate other studies on Thai students (Swatevacharkul, 2008).

• Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

A survey of the literature reveals two broad conceptualizations of teacher's roles in language learning. The first of these is that of the teacher as the authority figure in language teaching and learning. This involves also the teacher as the imparter of knowledge, directing and controlling all learning in the classroom. The second conceptualization conceives the teacher as a facilitator of language learning process.

With respect to the teacher's roles in pedagogy for autonomy, the literature has unravelled two primary conceptualizations (Voller, 1997; Benson, 2011). The first role concerns his/her function as a guide towards learner autonomy. This involves both

his/her task as a technical and a psycho-social support. In the technical support, the teacher is expected to act as a facilitator, a resource, and a counselor. The conceptualization of his role as a psycho-social support is closely related to his task as a powerful motivational tool for his/her learners (Benson, 2001).

The gathered qualitative data indicated the emergence of technical support, psycho-social support, and provider of knowledge subcategories that described ENSB EFL informants' perceptions of their teachers' functions. The examination of the answers revealed that both the high achieving and the average participants expected their EFL Writing teachers to provide a technical support. Such a role implied the provision of constructive feedback and sample writings, the monitoring of students' progress, and the teaching of EFL Writing strategies. These tasks correspond to the teacher role as a facilitator in the pedagogy for autonomy (Little, 1991).

Additionally, the participants' conceptualized EFL Writing teacher as someone who needs to adapt his teaching content to cater for the students' needs and afford a challenging atmosphere. This role is itemized under the task of a resource in the pedagogy for autonomy (Benson, 2001). Subscribing to such a view, both the high achieving and the average participants were consonant with the autonomous learner profile since they expected their teacher to facilitate EFL Writing learning process through training and teaching them how to learn.

Such a perception of EFL Writing tutor's role as a teacher of language strategies is fundamental to the behavior of autonomous learners. This is in line with the thoughts of Galloway and Labarca (1990), who postulated the significance of scaffolding as a process that aims at assisting learners to gain awareness of their learning process. According to Little (1991), this kind of scaffolding lays the ground for greater learner autonomy to develop. This is because when the students' require the teacher to equip them with the needed language strategies, they expect him/her at a given moment to gradually withdraw his/her support, leaving more space to them to take greater control over their learning process.

Regarding the teacher role as a psycho-social support, the current research showed that being motivated and encouraged to express themselves freely was frequently required by the high achieving participants (See table 5.3). The examination of the findings revealed modesty and care as two personal qualities that the high achieving participants required in their EFL Writing teachers. Additionally, creating an optimum and supportive learning climate was highly demanded by the high achieving participants for a free practice of their EFL Writing activities.

Negative pressure exercised by some teachers was, however, claimed by the informants as impairing their effective EFL Writing performance. Similar to the obtained results, scholars like Benson (2001) argued that teachers' tolerance, empathy, and non-judgmental spirit are crucial in enhancing their learner autonomy. The current study findings found also support in Little' (1991) ideas, who posited that abandoning negative and lingering notion on the part of the teacher is prerequisite to create a supportive and optimum learning context and achieve fruitful learning.

The qualitative results on the teacher role category indicated that a considerable number (58, 3%) of the average participants and the majority of the low achieving informants (75%) subscribed to the profile of dependent learners since they could not disassociate EFL Writing teacher' role from that of the supplier of knowledge. This was displayed through the full responsibility these participants attributed to their teacher in teaching and assessing their EFL Writing skills.

According to their perceptions, EFL Writing teacher is required to be in-charge of teaching them how to write, showing them their own mistakes, and informing them about their own progress (See table 5.3). These findings correspond to the traditional role of teachers constructed by Little (1991), who describes them as people who carry the whole burden of learning on their own shoulders. With such a perception in mind, the participants are subscribed to the profile of passive and teacher-dependent students, who like to be spoon-fed.

The gathered data on the average and the low performing participants correspond to previous past research studies on Chinese and Turkish learners, who

displayed passivity and reluctance to assume responsibility of their EFL Writing learning process, showing more dependency on the syllabus presented in the classroom (Thang and Alias, 2007; Koçak and Alay, 2003).

- **Perceptions of EFL Writing**

As shown in the obtained results, EFL Writing was positively perceived by the high achieving and the average participants as a skill that was completely different from and complementary to the other modules studied at ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah). Congruent with previous research studies (Cotterall, 1995) on Thailand, Chinese, and Indonesian's students, appreciating learning of EFL Writing and other types of learning describes another feature of an autonomous language learner. This knowledge was, however, completely absent among the low achieving participants' repertoire in the present study. EFL Writing skill was rather perceived as a daunting skill (See table 5.4).

As speculated in the literature (Cotterall, 1991), learners' perceptions of their learning process has an influential impact on the approach adopted in language learning. The findings were consistent with such a view in that the negative perceptions of EFL Writing skill by the low achieving and 50% of the average participants explained their dependence on their EFL Writing teachers in telling and showing every aspect in their learning process. Also, the obtained results on the low achieving participants' limited repertoire of steps used to sustain their progress and assess it (See table 5.2) was primarily catalyzed by their negative perception of EFL Writing as a laborious skill.

Based on the above collected data and discussions, it is suggested that although ENSB EFL participants, namely the high achieving and nearly half of the average participants employed a variety of out-of class steps to learn EFL Writing autonomously and possessed a modern view of their teachers as facilitators and counsellors, it is early to assume they have a capacity for autonomy. This is because having readiness for autonomy does not necessarily mean being autonomous.

Readiness for autonomy stems on the students' perceptions and beliefs of their behaviours . Such a belief is defined , in the present thesis as a factor that favours the promotion of learner autonomy. As argued by many scholars advocating learner autonomy (Holec, 1981), autonomous learner needs to have the capacity to fix objectives, select methods and techniques, use self-evaluation, and contribute into the definition of content (Benson, 2001). Furthermore, as documented by Little (1991), learner autonomy is a conscious control of one's own learning process and a purposeful use of the learning strategies. These principles may not apply to ENSB EFL Third Year participants, including the high achieving and some of the average informants.

For example, when asked if they know how to set objectives and use self-evaluation, all of the participants showed their unfamiliarity with those actions. The major justifications put forward were related to their teachers' teaching methods, which proved inefficient to equip them with EFL Writing learning strategies, raising their awareness about them. According to Little (1991) being equipped with these strategies through a process of learning how to learn is a key role of the teacher to assist learners exercise a conscious control on their own learning process.

Thus, the case of ENSB EFL Third Year participants may reflect the overall educational system operating in most of the Algerian educational institutes ranging from primary schools, secondary schools, to universities. Such a system is still based on teacher-centered approach .Further researches, therefore, are needed to determine the reasons why ENSB EFL students are still incapable of assuming practical decisions relative to their EFL Writing learning process, most notably fixing objectives, selecting methods, materials, and content, and using self-evaluation.

7.2.2 The Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge

The findings of the participants' metacognitive knowledge is presented based on the second qualitative research question guiding phase one :

Research question: What are the underlying categories of metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing reported by ENSB high achieving, average, and low achieving participants?

Based on the findings, person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge are the three major categories revealing ENSB participants' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing.

- **Person Knowledge**

The reported qualitative result revealed that self-efficacy and motivation described the participants' person knowledge in EFL Writing. In self-efficacy category, writing anxiety was found as the most frequently mentioned subcategory triggering the participants' negative attitude about EFL Writing. However, although anxiety was displayed by the participants with the three proficiency levels, the findings indicated a potential difference in the factors triggering this anxiety among the three groups (i.e., high achieving, average, and low achieving participants)..

For example, the high achieving and the average participants expressed their anxiety with regard to a cluster of external factors such as the academic teaching context of EFL Writing, their EFL Writing teachers' instructions, and the type of EFL Writing tasks provided in classrooms. However, the low achieving participants' writing anxiety rather emanated from their negative perceptions of EFL Writing as a complex, effortful, and a laborious process (See table 5.2).

Congruent with previous research studies on Chinese student writers (Arndt, 1987; Tsui, 1996; Yang, 2006; You, 2004), the results obtained from the present qualitative study on the participants' self-efficacy demonstrated that self-confidence regarding one's writing capacities was manifested more frequently by the high achieving and the average participants. They displayed clear bias regarding their self-confidence since they could associate their positive self-perception of EFL Writing

with their awareness of their inborn talents and distinctive mental faculties as ones of their personal attributes (See table 5.2). The low achieving participants, however, didn't show any account of awareness concerning this knowledge. Additionally, they displayed low and negative attitude to EFL Writing due to their linguistic constraints. Not surprisingly then, they didn't improve any enjoyment toward EFL Writing task, nor did they show the needed motivation to write in English.

High achieving participants' mature conceptualization of motivation was further evidenced in their responses regarding their identity as English writers. Because of its key role in determining successful language learner (Cotterall and Murray, 2009), identity knowledge was reported by the high achieving participants in relation to their understanding of their own cognitive capacities, strengths, and weakness as English learners. This knowledge was, however, beyond the scope of the average and the low achieving students (See table 5.6).

• **Task Knowledge**

The participants' metacognitive awareness of task knowledge indicated that the findings on task constraint was congruent with the account of metacognition (Johnson, 2005). This is mainly because qualitative findings revealed that the high achieving and the average participants were aware of the multiple set of constraints impairing their effective performance in EFL Writing (See table 5.11) Accordingly, focus was put on the complex cognitive impediments such as EFL Writing rigid rules and structures that restricted their free writing, time constraint that precluded the effective use of organization strategies, and finally EFL Writing teaching methods, which were claimed as impairing their natural flow of ideas. In contrast, the lack of vocabulary and the poor diction, which are among the primary problems that low achieving learners encounter (Hyland, 2003; Manchon et al., 2009), had overwhelmingly precluded the low achieving participants from expressing their intended meaning in EFL Writing.

