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**Argument Essay Writing in English as a Foreign
Language: Third Year Students' Journey of Writer
Identity Construction and Expression at ENSB, Algiers**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctorate in English Linguistics and Didactics**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due to 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 : 28th May, 2024

Signed:

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear parents to whom I express all my heartfelt gratitude for their patience ,understanding and help.

This work is also dedicated to my sisters and brother.

To all my friends and colleagues who have always encouraged me.

Finally, I would like particularly to dedicate this work to the memory of my grandparents.

Abstract

This study is an exploratory qualitative case study of a group of forty-two third year students of English at a Teacher Training College in Algiers-Algeria and their struggle to construct a writer identity in higher education. Inspired by Ethnography, building on Social Constructivist perspective of writing, Norton (2000)'s theory of identity, Ivanič (1998)'s model of writer identity, and self-appraisal theory (Bandura, 1997), this study aims at discovering the factors that shape students' writer identity and the strategies they use to express it in argument essay writing. Data collection tools include a fifteen-item semi-structured questionnaire to students containing closed and open-ended questions on their writing experience and written accounts on their perceptions of writer identity, and students' argument essays. Qualitative and quantitative procedures were used for data analysis. Content analysis of students' argument essays and thematic analysis of their answers were used for analyzing argumentative writing difficulties encountered by the participants. On the other hand, the close-ended questions of the students' questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively and presented in a form of percentages. The findings revealed that becoming a student writer in the Algerian higher education context begins with mastering of English and being able to produce a grammatically correct text, and extends beyond these aspects to include psychological, social and cultural aspects related to the self and other; student writer and the reader, the context in which writing takes place and the power relationships between the different members of the writing community. The findings revealed that based on their perceptions of themselves as writers, the participants were classified into good, novice and writers in denial. All of the participants tried to construct a writer identity as they joined higher education and engaged in academic writing through daily classroom practice and beyond as some of them write as a hobby. In addition, the participants used a number of linguistic and discoursal strategies to express their writer identity in argument writing such as taking a clear position, develop strong arguments to defend it, using personal experience and knowledge as a source for writing, creating a connection with the reader, as well as taking different positions in the text like a "guide", "individual", "citizen", and "teacher". The latter seems to reflect Ivanič's (1998) model of writer identity including the auto-biographical self, discoursal self, self as author, and possibilities for selfhood. Based on these findings, the study suggests a more flexible approach to academic writing where standards of "good" writing are used as guidelines not limitations and students are considered as writers who already have potential that needs to be explored through classroom practice and positive teacher feedback to increase students' self-confidence and linguistic competences as writers.

Key words: writer identity; writer journey ; identity construction; identity expression; academic writing; argument essay; critical thinking; writing community; discourse.

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List of Abbreviations

AW: Academic Writing

AWC: Academic Writing Community

AWC: Academic Writing Conventions

AWD: Academic Writing Discourse

BA: Bachelor's degree

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ENSB: Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzaréah (Algiers) ENSB or Teacher Training College

HE: Higher Education

L1: First Language

L2: SL Second Language

LMD: Licence, Masters, Doctorate

NNS: Non-native speaker

NS: Native speaker

TE: Teacher Education

TTC: Teacher Training College (or ENSB)

TWF: Teacher Written Feedback

WI: Writer Identity

WIC: Writer Identity Construction

General Introduction

Motivation for the Study

The starting point of my research was my willingness to further explore a key finding of my Magister dissertation, which is students' resistance to teacher's written feedback (TWF) on their essays (Setrallah, 2012). Being protective of their ideas might imply that students believe that their ideas are part of their writer identity as they reflect who they are, how they think and behave as individuals and students. As a result, I believed it was necessary to give students voice to express themselves and evaluate their writing experience since are in a better position to describe their perceptions of writing and writer identity.

In this work, I place 'writer identity' and 'good writing' in inverted commas because I believe they are contested terms, as no agreement has been reached about their exact meaning both in the related literature and daily writing practice or pedagogy, essentially because each context has particular discourses and ideologies which shape the meaning of these concepts.

Consequently, in setting out these first early experiences as an English language student and later on as a teacher of academic English writing at the same College I was trained in as a student or a pre-service teacher of English, I became interested in students' difficulties in writing, how they struggle to become writers and why some students seem to struggle more than others and with different aspects of writing. As a teacher, I also noticed differences in writing perceptions between me, the teacher, and them, the students and how these differences led to conflicts and misunderstandings in class and thus affected my teaching practice and their learning process.

In addition to my experience as a student, my interest in academic writing and writer identity especially is the result of my experience as a teacher of writing at ENSB for over eight years which helped me to improve my teaching practice. The daily

classroom discussions and activities with students in the writing classes are not sufficient for teachers to understand how they write and the challenges they face, let alone their journey to becoming writers that is very complex, personal and sometimes intimate and inaccessible.

Finally, I assumed that the main source of my students' struggle with writing is the fact that they are learning English as a foreign language. This was also, as I thought, the reason behind my struggle as a teacher of writing. I always believed that my native speakers' counterparts would teach academic writing without any difficulty because they master the language as a major tool of writing instruction. This increased my feeling of poor competence as a teacher and my lack of self-confidence especially that I obtained a teaching position about six months after I completed and defended my Magister dissertation . Then, I did not feel ready or at ease to teach academic writing to third year students who had already studied English for two years at university , and for five years at school before joining university, which makes a total of seven years of English study . Nevertheless, this feeling increased my willingness to deepen my understanding of this issue.

Background and Context of the Study

Studying EFL (English as a Foreign Language) academic writing and argument writing , as part of a university English degree course, is important for at least six reasons: It can equip students with the necessary skills for effective communication, academic success, develop critical thinking, contribute to career advancement, cultivate analytical abilities, and empower self-expression.

1. Ensure effective communication: Clear and articulate writing skills are essential for effective communication in academic and professional settings. EFL academic and argument writing classes provide students with the necessary tools and strategies to express their ideas accurately and coherently, enabling them to engage in meaningful conversations and discussions.

2. Increase academic success: Writing is a fundamental component of university education, and good writing skills are often critical to achieving academic success. EFL academic and argument writing courses help students develop the ability to present well-structured arguments, support their claims with evidence, and formulate well-reasoned conclusions. These skills are essential for excelling in research papers, essays, and other writing assignments.
3. Develop critical thinking: EFL academic and argument writing fosters critical thinking skills. Students are taught to analyze information, evaluate different perspectives, and construct logical arguments. This process promotes independent thinking and enhances students' ability to think critically, assess information critically, and synthesize ideas effectively.
4. Contribute to career advancement: Proficiency in EFL academic and argument writing can enhance career opportunities for students pursuing professions that require strong written communication skills. Many fields demand professionals who can produce well-written reports, proposals, and research papers. By mastering EFL academic and argument writing, students become more competitive in the job market.
5. Foster analytical skills: EFL academic and argument writing involves substantial research and analysis, which helps students develop stronger analytical skills. The ability to gather information from various sources, evaluate the credibility of sources, and synthesize findings into coherent arguments is invaluable in both academic and professional pursuits.
6. Empower self-expression: EFL academic and argument writing allows students to express themselves confidently and eloquently. It facilitates personal growth, enabling students to voice their opinions, present their ideas, and engage in intellectual discourse. Through EFL academic and argument writing, students gain a sense of empowerment, contributing to

their self-confidence and developing their abilities to express themselves intellectually.

Studying EFL argument writing helps students develop critical thinking skills, enabling them to analyze information, evaluate different perspectives, and construct well-reasoned argument. Swales (2015) also stresses the necessity of EFL argument writing for academic success. He highlights that “effective academic writing skills, including argumentation, are essential for university students to excel in their studies and produce high-quality research papers and essays”.

In addition, Lee (2014) stresses the significance of EFL argument writing in fostering effective communication skills. He suggests that through argumentative writing practice, students learn to express their ideas accurately and coherently, enabling them to engage in meaningful conversations and discussions. Likewise, Tsui (2016) points out that studying EFL argument writing at the university level helps students become active participants in intellectual discourse. By understanding different argumentative strategies and developing their own persuasive abilities, students can effectively express their opinions and contribute meaningfully to academic and professional conversations.

The present study takes place at the Teacher Training College of Bouzaréah in Algiers (ENSB), a well-known institution that trains middle and secondary school teachers in Languages and Humanities. The participants represent a cohort of students seeking to become English language educators. However, many of them experience difficulties with academic writing, and argument writing specifically, and their journey of becoming writers seems to be a struggle that often impacts their writer identity.

Although research L1 and L2 instruction has evidenced the importance of helping students construct a strong and consistent writer identity in academic writing, aspects of writer identity are not explicitly taught in the EFL writing classroom because teachers of writing often believe that students need more

instruction and practice with grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. These aspects, according to them are more urgent and thus more importance compared to writer identity which seems a luxury. This common practice can also be explained by the widespread perception that academic writing should be objective and comply with standards; therefore student writers are expected to produce essays that meet the academic readers' expectations including teachers of writing. These expectations require students to demonstrate a good mastery of language to be able to express themselves clearly.

Many of these teachers complain that students' writing lacks substance, development, and critical thinking and is reduced to mere reproduction of text models that makes writing mechanical and of poor quality, yet, they do not seem to be aware that teaching aspects of writer identity in academic writing would improve the quality of students' writing. It is clear that students who are at the heart of the writing process as authors, thinkers, and generators of ideas and content are treated as passive consumers of academic discourse; such attitude on the part of teachers is likely to lead to their disengagement in the writing process especially that the letter is known for its difficulty and complexity that could discourage many EFL students. By embarking on this study, I would like to argue that developing students' writer identity is as important as developing their writing skills and strategies and mastery of language.

Research Aims

Through this study, I am trying to understand what student writers know about argument writing, how they develop arguments, the difficulties they face and how they solve them, what strategies those students use to develop their arguments and how they manifest their identity, how they see and present themselves as writers in their argument essays and how this identity is perceived by the teachers of writing including myself as a researcher who is teaching these students in the same institution.

Although many researchers who investigated students' writing experiences seem to tackle the concept of writing experience from the perspective of students' writing tasks and activities, defining experience is far from being an easy task. However, for the sake of this study, taking into account the context and participants' profile in addition to my own perspective as a researcher and a teacher of writing, and define writing experience globally as what students think, do, and how they see themselves as writers when they write for a specific purpose like producing an argument essay.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the Social Constructivist Theory of knowledge for its theoretical framework since writer identity is believed to be the outcome of students' social and cultural environment in general and their specific academic contexts as they negotiate the writing conventions of English and try to cope with them in order to be accepted as members of the academic writing community. Understanding and mastering the academic discourse seem to play a gate-keeping function by recognizing or denying students' identities as writers based on well-established criteria of what makes good writers and good writing in the academic context.

The study is also inspired by Ethnography for its methodological framework as it aims at understanding students' journeys as writers taking into account the specific features of their social and cultural environment and the general culture of the Algerian teacher education context in which English is the medium of communication; this context is also characterized by multilingualism and diversity. It is both a basis for students' cultural awareness and integration in the academic community and playing the game of writing, which are set up by the rules of English. The latter are quite challenging to non-English speakers at both linguistic and cultural levels. Thus, the study takes into account the culture, i.e., the social, cultural and linguistic context in which students' experiences take place. Because

those experiences are the result of the interactions students have with the people in their environment mainly teachers, peers and parents, they are the basis of the knowledge they have acquired about academic writing. The latter seems to play an important role in developing students as writers and shaping their identities that in turn determines how students write. This implies that both knowledge of writing and writer identities are social products that students could not have achieved in isolation.

To summarize, my research the theoretical underpinnings to conduct this study, alongside other theoretical paradigms as explained later on. I believe that this framework is helpful to understand how knowledge and identity are constructed and relate to academic writing. It also allowed me to understand how language functions in the social and cultural environments as a basic tool for writing.

It is also worth mentioning, at this point, that in Algeria, the educational background is dominated by the teaching of several languages. Firstly, Modern Standard Arabic is taught in schools and used by the government and the media. Classical/ Literary Arabic is mainly used in religious, academic, literature and formal contexts. More recently, the teaching of Tamazight regarded as the second official language after Arabic has been introduced in schools and teacher training colleges to train teachers in this language. In addition, Algerian Arabic (Eddaridja) is the most commonly spoken forms of Arabic in everyday conversation as well as French.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

In the Algerian context of EFL teaching and learning, university teachers as well as pre-service teacher trainers aim at equipping students with the necessary writing skills and strategies to develop as autonomous writers. In general, they mainly focus on the technical and linguistic aspects of academic and argument writing by training students on generating ideas for writing, developing relevant outlines and writing multiples drafts after essay sample rhetorical analysis in the hope that these

practices will help students develop their academic English writing competence and write essays based on the standards of academic writing at university.