Correspondingly, task constraint had affected the participants' perceptions and attitudes of EFL Writing tasks. For example, when queried about how they viewed EFL Writing, the high achieving and the average participants expressed a negative attitude to academic learning context as one external and deep-rooted constraint. Their answers involved rich conceptualizations of the factors catalysing their anxiety in EFL Writing, and focus was mainly put on the negative attitudes disapproved toward the nature of the writing tasks required in the classrooms. The findings correspond to a previous research study on Chinese student writers (Ruan, 2014; Emig, 1983).

In fact, both the high achieving and the average participants tended to conceptualize EFL Writing acquired in their classrooms as a highly structured language learning task. Such a writing task was perceived more as an activity that was imposed by rigid academic rules and restricted by their teachers' instructions than as a process, through which they could sustain their cognitive and creative ideas. According to them, their teachers viewed their EFL Writing assignments as final products to examine and criticize. This academic learning context undermined their motivation to academic EFL Writing acquisition.

On the other hand, anxiety toward EFL Writing among the low achieving participants emanates from their EFL Writing constraints such as limited size of linguistic repertoire and poor writing techniques. This corresponds to what some authors (Schoonen et al., 2003) had suggested about the significant influence that lexical knowledge and vocabulary size may have on the learners' attitude to learning and the quality of the text they produce.

Johnson's (2005) research on expertise in EFL Writing suggests that expert writers have richer conceptualisations in regard to their audience. The findings of the present research on ENSB EFL Third Year participants' understanding of their audience didn't correspond to such a view. The obtained results on the high achieving and the average participants were not found typical of expert writers. Given that

twelve of the participants in this study were high achieving with a history of school success, it was unclear why the majority of them didn't show a keen understanding of audience. This was even surprising because most of them referred to the importance of meeting the reader's needs in the transcripts. However, when being required to identify these readers, they didn't show an account of awareness of a real audience.

The high achieving participants demonstrated a large sense of audience claiming that their written compositions were intended for a large and undetermined number of population that fluctuate according to the purpose of their writing tasks. On the other hand, both the average and the low achieving participants' knowledge of keeping a real reader in mind seemed to be lacking. Their answers included very limited audience, encompassing their teachers as examiners of the accuracy of their final products, their family members, or their friends. Like the low achieving participants, the average ones displayed a vague sense of audience, comprising unknown readers. Based on the findings data, it is suggested that further research studies need to be undertaken to identify the reasons why Algerian EFL students in general and ENSB EFL students in particular couldn't conceptualize a real audience while writing in English.

The results from this study indicated also that the participants' failure to write with real audience and purpose in mind had an influential impact on their awareness of task demand variable. For example, the high achieving and average participants' understanding of task knowledge in relation to audience awareness along with the importance of linguistic resources in task demand suggested that their audience understanding was less associated with content development since it was closely related with the aesthetic aspect of the written text. This involved the choice of sophisticated words, figurative language, canonical expressions, and mechanics like punctuation to attract the reader.

In terms of the participants' knowledge regarding task purpose and task demand,

the results revealed the high achieving and the average participants' familiarity with the importance of a set of substantive processes such as essays and paragraphs conventions.

Unlike the lengthy and vivid explanation provided by the high achieving and the average participants regarding EFL text conventions, the statements proffered by the low achieving ones about essay and paragraph conventions were mainly concerned with superficial definition of body paragraphs, thesis statement, conclusion, and coherence and unity. The findings were in harmony with earlier study on Iranian EFL learners' writing metacognitive awareness (Maftoon and Farahian, 2014).

• **Strategy Knowledge**

As speculated in the literature and conducted researches about learners' metacognitive strategy knowledge, (Johnson, 2005; WaterS and ScHneider, 2010), the findings revealed that the participants, namely the high achieving and the average ones employ a cluster of planning strategies in EFL Writing (see table 5.10). These involve organizing an essay, brainstorming, drafting, outlining, and generating. The results had also indicated that strategies like numbering, putting a sentence into a given order (e.g. from general to specific or vice versa; from the weakest to the strongest point or vice versa), and starting with attractive introduction constitute the major planning strategies used by the participants, and more particularly by the high achieving and the average informants . The findings imply that these participants are using high order compositional processes relevant to planning strategies (WaterS and ScHneider, 2010).

However, it should be mentioned that even when these participants reported practicing these strategies in their EFL Writing tasks, they failed to verbalize them when queried to label them. They could describe them only as steps, which were employed intuitively. This suggests that although the high achieving and average participants practiced a cluster of planning strategies, they didn't not possess a metacognitive awareness about them.

This lack of metacognitive strategies knowledge was attributed by the participants to the type of instructions afforded by their EFL Writing teachers, who didn't not focus attention on teaching them EFL Writing strategies. Being in harmony with past conducted research, (Englert et al., 1990), the lack of strategy metacognitive knowledge among ENSB EFL Third Year students with the three proficiency levels had an influential impact on their mastery of EFL Writing task. The participants were disadvantageous since the performance of good EFL Writing depends not only on the use but also on the awareness of EFL Writing strategies.

Writing as telling mind was found to be adopted as an approach by some cases of the high achieving and all the other participants (i.e., average and low achieving participants) when performing their EFL Writing tasks. This involved jotting down information that were already organized in the participants' mind. In this situation, less reliance on knowledge-transforming processes (Johnson, 2005) was found, where content, words, syntax, a specific topic, and a text genre were selected to meet the need of a given audience. These findings suggest that the informants' metacognitive knowledge regarding strategy use was very limited. Even the high achieving and the average participants used to rely on the telling approach as it was less demanding for generating and developing ideas.

In examining the participants' knowledge about revision, the results demonstrated that the high achieving and the average informants displayed awareness about the importance of substantive revision. This involves rereading and reviewing EFL Writing ideas, editing a text for content and organisation, and changing key words (See table 5.10). However, when asked if they practiced revision as a strategy in their EFL Writing tasks, the high achieving, the average, and the low achieving reported using more cosmetic correction of the language, highlighting the use of proofreading. In other words, they simply made surface error correction such as checking language accuracy and mechanics of writing, namely grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The findings from the current study were in disagreement with Johnson's

(2005) research on expertise in writing in which the expert writers were claimed to be more engaged in revision than were the novice ones.

The obtained results indicated a considerable link between the participants' audience consideration (task purpose) and their strategies awareness (strategy knowledge). In fact, since the participants' written work was not addressed to meet a real audience expectations, less revision was emphasized, and the use of cosmetic correction with minimal content changes was favoured. Based on the participants' common answers, the major arguments put forwards were related to time factor, satisfaction regarding one's own written ideas, and unwillingness to invest efforts in developing ideas and revising deeply their whole written works.

It should be noted that the categories and subcategories that emerged in this study provide evidence that the participants with the three proficiency levels did not possess enough person, task, and strategy metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing. Not surprisingly then, learner's strategy and task awareness, which correspond to the profile of a good language learner doesn't seem to be part of ENSB EFL Third Year informants' repertoire. All the participants were confused between revision and proof reading. Furthermore, none of them could verbalise and express explicitly planning strategies they were using in EFL Writing. This implies that some of these strategies were used unconsciously by the participants.

As a frequently mentioned factor in the current study, EFL Writing teachers was reported to not explicitly teach EFL Writing strategies because his/her approach was more content-based rather than process-based. Thus, he/she was hold responsible by the participants for their inadequate strategy knowledge in EFL Writing.

7.3 Discussion of the Quantitative Findings (Phase II):

The quantitative survey aimed at explaining the relationship of the categories found and developed from the initial qualitative result with a larger population,

involving 125 participants with three proficiency levels. Thus, the second quantitative phase intends to investigate ENSB Third Year participants' level of readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing, to test out if there is any difference among the high achieving, the average, and the low achieving participants in terms of readiness for autonomy and in terms of metacognitive knowledge, to examine the relationship between these participants' proficiency levels, readiness for autonomy, and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing, and finally to identify the level of influence between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and readiness for autonomy. The findings are presented below.

7.3.1 Readiness for Autonomy: Status of the Participants

The first research question of the quantitative phase aimed to find out the level of readiness for autonomy in learning EFL Writing for Third Year students at ENSB University. The data gathered in the descriptive statistics results (See table 6.2) indicated that the participants' readiness for autonomy was satisfactory. The analysis revealed also that all the participants with the different proficiency levels demonstrated high perception of EFL Writing. They highly admitted that this technical module differs from the other subject matters they are learning in classrooms, displaying a high awareness of the fundamental role this skill played for the effective acquisition of the other EFL modules. As speculated in conducted researches (Cotterall, 1995), this kind of perception is central to the beliefs underlying learner autonomy. This was supported by the fact that learners who discern the importance of language learning and appreciate the difference existing between this kind of learning and the other subject matters can have more readiness to invest efforts in their learning process.

Findings revealed also that the participants had high perceptions of their roles as EFL writers (See table 6.2), who highly used personal steps (See table 6.6) to enhance their EFL Writing performance and assess their progress.

The main steps the participants reported they were ready to perform to assure their EFL Writing progress were reading in English, watching English movies, writing in English outside the school, and communicating with native speakers. Concerning the assessment of their progress, the findings revealed a high reliance of the participants on the expert others' feedback and on comparing their old and new pieces of EFL Writing as the major ways of self-assessment. The findings gathered likewise suggested that ENSB Third Year students were ready to use personal out of class activities to enhance their self-directed learning.

Considering the participants' perceptions of their teachers' responsibilities (See table 6.6), the findings indicated their high expectations to see their EFL Writing teachers providing a technical support. They highly wanted their teachers (See table 6.1) to provide them with constructive feedback, to teach them both EFL Writing strategies and self-assessment techniques, and to provide them with models of good EFL Writing texts. Taken together, all these responses were reminiscent of the characteristics of active learners as speculated in the literature by Holec (1991). The findings imply that ENSB EFL Third Year participants were ready to be afforded with opportunities to learn from their teachers how to be autonomous, which may suggest their willingness to take more control over their own learning process of EFL Writing.

Furthermore, the results drawn from the data (See table 6.6) indicated that the participants highly required their EFL Writing teacher to act as a psycho-social support . Subscribing to such a view, the participants wanted their teacher to act as a facilitator of their EFL Writing learning process. This was reflected (See table 6.1) in their high desire to see their EFL Writing teacher as a motivator and a creator of both a positive climate and a challenging learning atmosphere. These perceptions of teacher's role corresponded to the survey of the literature (Little, 1991 ; Benson, 2001), stating that the autonomy-supportive qualities such as patience, tolerance , and empathy are key factors to sustain mutual respect between teachers and learners (Stutridge, 1997).

Also, based on the statistical evidence in table 6.6, the findings showed a low level of dependence on the teacher among the participants with the three proficiency levels. This suggests their readiness to rely less on their EFL Writing teachers and more on themselves. This was supported by the low rated means attributed to the tasks of the teacher as the major responsible for most of the aspects related to their EFL Writing learning such as correcting mistakes (Mean=1, 63), showing progress (Mean=1, 70), and identifying strengths and weaknesses in EFL Writing (Mean=1, 70). This suggests the participants' readiness to assume an active role in EFL Writing learning process.

The results of the present quantitative study mismatched the findings of Abdel Razeq (2014), who posited that Palestinian learners were dependent on their teachers for most of the areas pertaining to their learning process. The results were also inconsistent with a cluster of conducted researches by Chan et al., (2002) with Chinese students and Yildirim (2008) with Turkish ones.

7.3.2 Metacognitive Knowledge: Status of the Participants

As aforementioned, the second research question in the quantitative phase was stated as follows: 'To what extent do ENSB students have metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing?'. The objective of this research question was to investigate ENSB EFL Third Year participants' level of metacognitive knowledge. The findings revealed a moderate metacognitive knowledge of the participants. Similar to the findings of Cotterall (2009), person knowledge, in this study, was found the less scored type of metacognitive knowledge than task knowledge . As posited by Cotterall, learners in general encounter difficulties in reporting their person knowledge because it is a kind of general reflection they are required to do regarding not only their past and present experiences but also the personal factors that inhibit/sustain their learning process. Regarding motivation in person knowledge (See table 6.7), the findings revealed a high sense of enjoyment among the participants .

Task knowledge was ranked the highest among person and strategic knowledge (See table 6.4). The same results were articulated in the findings of Cotterall (2009), capitalizing that the reason for this can be due to the fact that task knowledge is the most concrete of the two other types of metacognitive knowledge. Thus, it is easier for learners to speak about it since most of the information about EFL Writing task are instructed by their EFL Writing teachers in classrooms.

The descriptive statistics of task knowledge as reported in table 6.7 demonstrated the participants' moderate knowledge regarding their EFL Writing constraint. As indicated in table 6.3, the participants' highest constraint was topic knowledge. This suggests their high awareness about the fact that unfamiliar topics undermined their performance in EFL Writing. Limited allocated time was also viewed as a major constraint triggering high pressure in the participants by both limiting their imagination and precluding them from reviewing their papers for language errors. These findings suggest that the participants did not have enough control over time management strategies.

As revealed in the findings (See table 6.7), the participants possessed an average knowledge of task purpose . Moderated attention (See table 6.3) was attributed to the aesthetic aspect of the text and to the correct spelling, while more importance was assigned to content. The findings run on parallel with the study of Weigle (2005), who posited that learners whose focus was less put on the surface level of the text like paper format and spelling, and more on content were likely to have metacognitive awareness regarding task purpose.

High understanding of task demand was shown in the results (see table 6.7). Findings on task knowledge in table 6.7 revealed also that generally the participants had unsatisfactory levels of audience understanding. Above three fifth (64%) of participants demonstrated a limited audience understanding (See table 6.3), considering their families and friends as their major audience .

The findings suggested that the participants possessed an ambiguous and moderate conceptualization of audience. Accordingly, the participants did not focus attention on meeting audience expectations when writing in English. The results gathered likewise were in contrast with the study of Weigle (2005), foregrounding the significant role of good understanding of audience in determining high academic success. Accordingly, high performing learners are supposed to have higher audience knowledge if they are to produce quality EFL Writing, which was not the case in the present study.

Being the least scored knowledge, strategic knowledge findings were consonant with the results yielded by Cotterall's (2009) research study, positing that this type of knowledge is the most abstract compared to person and task knowledge. Because strategy knowledge requires thinking and speaking about cognitive and metacognitive strategies, learners find it difficult to talk about it. Not surprisingly then, ENSB EFL participants attributed their lack of awareness of the strategies use to their teachers who did not provide them with strategy training. This was evidenced by their average knowledge and use of planning (Mean=3, 16) and revision strategies (Mean=3, 04) (See table 6.7).

The finding gathered likewise suggests that the participants lacked the planning strategies that assist them in transforming knowledge to create new one . They were still using as called by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) knowledge-telling strategy that requires less cognitive efforts. Although the participants reported using few planning strategies (e.g., numbering, moving from general to specific , and from the least important to the most important ideas), these are mainly deployed to express ideas that were already organized in their minds. The findings were in opposition with Weigle's (2005) study, which stated that the high performing learners were more likely to use a variety of planning strategies to transform and create new knowledge.

7.3.3 Difference in the Participants' Readiness for Autonomy and Metacognitive knowledge According to the Participants' Proficiency Levels

To answer research question three 'Are there any differences in ENSB students' readiness for autonomy regarding their proficiency levels?', Independent sample T-test was implemented to compare the means of readiness for autonomy between paired samples ; (average and low), (high and low), and (high and average). Based on the statistical evidence involved in the findings, it was revealed that the high achieving, the average, and the low achieving participants' level of readiness and willingness to exert control over their EFL Writing learning process was not significantly different from each other.

The findings suggest that the participants' academic achievement was not significantly related to their readiness for autonomy. The obtained findings corroborated previous investigation studies (Xuan et al., 2018), revealing no significant difference among the Malaysian higher and lower proficiency levels students regarding their readiness for autonomous learning. However, different results were articulated in the research carried out by Abdel Razeq (2014), capitalizing a significant mean difference between the high and low performing Palestinian students in their practices for autonomous learning. The results gathered likewise was also in opposition with the research conducted by Johnson (2005), documenting that the high achieving informants had more tendencies to be independent than their counterparts, the low achieving ones.

To investigate a response to the fourth research question 'Are there any differences in ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge regarding their proficiency levels?', the mean differences between the participants' metacognitive knowledge with respect to their proficiency levels (High, average, and low) was observed through an independent sample t-test. The results demonstrated no significant mean difference in metacognitive knowledge between the high achieving, the average, and the low

achieving participants (See table 6.11).

These findings imply that learners' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing was not closely related to their proficiency levels. Thus, drawing in opposition with the investigation of Gassner (2012), the obtained findings revealed that ENSB EFL participants with higher proficiency levels did not possess more metacognitive awareness of their own learning process than those with lower proficiency levels. Thus, academic success at ENSB (i.e., Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzareah) are caused by other factors that are worth being investigated in future researches.

7.3.4 The Relationship between the Participants Readiness for Autonomy, their Metacognitive Knowledge, and their Proficiency Levels

By addressing the fifth research question 'Is there any significant relationship between ENSB students' readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency levels?', the findings revealed a very weak association between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their proficiency levels. Given the fact that the relationship between the two constructs was very weak, the findings may hint that both autonomous and dependent students can be academically successful. These results corroborated past research study conducted by (FreaMea et al., 2019), which posited that Philippian students' achievements were not significantly correlated with their autonomy. However, it contradicted the common belief held by the advocates of learner autonomy such as Little (1991), who capitalized that autonomous learners are more likely to be academically successful than their counterparts the dependent ones. It was not the case of ENSB EFL Third Year informants.

This weak relationship between the informants readiness for autonomy and their proficiency levels may also suggest that ENSB EFL students regardless their proficiency levels were prone to the traditional teaching and the spoon-feeding approach. The results, gathered likewise, can raise the question of whether readiness for autonomy is a reliable indicator of the good academic performance in EFL Writing within the ENSB educational context or not. Therefore, further examinations are

sought to investigate the other contextual factors that may affect the academic success of ENSB students like culture and past learning experiences.

The findings also revealed (6.14) weak association between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their proficiency levels. This suggests that ENSB EFL informants were likely to succeed academically in EFL Writing without having enough metacognitive awareness regarding this skill. These results contradicted previous investigation studies (FreaMea et al., 2019) on Philippian students, which illustrated a significant and moderate correlation between their metacognitive knowledge and their academic achievement. Also, the findings didn't draw a parallel with previous studies of (Yanyan ,2010; Baker and Brown, 1984; Devine, 1993; Flavell, 1979; Kasper, 1997; Vandergrift, 2002; Xu and Tang, 2007), foregrounding that the possession of a strong metacognitive knowledge base is critical to academic successful learning.

It could also be observed from the data that a positive correlation existed between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge. Given that the correlation is statistically significant and strong, it can be suggested that the participants with higher metacognitive knowledge could have more readiness for autonomous learning of EFL Writing. This indicated a strong relationship between the two constructs where the raise in metacognitive knowledge is accompanied by a linear raise in readiness for autonomy.

The findings were congruent with studies carried out by Latief (2013) on Indonesian students, illustrating that the higher the participants' metacognitive knowledge was, the higher their autonomy level was. This can provide also evidence to support the validity of (Alvarez, 2010; Benson, 2007; Little, 2010 ideas that metacognition is an essential foundation of learner autonomy. The results of the present quantitative study was also congruent with a past research study on Turkish students' writers (Yaylı,2010) that emphasised metacognitive knowledge as the key indicator of learner autonomy.