Research has shown that when students are encouraged to express their writer identity, it allows them to bring their authentic voice into their writing, resulting in more engaging and meaningful texts (Ivanič, 1998). This suggests that a strong writer identity is associated with a higher quality of writing, as it enables students to express their ideas with confidence and clarity (Belcher, 2012). Expressing writer identity involves students critically examining their own perspectives, beliefs, and experiences. This self-reflection can lead to higher levels of critical thinking and analysis in the final text (Norton, 2013). Studies have shown that students with a developed writer identity are more likely to engage in critical evaluation of ideas, resulting in well-reasoned arguments and a stronger overall quality of writing (Hyland, 2003).

However, little attention is generally given to students as “writers” or to whether such practices will produce confident writers. As a matter of fact, teachers do not explicitly focus on developing students writer identity in academic and argument writing and seem to believe that when teachers help students develop their academic writing skills and strategies, their writer identity will develop automatically. Yet, experience indicates that this is not the case because the majority of EFL students still lack confidence as writers even after they develop basic writing skills.

Based on these assumptions, the present study invites teachers of writing to invest their efforts in developing students’ writer identity in a more explicit way because research has demonstrated that, as noted above, students’ expression of writer identity can improve the overall quality of the essays they write. Thus, instead of looking at students’ writer identity as a secondary matter, it should be considered as a priority in foreign language writing, although as pre-service EFL teachers who are expected to teach writing to pupils in middle and secondary

schools, they are firstly required to develop solid writing skills for their professional career as teachers of English. For many teachers, developing student writer's identity may appear like a luxury, if we look at this issue from a teacher's perspective, but from a student's perspective, one may learn a great deal on their perceptions and realities. Although researching students' writer identity has recently gained more attention than ever before, as a new research ground that has resulted from shifting focus from the text and writing process to the writer as a text generator, studies in the EFL context are still limited in number and studies in the Algerian context are almost scarce. This justifies the importance of this study as an attempt to investigate this new area of academic writing.

The present study aims at answering the following research questions:

Research question 1: What do students think about their academic English writing experience at ENSB?

This first research question aims at giving participants voice to share their personal narratives, thoughts, meaning and interpretation of academic writing in a Teacher Training College in Algiers (ENSB). This question should elicit participants' perceptions of and behaviours in regard to academic writing, in general, and argument writing, in particular which is the focus of this study. The argument essay was selected because it is a very popular genre and widely used in writing instruction and evaluation at university in both ESL and EFL contexts.

This question also aims at setting the context for the second research question since the context or environment in which students write has probably an impact on the aims, functions, features, and types of the writing they produce. In this study, I use the terms "environment" and "context" interchangeably to refer to students' academic community which in turn refers to higher education or university including teacher education as the context is a Teacher Training College. Environment covers not only the physical space (university and teacher education institutions like ENSB), but also its culture, values, educational philosophy,

discourse and writing pedagogy that touches upon academic writing teaching, learning and evaluation. Therefore, participants are both students and pre-service secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). This “dual” profile has no doubt an impact on their writing experience as well as perceptions, beliefs and behaviours. Academic writing is a key skill leading to their academic success as students and to their professional career as EFL teachers.

Research question 2: How do they perceive themselves as writers?

This second research question aims at shedding light on students’ perceptions and beliefs about their writer identity indirectly without bringing this concept to the front line, as many participants were not familiar with it at the beginning. Yet, many described it very accurately and clearly when they shared how they go about the process of writing, the strategies they use and the choices they make when writing an argument essay.

Research question 3: What factors influence their writer identity construction?

This third research question should target students’ writing experiences, perceptions and beliefs about this practice and their own knowledge and writing skills, the available opportunities to write in class and beyond, the writing agenda or functions and purposes of academic writing, the interaction with the teacher as a key reader in addition to peers and any possible other reader who can get access to students’ texts especially argument essays. These readers depend on the ways students choose to share their texts whether online via social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber or other chat groups as well as sharing hard copy texts with friends and family members outside the classroom. Although these technologies do not seem fully explored by this study’s participants, their role in constructing students’ writer identity is undeniable. Yet, more focus is put on students’ writing practice in class as a major space or environment for their writer identity construction.

Research question 4: How do they express their writer's identity in argument writing?

This fourth research question aims at examining how writer identity is expressed in the argument essays written by the participants. This helps finding out the linguistic and pragmatic choices they make to present themselves as authors or writers, the way they develop their voice and try to meet readers' needs and expectations through taking a clear position and developing arguments to defend it as it is the case in argument writing.

Methodology of the Study

To investigate this research problem, a qualitative exploratory case study design was employed. Data collection tools such as students' semi-structured questionnaire, reflective writer identity written accounts, and analysis of students' argument writing essays were used to gather comprehensive insights into students' perceptions, experiences, and expressions of their writer identity in argument writing.

The research for the study was carried out in Algiers (Algeria). Data was collected by four main methods. First of all, forty-two essays written by pre-service student teachers. There were four males and forty females in this group of students.

I also engaged with informal discussions with teachers of writing that informed the study but were not recorded systematically since I was not aware that these discussions could be used as a reliable data ; so I just used their insights to improve the students' semi-structured questionnaire by consulting them during the pilot phase. Thus, the instruments of data collection are three in total: students' semi-structured questionnaires, students' written accounts on their writer identity and students' argument essays.

First, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on participants' perceptions on their academic writing learning, instruction and

practice in order to better understand the context in which they write and how it affects their perceptions and behaviours regarding their writer identity. It was piloted with a small number of students. Second, a written task as an alternative to think aloud protocol was implemented. The task is an unstructured written reflective account on participants' writer identity. Third, argument essays written by participants on different topics of their choice.

Significance of the Study

Understanding how EFL students develop their writer identity in argument writing therefore seems an important issue to investigate for several reasons. Firstly, writer identity plays a critical role in shaping individuals' writing processes, choices, and overall engagement with written discourse. Investigating this aspect can provide valuable insights into the factors influencing EFL students' writing development and their perceptions of themselves as writers.

Secondly, argument writing is a complex genre that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also critical thinking skills, the ability to engage with multiple perspectives, and effective communication of one's ideas. Exploring how EFL students navigate the process of developing their writer identity within the context of argument writing can contribute to pedagogical practices and curriculum adjustments or improvements, in order to foster more effective instruction and support tailored to students' needs.

Thirdly, this research may help us get valuable insights on students' motivation and engagement within the academic writing community. A strong writer identity can significantly impact students' motivation and engagement in the writing process. When students identify themselves as competent and capable writers, they are more likely to invest time and effort in their writing tasks, and develop a positive disposition towards EFL writing.