The strong correlation between metacognitive knowledge and readiness for autonomy (See table 6.18) was displayed mainly in the participants' perceptions of their roles. This strong correlation indicated that the participants' awareness of EFL Writing skill was the outcome of their personal efforts, using personal out-of class steps to progress in EFL Writing ($r=, 572, p<0, 05$) and to assess it ($r=, 438, p<0, 05$).

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated a weak correlation between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their perceptions of their teachers' roles (See table 6.19) on the one hand and a very weak correlation ($r=, 223, p>0, 05$) between their perception to EFL Writing and metacognitive knowledge on the other hand. The obtained results implied no association between how the participants perceived their teachers' roles and their attitudes to their metacognitive knowledge. Thus, there is evidence to suggest that ENSB EFL Third Year participants didn't receive instructions in classroom about metacognitive knowledge. The participants' moderated level of metacognitive awareness didn't emanate from their EFL Writing teachers' explicit instructions on metacognitive strategies but from the EFL Writing lessons received in their classrooms.

Among the three components of metacognitive knowledge (See table 6.15), person knowledge was found to have the highest correlation value ($r=, 664, p<0.05$) with participants' readiness for autonomy; task knowledge (See table 6.16) was positioned the second ($r=, 459, p<0, 05$), and strategy knowledge (See table 6.17) was ranged as the third ($r=, 271, p<0, 05$). The findings of the present study corroborated those of the previous research carried out by Yanyan (2010). Thus, the answer to the fifth research question is that the participants' metacognitive knowledge correlates significantly with their readiness for autonomy.

The strong association found between the participants' person knowledge and their readiness for autonomy (See table 6.15) suggests that higher motivation, namely the sense of identity ($r=, 627, p <0, 05$) is likely to sustain the participants' willingness

to be autonomous learners of EFL Writing. Being consistent with the literature posited by Flavell (1979), the findings revealed that the participants who possess higher awareness about themselves as EFL writers are more prepared toward taking control over their own learning process.

Being congruent with the studies conducted by Yanyan (2010), a moderated association was found between the participants' task knowledge and their readiness for autonomy (See table 6.16) ($r=, 459, p<0, 05$). However, many aspects of the participants' task knowledge had weak correlation value with their readiness for autonomy such as task constraint ($r=, 273, p<0, 05$), task demand ($r=, 299, p<0, 05$), audience understanding ($r=, 276, p<0, 05$), and task purpose. The results revealed that the informants' readiness for autonomous learning of EFL Writing was not related to their awareness of their constraints, audience understanding, task demand, and task purpose knowledge regarding their EFL Writing task. Hence, to promote the participants' readiness for autonomy, their awareness to these task knowledge aspects need to be raised by their teachers through a process of learning how to learn.

As speculated in the literature review (Little, 1991), metacognitive knowledge in general and task knowledge in particular should be acquired in the classroom by teachers as a way to assist learners in gaining insights into the different aspects of their learning process. Given the significant role of task knowledge (Flavell, 1979), more efforts on the part of ENSB Writing teachers are sought to raise this knowledge in their students if they are to help them take a conscious control of their EFL Writing learning process.

The relationship between the participants' readiness for autonomy and task knowledge (See table 6.17) was found weak ($r=, 271, p<0, 05$). This implies that the participants' readiness for autonomy was not sufficiently related to their EFL Writing strategies knowledge, namely to those of planning and revision strategies. The results gathered likewise contradicted the idea of Little (1991) and Holec (1981), who noted

that a capacity for autonomous learning requires an effective use of learning strategies. The finding further revealed that higher awareness of planning and revision strategies use is likely to lead to higher participants' readiness for autonomy.

7.3.5 The Influence of the Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge on Their Readiness for Autonomy

By addressing the sixth research question 'Can ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy?', a regression analysis was conducted. From the analysis of the results (See table 6.23), it was found that the participants' metacognitive knowledge was a predictor ($p=0,000 <0.01$) of their readiness for autonomous learning of EFL Writing. As it predicted from 42, 3% of the variance of readiness for autonomy (See table 6.21), metacognitive knowledge was suggested to play an utmost role in determining ENSB Third Year informants' readiness toward autonomous learning. In line with previous research studies (Zarei, 2010; Ismael, 2015) conducted with Iranian students, their findings denoted that enhancing autonomy in learners depended on activating their metacognitive knowledge about their EFL Writing learning. The findings of the present quantitative study was also consistent in the literature (Zimmerman and Schunk 1989; Little, 1991; Dickinson, 1992; Oxford, 1990, 2003; Wenden, 1991), stressing that the control over ones' own learning highly depends on the awareness about the important aspects of this learning process. As posited by Wenden (2001, p.62), metacognitive knowledge is prerequisite to the deployment of ...self-regulatory processes». Thus, fostering metacognitive knowledge base in EFL Writing learners is a needed step for those teachers who aim at sustaining autonomous behavior in them.

Thus, in order that EFL Writing teachers at ENSB assist their students in directing purposefully and autonomously their EFL Writing learning process, they are highly appealed to foster their metacognitive knowledge base. This can be achieved as articulated by Cotterall (2009), a) through raising their awareness on their strengths

and weaknesses in EFL Writing, b) through enhancing their understanding of the constraints, demand, and purpose of the EFL Writing task, and c) through sustaining their consciousness in relation to strategy knowledge and use of EFL Writing task.

Based on the initial qualitative and quantitative findings, it is worth noting that Algerian education context in general and ENSB teaching and learning context in particular are based on spoon-feeding approach, where the majority of students are not equipped with the needed tools to become autonomous. Also, a considerable number of EFL Writing teachers are still using traditional and content-based teaching methods. The same results were articulated in the findings of previous studies conducted in Algeria by (Benadla ,2013; Kadi 2018), capitalizing that the teacher behaviour underlying traditional and authoritative figures is rooted in the Algerian society. In other words, it is part of the Algerian teacher character, who feels more secure using teacher-centred approach than adopting autonomy-based approach. This was also related to statements of (Semmouk , 2005), positing that the absence of critical thinking and negotiation are the major features of the Algerian individual's character and psyche being instructed to accept family orders and norms. Thus, being accustomed to such practices from primary schools, the Algerian learner finds it difficult to move toward autonomy at university level. This is mainly because his/her past learning experience didn't involve any training on learning how to be autonomous, nor did it aim at equipping him/her with the needed learning strategies and raise his/her metacognitive awareness.

7.7 Conclusion:

The last chapter provided a discussion of data collected from qualitative and quantitative phases. The major findings were used to answer the research questions guiding this study. The discussion of qualitative data revealed that although ENSB participants used a cluster of steps that were reminiscent to autonomous learner profile, they were not prone to completely assume responsibility over their EFL Writing learning process. Nevertheless, while a considerable number of the participants expected their writing teacher to act as a facilitator, some of them subscribed to dependent learners profile, requiring their teacher to play a traditional role as the source of knowledge. Thus, based on the review of the advocates of learner autonomy, it was suggested that the informants lacked well-defined strategies for taking practical decisions regarding their learning process. Qualitative data provided an understanding of ENSB EFL metacognitive knowledge. The findings on their person knowledge revealed that anxiety to EFL Writing as a daunting process was commonly believed by the low achieving participants. For the high achieving and the average informants, however, writing anxiety emanated from ENSB teaching practices of EFL Writing and the 'rigid rules' involved in academic EFL Writing. ENSB Third Year participants displayed a lack of awareness concerning significant areas of metacognitive knowledge, more particularly audience understanding, planning, and revising strategies.

Build up on the qualitative data, the quantitative discussion indicated that the participants' displayed satisfactory level of readiness for autonomy, while they still needed to apply efforts as to enhance their metacognitive knowledge level. Due to some factors discussed in this chapter, no difference in readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge base was found among the participants with the three proficiency levels. Correspondingly, it was suggested that no significant relationship exists between the participants' proficiency levels and the two other variables (i.e.,

readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge). However, the findings revealed that the participants' readiness for autonomous learning in EFL Writing was highly influenced by their metacognitive knowledge. The major assumption of the present study was that the more this knowledge is promoted in learners by their teacher, the more their readiness for autonomous learning is likely to raise.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has provided an overview on the existing literature on the definitions of learner autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and EFL Writing. In doing so, the theories of the three most prominent figures in the philosophy of education along with the three most influential theories in the educational psychology were highlighted in chapter one. Their underlying philosophical as well as psycho-educational ideas supporting learner autonomy development as an educational objective were emphasized. Moving from general to specific, chapter two comprises learner autonomy definition in EFL learning context in the light of the three fundamental dimensions; methodological, psychological, and content. The conditions as well as the factors optimizing the promotion of learner autonomy were stressed. On a narrow scope, metacognitive knowledge was defined in chapter three based on Flavell typology; person, task, and strategy knowledge. An overview of EFL Writing teaching and assessment approaches, major constraints, and optimum conditions for its promotion are presented and stressed.

This study was conducted to explore Third Year ENSB students' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive language base as two primary conditions that are instrumental for promoting their EFL Writing performance. It also sought to unfold the relationship between the informants' readiness for autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels in EFL Writing learning process. To achieve these objectives an exploratory mixed methods design was employed in this study. The last section is an attempt to provide insights into the limitations of the current study and a range of recommendations for future researches.

One of the major research findings was that the informants with the three proficiency levels displayed a satisfactory degree of readiness for autonomy and an average metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing learning process. The qualitative findings revealed that the participants demonstrated a readiness to assume a set of out-of-class actions and steps to enhance the quality of their EFL Writing. Such actions were reading and writing in English, using audio-visuals, seeking assistance from

online expert writers, speaking to native speakers for a better EFL Writing performance, and finally assessing their progress by comparing their old pieces of writing with the new ones. As revealed in the discussion of this study, these actions reflected the personal efforts exhibited by the participants to assume a responsibility in EFL Writing learning process. The participants were still incapable to fix objectives, select methods, materials, and content, and use self-evaluation because they didn't receive any training about learning strategy knowledge and use in general and about EFL Writing strategies knowledge in particular.

Findings showed also that the high achieving and the average participants expected a technical support from their teachers. With regard to these expectations, the informants expressed a desire to receive explicit and constructive feedback from their teachers along with further functions. Such functions were the provision of model written texts, the guidance on how to monitor their progress, the teaching of EFL Writing strategies. Two further functions required from the teacher as a technical support were focusing on teaching skills that cater for their own needs and creating for them a challenging learning environment.

Additionally, the most frequently mentioned teacher's role reported by mostly the high achieving students was associated with a psycho-social support. This demonstrated that high performing students required some personal qualities in the teacher such as modesty and care because they wanted him to create an optimum and supportive learning climate. By joining the existing literature (Little 1991) the students who subscribed to such a view, were consonant with the autonomous learner profile. This was also revealed by their positive perceptions to EFL Writing as a skill that is different and at the same time complementary to the other subject matters studied at ENSB.

Further findings regarding the teacher role revealed that the low achieving and more than half of the average informants subscribed to the profile of dependent learner

because they conceptualized their teachers as the depository of knowledge. They were hold responsible for the major aspects of their EFL Writing learning process ranging from showing them how to write, correcting their mistakes, and showing them their own progress. This view was also triggered by their negative perceptions of EFL Writing as a difficult skill.

Another major qualitative finding was concerned with the participants' metacognitive knowledge base in EFL Writing. It was found that the participants demonstrated their person knowledge with regard to self-efficacy and motivation knowledge. High achieving and average informants' anxiety was found to be triggered by the academic EFL Writing taught in the classroom context and by the teaching methods offered by their teachers. For the low achieving participants, anxiety to EFL Writing was more the outcome of their constraints and poor linguistic background. Further, the high achieving and the average participants associated their self-confidence in EFL Writing with inborn talents and distinctive mental faculties; whereas, their motivation was displayed through their enjoyment to EFL Writing task and their knowledge about their own identify as English writers.

Moreover, qualitative data analysis showed that the achieving and the average students' major constraints in EFL Writing were triggered by the academic rules and structures, the allocated time, and topic knowledge. Finally, teachers' way of instructions was considered as the primary constraints for the participants claiming that their EFL Writings were treated as final products to be examined and assessed by the teacher. For them, this limited the development of their natural flow of ideas.

Although, the participants recognized the importance of ideas and content in a written process, their concept about their audience was poor. In terms of task purpose, the participants, namely the high achieving and the average, demonstrated familiarity with the significance of a set of substantive processes such EFL text content, essay and paragraph conventions, and coherence and unity. However, when committed to the

writing process, less focus was put on content development. Their primary focus shifted toward enhancing the aesthetic aspect of their written texts such as sophisticated words, figurative language, and canonical expressions. Regarding strategy knowledge, ENSB EFL informants demonstrated a shallow knowledge. Their writings were characterized by a telling- showing approach in which they jotted down the ideas that were already internalized in their mind instead of transforming the information and creating new one to fit the required objective in EFL Writing assignments.

Regarding the quantitative findings, the participants' readiness for autonomy as framed in the qualitative data was found satisfactory. However, their metacognitive knowledge about EFL Writing learning process was found to be average. No significant difference in readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge base was found among the participants in terms of their proficiency levels. Nevertheless, their proficiency levels were not significantly related to their readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge, which may suggest that these two variables are not reliable indicators of the Informants' good academic performance in EFL Writing in the Algerian educational context.

The major assumption, in this context, is that ENSB Third Year students can be academically successful without being autonomous and metacognitively aware about their learning process because they are all prone to the traditional way of teaching. Another major quantitative finding indicated that the participants' readiness for autonomy highly depended on their metacognitive knowledge base in EFL Writing. In this respect, it can be hypothesized that if metacognitive knowledge is promoted in EFL Writing by ENSB teachers, EFL students will display higher readiness to assume responsibility of their learning process, hence promote the quality of their EFL Writing papers.

1. Limitations of the Study

By closing this thesis, the researcher aims at looking at any missing pieces that had not been addressed in the current study, and which could provide better insights into the understanding of the topic under study. Given the exploratory nature of the study, there exist some limitations. These are presented along with the recommendations for further researches.

1. In the present study, one of the limitations are concerned with the research instruments phase one. Data in the qualitative phase were gathered only through focus group interview and timed essay. Better idea and deeper insights regarding the participants' metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing could be obtained if a cluster of other instruments such as think aloud protocol and diaries were used to provide a more detailed information about the participants' perceptions.
2. One of the limitations of this study is that the highest score that determined the high achieving students' proficiency level in EFL Writing obtained from the proficiency test was probably estimated at no more than 15. Qualitative data in the present study revealed that the high achieving and most of the average students' shared a number of common points. If the sample population involved higher achiever proficiency students in which the difference between them and the other students is significant, the researcher could capture more variance in the data set.
3. Another major limitation of the present study consists of the small number ($n=4$) of the low achieving participants in the focus group interview (qualitative phase) in comparison with the number of the average ($n=12$) and the high achieving ($n=8$) informants. While the high achieving and the average students demonstrated more voluntary participation in the focus group interview, most of the low achieving subjects were reluctant to participate. A larger sample of the low achieving students would help obtain a holistic view of their perceptions regarding the topic under study (i.e., readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge). In a further research, the

researcher can seek means that help achieve equal size number among the participants' with different proficiency levels to obtain more stable data that can be generalizable in the Likert Scale questionnaire..

4. The likert questionnaire used in the present study was created based on the emergent findings obtained from the qualitative phase. These were used to create a Likert Scale survey for the second quantitative phase. The qualitative data represents the perception of the minority. Thus, there may be other aspects relative to the topic under study (i.e., learner autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing) that were not covered by the purposive sample population in phase one.

5. Findings obtained from qualitative and quantitative methods represent ENSB EFL Third Year students' scope and perceptions. These perceptions are influenced by factors that are specific to ENSB. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the context of ENS Bouzareah.

2. Directions for Future Researches

1. Since little is known about the relationship between Algerian students' autonomy and metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing, further exploratory research studies can be conducted to collect data using introspective research instruments like weekly learning journals, diaries, and think aloud protocol by asking the participants to keep with during their participation to the research. These data collection tools can provide detailed information about the participants' perceptions of their autonomy and metacognitive knowledge.

2. As a frequently mentioned finding in the current study, EFL Writing teachers were reported in the participants' verbatim quotations to not explicitly teach EFL Writing strategies relying more a content-based rather a process-based approach. Further qualitative studies can be conducted to explore the teaching practices of teachers and understand the reasons why Algerian students do not have sufficient metacognitive

knowledge base in EFL Writing, and what are the reasons beyond their incapability to set objectives and assume practical decisions regarding important aspects of their learning process.

3. The present study only explored the participants' self-reported perceptions to their readiness for autonomous learning because it is difficult to measure learner autonomy objectively. Further research studies can be conducted in which accurate measures are developed to collect data regarding actual participants' autonomous level. In doing so, more accurate relationship between learners' autonomy, their metacognitive knowledge, and their proficiency levels can be investigated.

4. One of the primary findings in the quantitative research is the inconsistency between the results and the literature review. This involves mainly the inconsistency between the participants' proficiency levels and both their readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge levels in EFL Writing learning. Further research studies, therefore, can be conducted to explore the other possible factors that can influence Algerian EFL students' academic success.

5. Another major finding in the present study was the significant lack of awareness in relation to the participants' person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge (more particularly audience understanding, planning, and revising strategies). This suggests the importance to promote metacognitive knowledge as a step to enhance students' autonomous behaviour in EFL Writing. Thus, further mixed methods studies need to be carried out, involving EFL Writing courses that aim at raising metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing through well structured and defined programs. The participants' constant reflective essays about their understanding of person, task, and strategic knowledge can be submitted at the end of each course, then examined by the researchers. This can provide better insights into the students' development of metacognitive knowledge in EFL Writing task after each lesson.

6. Lastly, since autonomy is a new western construct, a longitude research can be conducted in which a research study explores the impact of promoting learner autonomy on the participants' EFL Writing learning outcomes. After a period of instruction about how to set objectives, how to use self-assessment, how to select learning materials and techniques, the participants' achievements in EFL Writing will be examined to find out if the instruction on learner autonomy has improved their EFL Writing performance or not.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for the Participants (Phase I)

Interview Protocol Project :

Time of interview :

Date :

Place :

Position of interview :

Questions :

Part I : Learners' Perceptions of their Readiness for Autonomy in EFL Writing learning

- 1 What do you think the teacher should do to help you cope with difficulties you encounter in learning writing skill?
- 2 How do you think the teacher can help you learn writing skills effectively?
- 3 What do you think you should do to see how you are progressing in writing skills?
- 4 How do you think your teacher can help you to see how you are progressing in writing?
- 5 In what way do you think learning how to write in English is different from learning other subjects ?
- 6 Do you think you should learn writing skill effectively? Why/why not?
- 7 What do you think you should do to improve your writing performance ?

Part II : Learners' Metacognitive Knowledge about EFL Writing

Questions :

- 1 What is your general attitude toward writing?

- 2 Do you think you are a good writer in English? What makes you think so?
- 3 What are the obstacles you usually encounter in writing essays?
- 4 What makes good writing?
- 5 What are the English conventions for essay writing that you know? (for example, how to you write an essay?)
- 6 Before writing an essay, what do you try to focus on first?
- 7 Who do you think will read your essay?
- 8 What are the steps you usually follow while writing an essay?
- 9 If you are given a second chance to re-write this essay, what are the changes you will make?

Thank you for your contribution to the interview

Interview Protocol adapted from Creswell (2007).