Finally, this study topic can lead to students' individualized support. Every student has a unique set of experiences, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds that shape their identity as writers. Investigating writer identity can help educators recognize and respect these individual differences, offering customized support that caters to students' specific needs and encourages their growth as writers

This study is therefore significant because it may help understand how students negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and personal identities through writing that can promote empathy, inclusivity, and intercultural understanding in EFL learning environments. In addition, a strong writer identity instils a sense of self-efficacy, empowering students to tackle writing challenges with confidence. By investigating writer identity, educators can help students recognize their strengths, build self-belief, and leverage their unique perspectives, contributing to their personal and academic growth. Developing a writer identity that transcends the EFL classroom creates a foundation for lifelong writing skills. Investigating writer identity can inform instructional practices that foster a love for writing, encouraging students to continue nurturing their writing abilities outside of formal education settings. A good writer identity expression often indicates that students have a clear understanding of their ideas and arguments. They are able to articulate their thoughts coherently and present them in a logical and organized manner.

Writer identity expression often correlates with the ability to construct persuasive arguments. When students have a strong writer identity, they are more confident in presenting and supporting their claims, employing appropriate evidence and reasoning to back up their points, which has been observed as the weakest point in students' writing competence. Focusing on writer identity expression may result in using compelling and convincing arguments in the essay to effectively persuading the reader. A strong writer identity expression reflects the use of an authentic voice in the essay. Students who are confident in their writing abilities and have a clear writer identity are more likely to express their thoughts

and opinions in a genuine and unique manner. This adds originality and depth to the essay, helping it stand out and engage the reader effectively.

Structure of the Study

This study contains a general introduction, a general conclusion, and is divided into two parts: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part covers the literature review that sets the theoretical framework of the study and defines and discusses the main concepts. This is done in two chapters. The first one is an overview of academic writing research in L1, L2, and EFL contexts with a focus on argument essay writing and the challenges it poses to students in HE. The second chapter critically reviews the studies related to the notion of writer identity and aims at stressing the vital role of the writer as an individual and member of the writing community over the technical aspects of text production and therefore the importance of exploring and studying how students develop as writers and what factors interplay in the process of their identity construction. The literature review serves to narrow down my research focus and as a basis for formulating the research questions that this study seeks to answer.

The empirical part covers the rest of the thesis. It includes chapter three, chapter four and chapter five. Chapter three is devoted to the description of the methodology chosen to investigate the topic of the study. This takes into account the specific setting and profile of the participants. It also discusses the rationale behind the research methods/ tools selected to collect data and the data analysis procedure.

Chapter four outlines the findings of the study and aims at explaining how I made sense of the data, organized and expressed it through the process of writing. The results of the study are organized into three main themes; the context, the writer and the text. These themes refer to the writing community in which participants develop as writers, the way they perceive themselves as writers and how they manifest their writer identities in the argument essay.

Finally, the last and fifth chapter is a summary and discussion of the findings. It relates them to previous research. Moreover, it highlights the study's contribution to knowledge, implications, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The strengths and limitations of the study are also acknowledged in this final chapter. The thesis ends with references and a number of appendices containing the details of the data collection .

Terminology

In this section, I explain my understanding of some contested concepts, mostly, identity, community, and culture. In addition, given that this thesis focuses on the concept of writer identity, this section seeks to explain it and how it is meant to bridge the gap between the various constructs in this study including academic writing and identity construction.

Identity

Within the context of this study, I deal with identity from a post-structuralist view point. Drawing on Norton (2000) and Clarke's (2008) theories on identity , I see it as a hybrid, dynamic, and multi-dimensional concept that is constructed through space and time by both interaction with the outside world and perception of it. Given the bond between society and cognition in identity formation, the idea that identity and ideology are similar seems to be appealing. Nevertheless, my view involves the idea that identity construction depends on individuals' discourses, which shape their understanding of the world as well as their past, current, and future selves. This understanding allows individuals to negotiate their identities in ways that are specific to them, which also becomes part of who they are. Thus, identity here is seen as a result of social interaction and personal experiences within a specific community. In that sense, local and global types of membership, when combined with participants' discourses and the perception they have about the world and themselves as part of their past, current, and possible future trajectories, are responsible for their identity construction as well as the manner in

which it is negotiated. In addition, given their multi-dimensional and fluid nature, the formation of identities is not bound by a specific set of structures. Instead, I see it as a constantly changing construct that has different facets newly forming or changing depending on individuals' discourses, circumstances and, more importantly, their personal interpretations of these situations, which include society, culture, and personal encounters.

Identity encompasses a myriad of components, making it a complex and ever-evolving concept. It encompasses not only our personal characteristics but also our cultural, social, and psychological dimensions. Our identity is influenced by a tapestry of factors, including our upbringing, experiences, values, beliefs, and interactions with others. It is the amalgamation of these elements that form the intricate mosaic of who we are. At the core of identity lies self-perception - how we view ourselves and how we believe others perceive us. This self-perception plays a crucial role in shaping our identity, as it influences our choices, behaviours, and the roles we assume in society. Through introspection and self-reflection, we gain insights into our strengths, weaknesses, passions, and aspirations, gradually constructing our sense of self.

Cultural identity holds immense significance in defining who we are. Our cultural background, traditions, language, and heritage contribute to our sense of belonging and help shape our values and worldview. It is through our cultural identity that we relate to others, fostering a sense of community and connection. However, cultural identity should not be seen as static; it evolves as we engage with different cultures and adapt to new experiences.

Social identity emerges from our interactions with social groups, such as family, friends, and communities. We derive a sense of belonging from these affiliations, as they provide us with support, shared experiences, and a framework for understanding our place in society. Social identity can also encompass aspects such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, as these factors shape our experiences and

influence how others perceive us. Identity plays a pivotal role in shaping our choices, relationships, and overall well-being. It affects our career paths, personal goals, and the way we navigate societal expectations. Our sense of identity can bring about a sense of empowerment and purpose, enabling us to pursue our passions and make a positive impact in the world. Conversely, a lack of clarity or conflict within our identity can lead to confusion, self-doubt, and even social exclusion. In the quest to define identity, we come to appreciate its intricacy and the multitude of factors that contribute to our uniqueness. It is a fluid and evolving concept that transcends boundaries and encompasses the richness of our personal and social experiences. Our identities are not fixed; they are shaped by our past, present, and future, and are continuously influenced by the world around us.