APPENDIX B

Study Survey Questionnaire for the Participants (Phase II)

Likert Questionnaire

The students are required to respond to the questionnaire according to their understanding

*Obligatoire

Your full name and group *

Votre réponse _____

Your gender *

Male

Female

Your age *

Under 20

20-23

Act
Acc

Likert Questionnaire

*Obligatoire

Section One

I have to read in English (e.g. books, novels, articles) to progress in my writing skill. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I usually write in English at home. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Acc
Acc

I usually write in English at home. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I seldom write in English at home. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I find it difficult to study English writing on my own. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I watch and listen to English movies and documentaries to improve my writing skill. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I talk to native speakers in English to improve my English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I use internet in English to communicate with expert writers. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I assess my progress by comparing my old pieces of writing in English with my new ones. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I like receiving feedback on my progress from significant people (e.g. teachers, family, and mates). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I would like the teacher to give clear feedback about my weaknesses and strengths in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can identify my own weaknesses and strengths in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I think the teacher should give me opportunities to learn about learning strategies in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I think the teacher should give me opportunities to assess my progress in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I think I am able to assess the progress I made in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I find it helpful if the teacher provides with me sample essays to follow. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I find it helpful if the teacher gives me homework to increase my practice in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Teacher's motivation (e.g. verbal reward, attention) is the kind of support I need to improve my writing skill. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I think the teacher should create positive learning environment in EFL writing classroom. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I think it is the teacher's responsibility to show me everything about writing in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I like the teacher to create a challenging learning atmosphere in English writing classroom. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I need the teacher to correct my mistakes in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I need the teacher to show me how I am progressing in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I need the teacher to identify my weaknesses and strengths in English writing. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Learning writing is different from learning other modules. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Learning writing is more difficult than learning other modules. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Writing skill is needed in the acquisition of the other modules. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

[Retour](#)

[Suivant](#)

N'envoyez jamais de mots de passe via Google Forms.

Ce contenu n'est ni rédigé, ni cautionné par Google. [Signaler un cas d'utilisation abusive](#) - [Conditions d'utilisation](#) - [Règles de confidentialité](#)

Section Two

I do not know how to write good paragraphs and essays in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel myself comfortable when writing in English both inside and outside the classroom. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

A
Ac

I prefer to write in my mother tongue than in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am not a good writer in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I believe I am born as a talented writer in English language. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Writing in English is a kind of therapy for me. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I can write good essays in English because I have good ideas, rich vocabulary, and correct grammar. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I know how to write an attractive essay in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I know my own strengths and weakness as a writer in English language. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I have the capacity to express my feelings and ideas in a beautiful English written style. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I know well my mental capacities as a writer in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I have difficulties in writing good introductions. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I rarely review my exam paper when I am bound by the allocated time. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My imagination is limited when I write under time pressure. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I make many language mistakes in EFL writing (e.g. spelling, grammar, and sentence structure). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My problem when writing in English is the lack of vocabulary. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

All my essays in English are read by my teacher only. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Only family and friends read what I write in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

[Retour](#)

[Suivant](#)

Section Three

My audience in English writings can be total strangers. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I basically write for myself. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Ac
Ac

As I write in English, I focus on spelling every word right, on respecting essay and paragraph format , and on making my paper neat. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I usually focus on the aesthetic language when I write in English.(e.g. use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and fancy words). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

A
A

I am familiar with the components of English essays (e.g. introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I know how to write a good thesis statement in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am good at writing topic sentences in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I know the different genres in EFL writing (e.g., expository, descriptive, argumentative, narrative). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Good EFL writing contains clear and original ideas. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Good EFL writing involves attractive language (e.g. use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and fancy words). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Good EFL essay should be correctly formed, neat, and every word should be spelled correctly. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I usually start with a plan before I start to write in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I have a real and specific audience in mind while writing in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I stop while writing and ask myself if the ideas are clear for the reader. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I usually focus on content when writing in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am aware about the factors that disturb me while writing in English. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel more comfortable when I write about the topic I know the most about. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I use some strategies when planning my essay (e.g. numbering, starting from general to specific, and starting from the weakest the strongest ideas). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I usually start writing by jotting down all the ideas I have in mind. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

When I finish writing, I first check the textual features of the paper (e.g. spelling mistakes, grammar, and mechanics). *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

After I finish writing, I first check my paper for content and clarity of meaning. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

End of the questionnaire

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

[Retour](#)

[Envoyer](#)

APPENDIX C

Background Questionnaire to the Participants (Phase 1)

Dear Students,

In connection to my Phd thesis on Learner Autonomy and Metacognitive Awareness in EFL Writing, I seek your valuable co-operation by answering this questionnaire. The major purpose is to gather your background information and past learning experiences regarding EFL language learning in general and EFL Writing in particular. Your identity and individual responses will be treated confidentially and will be used only for this academic research purpose.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please mark (X) as appropriate.

1. Your gender :

Male

Female

2. Your age : (please specify)

Under 20

20-23

24-28

29+

3 Where are you from ? (Please specify)

East Algeria

Central Algeira

c)West Algeria

d) South Algeria

4. Your mother tongue (please specify) :

Arabic

Berber

French

English

others

5 .Your class :

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

4th year

5th year

6. How long have you been studying English language ? (Please specify)

3-5

6-8

9-11

12+

7. How was the experience ? (please specify).

Positive

Negative

Please justify your answer.

.....

.....

8. How long have you been studying EFL writing ? (please specify).

3-5

6-8

9-11

12+

9. How was the experience ? (please specify).

Positive

Negative

Please justify your answer.

.....

.....

APPENDIX D

Proficiency Test Questions for Third Year Students (Phase 1)

Bouzereah High School for Teachers

Groups :1/2/7/8

Department of English

Peda Trends 3rd year

First Term Examination 2018

Write an essay on one of the following topics :

- 1- “Your philosophical journey sometimes may lead your thinking in directions that society does not support” (Manuel Velasquez).
According to many thinkers, the Allegory of the Cave is an extended metaphor that provides further insights into Plato’s perception of philosophy and education. Explain this point using the symbols involved in the Allegory.
- 2- Aristotle has always been distinguished as a philosopher who believes that a balanced person is the happy and educated man . For him, it is the education through habit that enhances moral virtues and guarantees happiness for the citizen in the city state.
Explain this idea in the light of what you have studied.

Good Luck

APPENDIX E

Timed Essay Question (Phase 1)

Write an essay of no more than 100 words to compare between autonomous learners and dependent ones.

APPENDIX F

Pedagogical Trends Analytic Rubric

Student	Date	Topic
Score	Level	Criteria
Critical analysis (6 pts)	14- 17 10 -13 5- 9	High Demonstrates a deep critical analysis of the topic supporting it by some strong arguments. Average Demonstrates a shallow critical analysis of the topic supporting it by some arguments Low Demonstrates no critical analysis of the topic.
Content (5 pts)	14- 17 10 -13 5- 9	High Demonstrates rich ideas relevant to the topic. Average Demonstrates some ideas relevant to the topic. Low Demonstrates very few ideas relevant to the topic.
Organization (3 pts)	14- 17 10 -13 5- 9	High Demonstrates logical sequencing and development of ideas. Average Demonstrates logical sequencing and development of ideas in some parts. Low Demonstrates no logical sequencing and development of ideas.
Vocabulary usage and terminology (3 pts)	14- 17 10 -13 5- 9	High Uses a rich repertoire of philosophical vocabulary. Average Uses some relevant philosophical vocabulary. Low Uses very poor philosophical vocabulary.
Mechanics & grammatical accuracy (3 pts)	14- 17 10 -13 5- 9	High Contains a few spelling and grammar errors. Average Contains some spelling and grammar errors. Low Contains too many basic spelling and grammar errors

Adapted from Jacobs et al, (1981) scoring profile Cited in Weigle, 2002, p116

APPENDIX G

Background Information of the 24 Participants in the Focus Group Interview (Phase I)

Coded-names	Gender	Geographical Area	Mother tongue	Proficiency levels assigned by the Teacher/Researcher	Years of studying English language
LY1	Female	North	Berber	High	11
RM1	Female	North	Algerian dialect	High	11
SL1	Female	North	Berber	High	11
YS1	Female	North	Algerian dialect	High	12+
SR1	Female	East	Berber	Average	11
DJ1	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Low	11
YS2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
SR2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
AZ1	Female	South	Algerian dialect	Average	11
SB1	Female	North	Algerian dialect	High	11
KR1	Female	South	Algerian dialect	Low	11
TH2	Female	East	Algerian dialect	High	11
DJ2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	High	11
MR2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Low	11
FD2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
AB7	Male	North	Algerian dialect	High	11
RW7	Female	West	Algerian dialect	Average	11
ZB7	Female	West	Algerian dialect	Average	11
ZK8	Male	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
MR7	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
Coded-names	Gender	Geographical Area	Mother tongue	Proficiency levels assigned by the Teacher/Researcher	Years of studying English language
IM8	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11

HN8	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11
RM2	Female	North	Algerian dialect	Average	11

APPENDIX H

Sample from the Study: Identifying Verbatim via Nodes in Nvivo Software (Phase I)

The screenshot displays the Nvivo software interface. On the left, a 'Nodes' list is shown with columns for 'Name', 'Files', and 'References'. The 'focus on content' node is highlighted. On the right, a detailed view of this node is shown, including a grid of document thumbnails and a text area displaying verbatim quotes from participants.

Name	Files	References
writing strategies used	1	1
starting with aquote	1	1
keeping one's identity	1	1
unawareness of strategy name	5	7
Task knowledge	1	1
task purpose	0	0
task requirement	1	2
syntactic variety	2	2
recall background language	1	1
logical organization	4	6
focus on vocabulary	1	1
focus on mechanics	1	1
focus on key words	1	1
focus on essay structure	1	1
focus on content	9	13
concern for figurative english	2	2
audience consideration	4	14
task demand	0	0
task constraints	0	0
students' identity	1	1
strategic knowledge	1	1
starting with body paragraphs	2	2
starting with body paragraph	2	2

focus on content

Grid of document thumbnails: G1 part 2 (3), g8 new version (1), Gr 7 voice 16 (1), lydia g 1 (1), romaissa g 1 (2), sara gr 1 (1), selma g 1 (1).

Full Name: Files\lydia g 1
References: 1
Coverage: 2.07%

<Files\G1 part 2> - 3 references coded [1,46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0,84% Coverage

Sabrina: The first thing I focused on before I started writing is are ideas in general. So concerning the language or grammar or tenses. I don't have a problem with that. So when I start writing just say Just come come to me and I do it. Let's say unconsciously. Yes. So I don't have I just have problem with ideas and the way to organize those ideas. So generally, when I started writing. I just put them I I just write the ideas randomly and then I start organize them and this organization just to confuse me because I just have problems with organizing and putting this before this. So that's all I. Well the most important thing I focus on is or our ideas.

Reference 2 - 0,27% Coverage

Yasmine: when I start writing when I am asked to write I focus first of all about what I am going to write about is the idea that I'm going to write about exactly in my opinion or my

APPENDIX I

Sample from the Study: Nodes Hierarchy in Nvivo Software (Phase I)

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
Students' perception to their roles		1	24/06/2020 19:45	HIND	29/06/2020 15:05
Assessing progress		1	29/06/2020 17:19	HIND	29/06/2020 17:19
capacity for understanding EFL language		0	29/06/2020 17:22	HIND	29/06/2020 17:22
understanding books		1	25/06/2020 22:59	HIND	27/06/2020 13:01
understanding native speakers		1	25/06/2020 21:11	HIND	25/06/2020 21:11
writing speed		1	25/06/2020 19:47	HIND	25/06/2020 19:47
editing and comparing old and recent writings		3	25/06/2020 17:40	HIND	27/06/2020 20:37
feedback from significant people		3	24/06/2020 20:28	HIND	29/06/2020 17:33
discovering weaknesses		1	25/06/2020 20:40	HIND	25/06/2020 20:40
motivated by progress		3	24/06/2020 20:23	HIND	27/06/2020 20:34
relying on experts on the net		2	27/06/2020 20:11	HIND	29/06/2020 17:29
Steps for progressing		0	24/06/2020 20:04	HIND	29/06/2020 17:19
listening and watching audio visuals		3	24/06/2020 20:38	HIND	29/06/2020 16:51
reading		3	24/06/2020 20:06	HIND	27/06/2020 21:05
check dictionaries and grammar books		1	25/06/2020 21:23	HIND	25/06/2020 21:23
imitating books styles		2	24/06/2020 20:19	HIND	27/06/2020 20:33
speaking		1	25/06/2020 20:04	HIND	25/06/2020 21:11
writing		3	24/06/2020 20:27	HIND	29/06/2020 17:27
practice (2)		1	29/06/2020 17:34	HIND	29/06/2020 17:34
Teacher Role		0	24/06/2020 19:44	HIND	24/06/2020 19:44
authoritative		1	24/06/2020 20:21	HIND	24/06/2020 20:21
dependence on teacher		0	24/06/2020 20:14	HIND	29/06/2020 15:15
check and correct mistakes		2	24/06/2020 20:10	HIND	29/06/2020 14:51

APPENDIX J

Sample from the Study: Imported Data in Nvivo Software (Phase I)

Name	Codes	References	Modified On	Modified By	Classification
g1 coded transcription		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
G1 part 2		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
g8 new version		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
Gr 7 voice 16		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
lylia g 1		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
romaissa g1		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
sara gr 1		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students
selma g 1		0	10/08/2019 18:41	HIND	ENSB students

APPENDIX K

Email Invitation Letter to the Participants (Phase II)

← Retour ↶ ↷ ➡ Archiver ↗ Déplacer 🗑 Supprimer 🛡 Spam ... ☰ ▲ ▼ ✕

Dear Lyia,

I am attaching in this mail both the message I want you to transfer to your classmates and the link.
Thank you for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Bellimane,

The link is :

<https://forms.gle/yxR3P7sPyWKzoDnJ7>

And the message is as follows:

Activer Window
Accédez aux paramé

Dear students, I am seeking your active cooperation and participation in my Phd thesis. This can be achieved by filling my likert questionnaire. The principle of the questionnaire is so simple. You are required to select the option that represents you the most (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). No justification on your part is required. This will help you to fill in the questionnaire in few minutes only.

Some of personal information (e.g. your full name, group, age, mother tongues etc...) are highly required. These will be coded for sure; I need them to identify you only. So please fill this part. When responding, bear in mind that there is no correct or false answer you can provide; my focus is put on what you think and practice daily (please answer the questions based on your own experience). Please give me the accurate

I would love if all the third year students participate in the survey, for I really need the whole number . Also, I need to collect my data soon, so it will be kind of you if you take no more than one week to submit it . This is the kind of help I require from you in this short period of time (one week).

Activer Window
Accédez aux paramé

Sincerely,

Bellimane,

↶ ↷ ➡ ...

APPENDIX L

Sample from the Study : The Coding Interview Transcripts in Computer (Phase II)

Transcription of Voice recorded group 2

Me: Since you have been required to write the essay you can. So the purpose is that you can refer to it whenever I give you a question and you find it difficult to answer we can refer to the test. You had my first question is and the one who feel comfortable to answer. Start first.

Question 1: What's your general attitude toward writing ? positive ? negative ? You tell me why.

Tahani : [I'm fascinated about writing. I like writing. It's kind of a therapy.] To it. [Also it makes me feel better because I'm letting out all my emotions and all my thoughts.] [It's good to enhance my. To make it better. My skills of writing and my my English my language I'm writing with]

Question 2 : Great. What makes you think you are good. You are. What makes you like writing ?

Tahani : [I like writing because I find it like a sort of art. There are painters there are. There are singers and [I'm an artist in writing]. I like writing.]

Romaissa : [Well before I didn't have such a positive attitude toward writing I used to fear

Commentaire [UW1]: Positive attitude to writing

Commentaire [UW2]: Good feeling/ letting out emotions and thoughts

Commentaire [UW3]: Enhance writing skills and English

Commentaire [UW4]: An artist in writing

Commentaire [UW5]: High self concept in writing

Commentaire [UW6]: Sense of scare before

APPENDIX M

The Coded Categories and Sub-categories of the Study (Phase I)

Categories and Subcategories

Participants' Readiness for Autonomy

A. Students' Perceptions to their roles

1. Steps for progressing
 - a) Reading
 - b) Writing
 - c) Listening and Watching to Audio-visuals
 - d) Online experts in Writing
 - e) Speaking
2. Assessing progress
 - a) Comparing old and new writings
 - b) Feedback from Significant People

B. Students' Perceptions to Teacher's roles

1. Technical support
 - a) Constructive Feedback
 - b) Sample Writing
 - c) Monitoring Progress
 - d) Teaching Strategies
 - e) Catering for Students' needs
 - f) Positive & Challenging learning Atmosphere
2. Psycho-social support
 - a) Motivator
 - b) Encouraging self-expression
3. Imparter of knowledge
 - a) Showing how to write
 - b) Checking and correcting mistakes
 - c) Showing progress

B. Students' Perceptions to Teacher's roles

1. Technical support
 - a) Constructive Feedback
 - b) Sample Writing
 - c) Monitoring Progress
 - d) Teaching Strategies
 - e) Catering for Students' needs
 - f) Positive & Challenging learning Atmosphere
2. Psycho-social support
 - a) Motivator
 - b) Encouraging self-expression
3. Imparter of knowledge
 - a) Showing how to write
 - b) Checking and correcting mistakes
 - c) Showing progress

C. Students Perceptions to EFL Writing task

|

- 1 Different from other modules
- 2 A difficult skill
- 3 Complementary to other modules

Participants' Metacognitive Knowledge in EFL Writing

Person knowledge

- 1 Self-efficacy
 - a) Writing anxiety
 - b) Confidence and Satisfaction
- 2 Motivation
 - a) Sense of task enjoyment
 - b) Identity

Task Knowledge

- 1 Task constraint
 - a) Rigid text structure
 - b) Time constraint
 - c) Topic knowledge
 - d) Linguistic impediments
 - e) Teachers' instructions

- 2 Task Purpose
 - a) Audience understanding
 - b) Focus on content
- 3 Task demand
 - a) Writing process (paragraph and essay)
 - b) Text content
 - c) Importance of text resources
 - d) Concern for mechanics

Strategic Knowledge

- 1 Planning
 - a) Planning an essay
 - b) Starting with the most important part
 - c) Writing as telling

- 2 Evaluation and Revision
 - a) Substantive revision
 - b) Cosmetic correction of language

APPENDIX N

Revision of the Survey Questionnaire Items According to the Colleagues' Comments (Phase II)

Items	Changes
Items: <i>"I always prepare an outline before I start to write in English"</i> and <i>"I am aware about the factors that disturb me while writing in English"</i>	Were deleted
Item (3) <i>"I practice reading in English (e.g. books, novels, articles) to progress in EFL writing."</i>	Changed into <i>"I have to read in English (e.g. books, novels, articles) to progress in my writing skill"</i>
Item (4) <i>"I practice writing in English at home"</i>	Changed into <i>"I usually write in English at home"</i> ;
Item (27) <i>"I only need the teacher's encouragement and motivation to improve my writing (e.g. verbal reward, attention)"</i>	Changed into <i>"Teacher's motivation (e.g. verbal reward, attention) is the kind of support I need to improve my writing skill"</i>
Item (45) <i>"The reader of my writings can be total strangers"</i>	Changed to <i>"My audience in English writings can be total strangers"</i> .