Writer identity

Writer identity is used in this study as a key concept that refers to the process of writer's self-representation as an author of the text, an individual who tries to express and defend personal beliefs, thoughts and experiences unique to him but also shared with the academic writing community as a mini-society. Writer identity also refers to the multiple roles student writers perform in an ongoing attempt to be seen and accepted as a "good writer" and be accepted and recognized by the other community members like teachers and students who are the real readers in addition to the imaginary ones who are any person having access to the text and being able to read in English. Writing cannot be dissociated from the writer and this strong relationship is materialized in the way student writers present themselves, their thoughts and positions and how they defend them using a variety of linguistic, cultural, and social resources such as personal beliefs, values, knowledge, and experience. Those resources give power to the student writer as an author, expert and thinker who has something interesting to say about the topic. These different roles justify the multi-faceted nature of writer identity and why often the use of writer identity is justified as a way to express the complexity and variety in the way students see and present themselves as writers. Yet, writer identity is used often

to refer to the concept as one entity just as it is the case with writing, culture, community and other related concepts.

Community

The term ‘community’ is used throughout the thesis to refer to teachers and students at ENSB. Since the majority of students and teachers at the level at ENSB originally come from different towns of the same county, cultural background is shared between them. In addition, most individuals in the community either teach or are taught in the Department of English at ENSB, which adds a layer of inclusiveness to the type of unity that they have, whether they are actively or passively cognisant of that. Clearly, there exist smaller communities within the broader frame of this one community. However, these are only referred to circumstantially depending on their relevance to the overall context of the study. Thus, other than this being a community of speech, wherein individuals more or less speak the same language(s), it is also a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) wherein individuals practise the same type of activities, have similar interests, and, most importantly, share some aspects of their identities.

Culture

Much of what is discussed in this thesis has more to do with the way culture is perceived by the participants in this study than it does with the way I perceive it. However, it is important to delineate the framework from which I decided to approach the notion of culture because of the role that this delineation had in the way my ethnographic study was conducted. Consequently, my understanding of culture acknowledges a high level of flexibility and variety. As Holliday’s (1999) perspective on “small” and “large” cultures is concerned, my view of the concept of culture puts into question any essentialist or culturalist bias that considers culture as a tangible social occurrence which essentially characterises particular nations or ethnicities. It rather implies a non-essentialist view that sees culture as a fluid

construct that varies over space and time. Therefore, I view culture as a fluid construct that should not be essentially tied up to particular nations or ethnic groups, in the sense that people's behaviours should not be explained by the way their cultures are perceived. This does not negate the idea that, at some level, cultures include nuances of what people make of them. My view acknowledges the idea that culture is a way whereby people self-represent and self-affiliate in the same way that it recognises the equality between cultures regardless of their nature. Thus, my perception of culture considers social behaviour to be the basis on which general understanding of cultures exists without completely disregarding how individuals perceive themselves in relation to the cultures that they have, especially that Algeria is a country that is multi-cultural and multi-lingual. By multi-cultural, I refer to the fact that Algerian people share one common culture that is based on Islam and Arab heritage, and at the same time, there are small cultures in different regions of the country like Tamazight, Chaoui, Tergui and others.

Perception

Perception is defined as “the process by which people select, organize, interpret, retrieve and respond to the information from the world around them.” (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2003, p.2). In this light of this definition, students' perceptions refer to their impression of their own writer identity that implies how they see themselves as writers, their academic writing experience that is the result of their interaction with the academic writing community. The latter is the environment where students practice writing and develop their knowledge and skills as writers as well as their impressions of other members of this community such as teachers and peers who are both writers and readers at the same time.

Chapter One

Overview of Research on Academic and Argument Writing in EFL Contexts

Introduction

This chapter sets the theoretical framework of the study, It is an overview of research on academic and argument writing in the EFL context. It includes twelve sections. These sections are structured based on Berlin (1982, 1987, 1988 cited in Hyland, 1997, p.24) who suggests that all complete rhetorical theories and approaches to teaching composition must consider the following: (1) the writer (or “knower”), (2) the audience(or reader), (3) reality and truth (context), and (4) the sources of language in written texts. This outline seems very useful in understanding research on writing starting from L1 composition, L2, and EFL research. Although there are differences in the way researchers and scholars think about what matters in research on writing, I will use these five key elements to organize this chapter.

First , section 1.1. defines academic writing and refers to the challenges facing students as they try to negotiate their access to and position in the academic writing community by understanding its discourse; how writing is taught, how texts are written following the so-called standards and conventions of academic writing and the teaching and learning of writing and the practice revolving around these processes.

Second, section 1.2. deals with the key theories and approaches to writing that focus on the writer as a key element of the writing process. This section aims at discussing relevant studies on “good writers’ behaviour” that will be used as a theoretical basis to develop and discuss the following sections and chapters.

This section also contains three sub-sections, which relate to three approaches to writing: 1.2.1. Expressivist view of writing, 1.2.2. the Process approach to writing and finally 1.2.3. the Ethnographic approach to writing.

Section 1.3. deals with Self-appraisal , Self-efficacy and Academic Writing and section 1.4. deals with academic English writing in the Algerian context. It aims at describing the different aspects of their academic writing experiences as both students and secondary school pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at ENSB.

Section 1.4. contains four sub-sections, which correspond to the four elements of context : 1.4.1. deals with Academic writing instruction at ENSB. Sub-section 1.4.2. deals with the curriculum of Academic English Writing at ENSB.

In addition, section 1.5. tackles the understanding of academic discourse and communities. 1.5.1. deals with the standards and criteria for good writing .Sub-section 1.5.2. deals with students' agendas for writing. Sub-section 1.5.3. deals with texts students write at university. 1.5.4. deals with Toulmin's model of argument (1964). Sub-section 1.5.5. deals with readers or audience including teachers, classmates, friends and people such as the large audience in general often outside the classroom.

Furthermore, section 1.6. deals with students' writing difficulties at university. Section 1.7. discusses contrastive rhetoric and writing across three languages: Arabic, French, and English. Section 1.8. deals with argument writing: features and importance of this genre at university. Section 1.8.1. tackles cognitive perspective to argument writing. Finally, section 1.8.2. deals with sociocultural perspective to argument writing.

1.1. Defining Academic Writing

Writing is a vital skill for undergraduate students as well as pre-service student teachers since it seems to determine their academic success. Most of the evaluations especially the summative ones are based on the written mode. This mode is an important and complex process which has been defined differently by different scholars. For example, White (1986, p.10) defines writing as the process of expressing the ideas, information, knowledge, or experience. But Tarigan (1994, p.3) viewed writing as an activity to produce or draw graphic symbols, which represent a language understood by people. People will understand the graphic symbols presented if they understand the language and the graphic itself. Ramelan (1992, p.14) also stated that writing is a representation or symbol of language.

Therefore writing is an activity which uses symbols to express ideas, events, feelings or thinking in written form that can be used as a tool to communicate with other people. It is also defined as a skill, process and product.

Academic writing basically suggests the type of writing done by academics in academia, which might cover undergraduate and post-graduate students, teachers, scholars, researchers, writers, and readers within higher education be it university or similar institutions like faculties, higher institutes, and teachers' training colleges. These people represent the members of the academic writing community, which is a vital source for writing students can use immediately because this source is more accessible to them as they become members of the writing community.

Academic texts, like other forms of writing, are no longer defined as static artifacts. Lexico-grammatical, rhetorical and discoursal features of academic writing change in time. Therefore, these texts are characterized by distinct lexico-grammatical, rhetorical, and discoursal features that contribute to its formal and objective nature. For example, academic texts exhibit high lexical density and complexity, using noun-based phrases, subordinate clauses, reporting verbs, and

hedges and boosters to convey information concisely and objectively (Badaru et al., 2022,p. 185). Rhetorically, the aim is to persuade through structured argumentation, featuring clear thesis statements, logical organization with headings and subheadings, and cohesion and coherence achieved through transitional phrases. Discoursal features reflect the writer's engagement with the academic community, including an impersonal tone that minimizes personal bias, audience awareness that tailors content to scholarly expectations, and intertextuality that references existing literature to situate new research within the broader academic discourse. Understanding these features is essential for producing effective academic writing that meets disciplinary standards (Pillay et al., 2022,p.103). Moreover, genres form intertextual relationships with each other. For example, Swales (2004) emphasizes the shift in the definition of genre from a static entity towards a dynamic entity by introducing the concept of “genre networks”. Describing genres with the metaphor of a network, Swales (2004,p.22) suggests that genres in the research world are frequently transformed into other genres. He points out that published articles can both precede and follow theses, and further, articles can be combined into theses . This view has drastically changed the current definition of competency in academic writing which is not solely based on linguistic ability but also on awareness of rhetorical features of writing accepted by the discourse community.

On the other hand, Tardy (2005,p.325) defines academic writing as “transformation of knowledge”, which involves persuading readers of the work’s value, significance and credibility. Hyland (2005, p.192) calls the academic writing process “an act of identity” since it not only conveys disciplinary content but also carries a representation of the writer. (Casanave, 2003, p.88) on the other hand, defines academic writing as a “socio-political process” that takes place in a social context where writers and their writings are compared to other writers and their writings, and where institutional norms, instructor and gatekeeper criteria, feedback and decisions of powerful evaluators help determine what “success” means. (Eda Işık Taş, 2010, p. 122)

Academic writing includes a number of texts or genres such as reports, summaries, journal articles, theses, dissertations and essays. The latter can have different types, aims and functions.

The features of academic writing were not directly addressed by scholars. Many of them indirectly refer to these features when describing how “mature” or “competent” writers or students approach the writing process as will be discussed in the section devoted to approaches to academic writing. However, features of academic writing are encouraged in universities formal documents and guides as well as their educational websites which are often used as a learning resource for students. For example, the university of Glasgow which has issued a document with five aspects to consider in academic writing as follows:

- i- Formal Register: This requires a specific vocabulary often common in a given subject or shared in a number of subjects or disciplines like human or social sciences. This vocabulary should be appropriate, clear, direct and rich to allow students and other members of the academic community to express their ideas effectively and clearly with their teachers or readers for academic purposes. This means that often times students are not encouraged to use pompous vocabulary which might sound extravagant unless it is needed as it is the case in literature where sophisticated vocabulary is an important part of the literary writing discourse.
- ii- Precision: Academic writing is also known for being precise and concise and thus students are expected to use relevant content, ideas and details only if they directly relate to the topic they are writing about . This is because the aim is usually to explain, clarify or teach something specific to the reader or to show their understanding of a specific topic related to their subject of study. Writing which involves redundant details is regarded as messy, confusing to the reader and of a poor quality because it tells that the writer does not know exactly what details are relevant to the topic and this

results in a bad text. Precision also has to do with the choice of vocabulary, which is expected to be specific and relevant to the topic. If the topic is technical, the language and vocabulary should follow and students' mastery of the jargon of their subject or technical language is another proof of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter that should be reflected in academic writing.

- iii- Grammatical complexity: Precision and good word choice cannot be achieved without students' abilities to develop complex sentences to be able to express intricate thoughts. Therefore, grammatical complexity is another key feature of academic writing. Students in an academic context, are often required to avoid overusing simple sentences as the latter make the writing style boring. Thus they are encouraged to use a variety of sentence structures like compound, complex and compound complex sentences in their writing. For example, “the government imposes more taxes” is not as complete as “Even though the workers’ have remained the same, the government decided to impose more taxes on income”.
- iv- Impersonality: This feature of academic writing has become very controversial recently. Usually, academic writing is characterized by being objective, unbiased and scientific as these qualities help convince the reader, when the writer tries to explain, discuss or present complex topics and make them simple to understand. This means that students and writers are not encouraged to involve their personal experiences, opinions and feelings in their writing as this is regarded as subjective, weak and non-scientific. This impersonality is often achieved by the use of the passive voice, cleft sentences, some modals like “should” and “would” and personal pronouns like “we” instead of “I”. However, there is a tendency today in the academic writing literature that encourages students to use their personal experiences and knowledge in writing in order to make it authentic, credible and thus more influential on the reader.

- v- Caution: As a result of being scientific and objective, academic writing is full of expressions which express the writer's carefulness and uncertainty. This feature is also known as hedging by which writers inform the reader that the ideas, issues and insights they are sharing with the reader should not be taken as facts. In addition, writers tend to avoid making strong claims and therefore they adapt their language accordingly by using modals like may, might, and could instead of must. The passive voice is also used for this purpose. Writers, in addition to the use of less strong modals, tend to consider the other possibilities that exist besides their claim and the conditions in which their claims can be valid. This stand is often regarded as safe, scientific and practical especially in research, which can be full of controversy.

According to teachers' practice and agendas, academic writing in English aims at teaching students how texts are constructed through teaching them the way English works. For example, how sentences are constructed and put together to form paragraphs and how paragraphs are put composed to form essays. In addition, other aspects of language should be taught such as vocabulary, grammar and mechanics like spelling and capitalization. Similarly, the way unity or coherence and cohesion are created, and ideas are linked together logically to communicate clear messages.