APPENDIX O

Cronbach Alphas for Internal Consistency Instrument (Phase II)

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	125	100,0
	Excluded ^a	0	,0
	Total	125	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR1	215,4800	338,203	,284	,846
VAR2	216,3600	323,168	,570	,840
VAR3	217,1200	321,945	,521	,840
VAR4	217,1600	322,039	,498	,841
VAR5	215,9200	329,961	,372	,844
VAR6	216,4000	325,290	,428	,842
VAR7	216,7120	335,562	,190	,847
VAR8	216,1920	328,995	,416	,843
VAR9	215,7040	334,404	,347	,844
VAR10	215,4640	340,057	,197	,847
VAR11	216,6240	331,737	,315	,845
VAR12	215,6720	339,061	,250	,846
VAR13	215,8800	339,929	,209	,847
VAR14	216,3760	334,640	,296	,845
VAR15	215,6640	343,806	,029	,849
VAR16	215,7760	338,385	,211	,846
VAR17	215,7760	342,578	,054	,849
VAR18	215,4480	340,314	,191	,847
VAR19	216,8880	340,762	,073	,849
VAR20	215,9840	335,064	,328	,845
VAR21	218,4560	344,347	,002	,849
VAR22	218,3920	347,176	-,104	,851
VAR23	218,3920	343,740	,028	,849
VAR24	215,7920	347,940	-,123	,851
VAR25	217,7680	332,228	,294	,845
VAR26	215,4560	343,202	,057	,848
VAR27	217,0640	319,786	,620	,838
VAR28	216,4240	321,762	,592	,839
VAR29	216,5760	325,891	,437	,842
VAR30	217,2000	317,435	,684	,837
VAR31	217,4800	325,977	,511	,841
VAR32	216,5520	329,749	,378	,843
VAR33	217,0160	319,645	,696	,838
VAR34	217,0560	320,505	,666	,838
VAR35	216,6160	326,464	,472	,842
VAR36	216,6720	319,545	,693	,838
VAR37	216,4800	328,703	,502	,842
VAR38	217,4720	325,090	,481	,841

VAR39	217,1120	350,536	-,154	,855
VAR40	216,1520	353,033	-,240	,855
VAR41	216,9120	330,920	,303	,845
VAR42	217,4320	321,828	,507	,840
VAR43	217,3440	329,211	,316	,845
VAR44	216,5280	344,558	-,023	,852
VAR45	217,0880	352,242	-,213	,855
VAR46	217,7840	340,138	,097	,849
VAR47	218,0720	350,567	-,183	,853
VAR48	216,7920	331,247	,319	,845
VAR49	215,8160	339,071	,200	,847
VAR50	216,5680	328,763	,468	,842
VAR51	216,5360	330,944	,388	,843
VAR52	216,1600	336,539	,270	,846
VAR53	215,9200	341,300	,125	,848
VAR54	216,3280	343,109	,028	,850
VAR55	218,5040	349,139	-,176	,851
VAR56	216,5040	336,542	,174	,848
VAR57	216,6800	330,252	,387	,843
VAR58	216,0400	333,329	,333	,844
VAR59	216,0080	340,314	,159	,847
VAR61	215,4480	339,201	,225	,846
VAR62	216,2480	336,091	,219	,846
VAR63	218,0080	345,298	-,037	,851
VAR64	218,0560	347,666	-,107	,852

APPENDIX P

The link of Online Survey Questionnaire (Phase II)

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRbT5rafsYjLBZX4FTXsHugdFfpHJYdOdsHI-fScBCOgLfyA/formResponse>

APPENDIX Q

Sample from the Study: Codebook Used in the Coding Process (Phase I)

Code		Description	Examples
Self efficacy (person Knowledge)	Sense of making progress	The sense of writing progress was sometimes associated with a satisfaction with one's achievement	« Above all, during the WRIT 151 course, the significant development of my writing is increasing fluency ... at the beginning of the course, I wrote 144 words in ten minutes, but at the end of this course the figure is growing up to 267 words. This is almost two times compared with the first one. »
	Anxiety in expressing ideas	Writing anxiety was noted when their immediate writing achievements were overshadowed by their distance to the overall writing goals	“Free writing is done as well. I began to like free writing, because I needn't pay much attention to the grammar. But grammar is my weakness. I should pay attention to it everywhere. That's a pity. Sometimes I found myself thinking about that when I will good at English, that made me upset.”
Motivation (Person knowledge)	Identity	Identity reflects the students' understanding of themselves as learners ; they correspond to Flavell's notion of person knowledge.	“My ability to speak English is an important part of who I am”.

	Involvement in tasks	A positive attitude toward writing was also reflected in students' awareness of the task difficulty, and their readiness to invest effort and time.	““I will have a lot to revise in my first draft. I almost need to rewrite it. But it is quite strange that although there is a lot of work ahead, I don't feel bored as I used to. This should be an advance in my learning of writing.” (S13, Wk7).
Task constraint (task knowledge)	Concern for topic knowledge	concern for topic knowledge was regarded as the writing constraint second to the language issues. Hence, those seemingly unfamiliar topics might be difficult to develop into a full text due to a lack of adequate background knowledge on them.	“Sometimes you choose a topic that you think is easy to write. But in fact, it is not. You may find it very difficult to write when you begin to. This is a problem. So I think searching for useful information is very important.”
	Grammar	One linguistic constraint was associated with the correct use of grammatical forms, as sufficient grammatical knowledge was generally considered as the basis of a good piece of English writing	“So far most of the mistakes in my compositions are about grammar, especially tense. Although I paid much attention to it, and read my compositions several times, others could still pick out many grammar problems in them. It is really a headache.”

APPENDIX T

Sample from the Study: Sonix Application for Interview Transcription (Phase I)

The screenshot displays the Sonix web application interface. At the top, there is a blue header with 'HOME' on the left and a user profile icon on the right. Below the header, the main content area shows the audio file 'Voix012.m4a' with a language selector set to 'English'. A menu bar includes 'File', 'Translations', 'Subtitles', 'Timecodes', 'Quality', 'Speakers', and 'Notes', along with a status indicator 'Last saved today at 7:24 pm'. A toolbar contains playback controls (play, 1.0x, previous, next, refresh, undo, redo, search, edit, share, embed, export) and a progress bar from 00:00:00 to 00:14:22. The main transcription area shows a speaker labeled 'Speaker2' with the following text: 'Yes, definitely positive. Some some individuals find themselves. Some individuals find themselves comfortable when they are just writing or typing in their laptops. And I definitely consider myself one of them. I mean, even even though like when you feel absolutely nothing and you just write whatever comes into your mind, it kind of feels like it's a bit relaxing. Yeah, it helps you get over some stuff and it helps you relax. It helps you just it puts you in the mood sometimes, even though the writing may, may make no sense or may be irrelevant to basically absolutely nothing. But it helps. It'. A 'Watermark' is visible over the text. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with 'PREFERENCES', 'SHORTCUTS', 'SUBTITLES', and 'REFER FRIENDS'. A system tray at the very bottom shows system icons for volume, network, and time (14:22).

APPENDIX U

Sample from the Transcript of the Focus Group Interview (Phase I)

G 8/ Names : **Karima/ Imene/ Marwa/ Hanane/ Zakaria.**

Me : My first question to you is : what's your attitude toward writing ?

So I have asked you to write something now. And I don't know ; some students like writing and some others do not. Some have positive attitude toward writing and for some others, it's not really what they like the most. I'm just keen to know what's your attitude towards writing. And just explain it. You can use English ; if you feel more comfortable to use your second language, please do it. French or Arabic ; who want to start first ? Your attitude toward writing is positive or negative.

Zakaria: According to my own perspective I'd say I'm one of those who adore writing ; positive because I regard it let's say as one of the most crucial and essential skills in let's say an academic career of a student it's very important. Very important. Let's say inside and outside the boundaries of schools, writing plays a very important role in one's life because you don't have to be let's say an academic writer so that you are able to write or express your own feelings or your own dogmas and beliefs.

Me : have you enjoyed the task ?

Zakaria :Let's say I felt thrilled by it because I believe that one can manifest his own ideas and bring them to life. Through transcribing them into letters and words.

Me: How do you feel when you write ?

Zakaria: I feel like I'm opened up to another dimension in which let's say fantasy and reality mixes and in which you can now live multiple several different lives. Travel large distances while you remain in your own place. So That's it.

Hanane: It is always positive for me to write. Yes. To me writing. It's like something it's like an invention. It's like a creation you are creating something that you are. Sometimes it has to be subjective personal. So writing it's like a means of relief.Yeah to me. Sometimes, when you don't find someone to talk to or when you have many ideas you just write them on a piece of paper and you just let let it out. And you you might discuss discuss things between you and your paper so that it is somehow a friend a pen friend of yourself from yourself to your ideas. Yeah

Me: do you make the difference between accademic writing and writing at home ?

Hanane: Yeah. Thanks to our education. Yes we are now where. We are now more aware of the mistakes and the. The appropriate appropriate things that should be wrote on. Both academic and free writing are Suitable yes.

Marwa: yes for me writing ; in my attitude toward writing is positive of course but I'm more likely to learn to write poems ; yes sometimes and post them. I write when I'm feeling negative on and feeling sad I don't write mostly when I'm happy or I mostly write when I'm feeling sad so I express my feelings I feel like I put them down and now I'm free. Whereas before academic writing I don't really like it I only write when I feel obliged to but when I write I guess a price but it's okay my writing is okay but I don't really practice it the academic writing.

Meriem :I adore writing as well it triggers such a positive attitude for me I think writing is a means of relief as Hannah's said it it helps you to take out all the negative energy when I'm sad I would like to write. I like writing that yeah I like writing at home because I'm free to write whatever I want but here academic writing is like it is limited to a limited but at home it is like you can write whatever you like and yeah you're free to express yourself

Me : Did you like to write a comparison contrast essay ?

Meriem: Yeah yeah. I'm a talkative person but I I don't I talk about I don't say the things that I feel but when I write a I write the things that I truly was trying to do yeah.

Me : did my topic restrict you ?

Marwa: yea,

Marwa : do you prefer free topics ?

Marwa:yes.

Karima: That I have much to add because they said probably everything but yes my attitude toward writing is negative and positive at the same time negative because I don't like to write

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