Therefore, academic writing is functional as it aims at communication and each type of essay or text has a specific aim as an independent genre. This logic revolves around two major principles ; writing to learn and learning to write in English. Unlike personal and creative writing, students in academic writing seem to have less control and choices on why and how they write since the aims of writing are already set up by the teachers and writing syllabus. This means that the purposes and motives for writing are already decided on and thus students have no or little choice to make. Yet, despite the formal nature of academic writing, participants try

to find room for their own purposes and agendas for writing which complement and at times conflict or challenge the officially established purposes.

1.2. Theories and Approaches to Academic Writing

In this section, we will draw a brief overview of research on writing that will serve as a necessary step to understand writing as communication, process, social act, text generation and the different theoretical perspectives on writing in order to understand writer identity and the related concepts and issues that will be discussed in the second chapter.

The first approach in the process writing movement focuses on the writer, emphasizing the writer's role in composing and generating texts. This approach aims to understand what effective writers do and how learners can acquire these skills. Three key positions within this approach have significantly influenced the process writing movement:

- the first focuses on the personal creativity of the individual writer
- the second on the cognitive processes of writing
- the third on the writer's immediate context.

1.2.1. Expressivist View of Writing

The concept of process writing, originating from the works of Elbow (1998), Murray (1985), and other scholars, promotes the idea of writers discovering their unique voices to create writing that is original and spontaneous. This perspective assumes that thinking comes before writing and that the free expression of ideas can stimulate self-discovery and cognitive development. It suggests a close connection between writing development and personal growth, where both writing and therapy aim to foster clear thinking, effective communication, and fulfilling self-expression.

The expressivist approach to writing education emphasizes the process of writing over the final product, viewing it as a creative and self-discovery process for the writer. This approach rejects a narrow focus on grammar and usage, instead encouraging writers to explore and make their own meanings through a supportive and non-directive teaching environment.

Writing is considered as a developmental process and therefore teachers are required to be flexible by negotiating topics with students instead of imposing them. Their role then is to provoke students' thinking by preparing relevant pre-writing tasks such as journaling, and analogies (Elbow, 1998), and respond to the ideas they produce. Consequently, this practice reflects the belief that writing is self-discovery.

Rohman (1965,p. 107-8) views good writing as "a unique and original expression that allows the writer to assert their authority over the subject matter, creating a fresh and original pattern". In contrast, bad writing is seen as "a mere imitation of someone else's work, lacking the writer's personal touch and authenticity". According to Rohman (1965, *ibid.*) , "good writing requires the writer to discover their individuality within the subject, making it a personal and responsible act".

The Expressivist approach to writing, as criticized by North (1987), is seen as lacking clear theoretical principles to evaluate "good writing" or provide advice on how to achieve it. According to Expressivists, good writing does not result from the application of rules but rather from the writer's free imagination. This perspective emphasizes the importance of personal expression and creativity in writing, but it does not offer a clear framework for evaluating or improving writing quality.

The Expressivist approach to writing, as critiqued by Faigley (1986), is characterized by a "romantic" perspective that promotes "vague goals of 'self-actualization'" and "vaguer definitions of good writing" that rely on subjective and culturally variable concepts such as "originality, integrity and spontaneity". This

perspective emphasizes personal expression and creativity over the application of clear rules or principles for evaluating writing quality. As North (1987) points out, the Expressivist approach "offers no clear theoretical principles from which to evaluate 'good writing', nor does it furnish advice that can help accomplish it". The focus is on the writer's free imagination and personal voice, rather than on objective standards, makes it difficult to provide concrete guidance for improving writing skills.

The Expressivist approach to writing is characterized by an "extreme learner-centred stance" that places the writer at the centre, with the writer's creative expression as the principal goal. However, the assumption that "all writers have similar innate intellectual and creative potential and simply require the right conditions to express this, now seems rather naïve". The Expressivist view is "seriously under-theorized and leans heavily on an asocial view of the writer, operating in a context where there are no cultural differences in the value of 'self-expression', no variations in personal inhibition, few distinctions in the writing processes of mature and novice writers, and no social consequences of writing". This perspective fails to account for the complex social, cultural, and individual factors that shape the writing process and outcomes.

Although "Expressivism" has "helped to move writing teaching and research away from a restricted attention to form, it ignores communication in the real-world contexts where writing matters". But, despite its limitations, the Expressivist approach is still influential in many U.S. first language classrooms, underpins courses in creative writing, and has helped inspire research to support a cognitive view of writing.

1.2.2. The Process Approach to Writing

Interest in writers' composing processes has been extended beyond notions of creativity and self-expression to focus on the cognitive aspects of writing. This is a very different view of process as it draws on the techniques and theories of cognitive

psychology and not literary creativity. Essentially it sees writing as a problem-solving activity: how writers approach a writing task as a problem and bring intellectual resources to solving it. This view of writing has developed a range of sophisticated investigative methods, generated an enormous body of research, and was, until recently, the dominant approach to teaching writing.

The notion of "process" in this approach implies that writing is a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process where writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. This contrasts with the traditional view of writing as a linear sequence of pre-writing, writing, and post-writing activities. Research has revealed the complexity of the writing process, highlighting the recursive nature of planning and editing activities, the influence of different writing tasks, and the value of examining writers' behaviours through a series of drafts. Case studies and think-aloud protocols, rather than just the final texts, have been widely used as research methods to gain insights into these dynamic writing processes.

Flower and Hayes' (1981) model was decisive as it proposed that the process of writing is influenced by the task and the writer's long-term memory. Here are its main features:

- writers have goals
- they plan extensively
- planning involves defining a rhetorical problem, placing it in a context, then exploring its parts, arriving at solutions and finally translating ideas on to the page
- all work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised, even before any text has been produced

- planning, drafting, revising and editing are recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous
- plans and text are constantly evaluated in a feedback loop
- the whole process is overseen by an executive control called a monitor.

This, then, is a computer model typical of theorising in cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence, giving priority to mechanisms such as *memory*, *Central Processing Unit*, *problem-solving programs* and *flow-charts*. This, then, is a computer model typical of theorising in cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence, giving priority to mechanisms such as *memory*, *Central Processing Unit*, *problem-solving programs* and *flow-charts*.

Faigley (1986) notes that the Flower and Hayes model contributed to a "science-consciousness" among writing teachers, offering a "deep-structure" theory of how writing could be taught. The model's simplicity is notable, as it explains a wide range of mental activities during composing through a relatively small number of sub-processes. Additionally, the model aims to account for individual differences in writing strategies, suggesting that "immature" or "novice" writers can be represented as using a reduced version of the composing model used by experts, and thus guided towards greater competence through instruction in expert strategies.

The process approach to teaching writing was significantly enhanced by the widespread availability and affordability of personal computers in the early 1980s. Word processing, which went beyond mere typing, revolutionized the way texts were manipulated, making it easier to revise, edit, and re-draft. This technological advancement quickly caught the attention of educators, who recognized its pedagogical potential. As a result, specialized programs emerged, such as Daedalus, which incorporated modules to support the various stages of the writing process, including generating ideas, editing, and facilitating peer review and discussion.

According to Bloch (2008), the ease with which changes could be made or new ideas incorporated made it clear how all aspects of the writing process were now seamlessly integrated.

The influence of process approaches on both research and teaching has been substantial, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the composing processes. These approaches have broadened research methodologies beyond traditional experimental and text analyses to incorporate qualitative methods from the social sciences. This shift aims to capture writing from an insider's perspective, considering the viewpoints of writers and readers themselves. Studies have utilized diverse methods such as writers' verbal reports during writing (Van Den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam, 2001), task observation (Bosher, 1998), and retrospective interviews (Nelson and Carson, 1998). Research often takes a longitudinal approach, tracking students' writing development over extended periods (Hyland, 1998), employing a range of techniques including recall protocols and analyses of multiple drafts.

Research on L2 writers has not met expectations. Process writing studies often confirm teachers' existing beliefs about skilled and unskilled writers, offering little new insight. Additionally, conflicting findings are common due to studies being limited to small writer samples in specific contexts, limiting their generalizability. Despite the extensive research output, doubts persist about the methods used to explore cognitive models of writing.

Summary of Findings of Process Approach to L2 Writing:

Silva (1993 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 22-23) summarises the main results of research into composing practices as:

- general composing process patterns seem to be similar in L1 and L2
- skilled writers compose differently from novices
- skilled writers use more effective planning and revising strategies

- L1 strategies may or may not be transferred to L2 contexts
- L2 writers tend to plan less than L1 writers
- L2 writers have more difficulty setting goals and generating material
- L2 writers revise more but reflect less on their writing
- L2 writers are less fluent, and produce less accurate and effective texts

According to Silva (2003), using think-aloud protocols in L2 writing research poses significant challenges as they provide an incomplete view of the intricate cognitive processes involved in writing since many processes are automatic and internalized, making them difficult to verbalize. In addition, they simultaneously verbalizing thoughts while writing can overwhelm short-term memory, leading to a limited representation of the actual processes. Finally, participants' verbal reports may be more of a constructed narrative to explain rather than accurately reflect their cognitive processes, potentially distorting the data. In this sense, relying solely on think-aloud protocols may not fully capture the complexity of L2 writing processes, raising concerns about the accuracy and depth of the insights gained from this method.

Scardamalia and Bereiter (1986) have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of existing models in the field of writing. They argue that these models lack the depth of fully developed theories and are unable to provide insights into the decision-making processes of writers. Consequently, they fall short in guiding students on improving their writing skills. Flower and Hayes' initial model was deemed too vague to accurately predict real writers' behaviours, leading to a shift towards emphasizing goal-setting and rhetorical strategies (Flower et al., 1990). Despite efforts to refine these models, the fundamental issue remains: attempting to capture the cognitive processes shared by all writers, from beginners to experts, without addressing the individual nuances of each writer's approach.

The existing cognitive process models of writing, such as the Flower and Hayes (1990) model, have faced several key criticisms. First, they are not fully developed theories and therefore fail to adequately explain or predict the actual writing behaviours of real writers. In addition, these models do not account for the reasons behind the choices writers make, limiting their ability to provide meaningful guidance to students on improving their writing practices. Another weakness relies in the fact that the original Flower and Hayes (1990) model was too imprecise to accurately predict the behaviour of real writers, undermining the weight of the research claims based on it. Although these models have been refined to emphasize goal-setting and rhetorical strategies, these improvements cannot overcome the fundamental weaknesses of a model that aims to describe cognitive processes common to all writers, from novices to experts.

Despite the influential role of these cognitive process models in writing research, they exhibit significant limitations in fully capturing the complexities of real-world writing and providing actionable guidance for writing instruction. To remedy for these limitations, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) suggest that because skilled and novice practices differ so radically, two models account for the research findings better than one. The latter are Knowledge-telling and Knowledge-transforming models.

The knowledge-telling model describes how novice writers deal with the writing process. For example, they plan and revise less often and less extensively compared to expert writers. Also, they are primarily concerned with generating content from their internal knowledge resources, rather than transforming that knowledge. Thus, their main goal using the knowledge-telling model is simply to tell what they can remember based on the assignment, topic, or genre, rather than engaging in deeper cognitive processes. In short, writing based on their behaviour is a mechanical production of texts based on recalling and reporting on memorized information and knowledge, which is similar to what students do in the product approach to writing.

The knowledge-transforming model, on the other hand, describes how proficient writers utilize writing tasks to analyze issues and establish objectives. These writers can contemplate the intricacies of the task and address challenges related to content, structure, audience, style, organization, and more within both a content space and a rhetorical space. This approach involves a continuous interplay between evolving knowledge and text, where thoughts are actively revised so that not only the text but also the ideas themselves may undergo transformation (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987).

Bereiter and Scardamalia's model of writing process development proposes that the writing process differs significantly between skilled and less-skilled writers. The model suggests that less-skilled writers engage in a "knowledge-telling" approach, where they rely on memorized information to complete a writing task, whereas skilled writers employ a "knowledge-transforming" approach, which involves the active construction of knowledge through writing. The knowledge-transforming model is characterized by a more complex and dynamic process, where writers engage in problem analysis, goal setting, and planning before beginning to write. This approach is seen as more effective in producing high-quality writing, as it allows writers to actively construct meaning and to revise and refine their ideas as they write. The model also highlights the importance of feedback and revision in the writing process, suggesting that writers need to receive feedback on their work and revise it multiple times to develop both their content and expression.

However, the model does not provide a clear explanation of how writers make the cognitive transition from a knowledge-telling to a knowledge-transforming approach, nor does it specify the intervening stages of this process. Additionally, it is unclear whether the process is the same for all learners, or if there are individual differences in how writers approach the writing process. Overall, Bereiter and Scardamalia's model provides valuable insights into the psychological processes involved in writing and the difficulties that unskilled

writers may face. It suggests that students should engage in a variety of challenging writing tasks and genres to develop their skills, and that feedback and revision are crucial components of the writing process.

Despite the widespread adoption of process-oriented writing instruction, many students continue to struggle with their writing skills even after intensive teaching of expert strategies. However, the impact of process-based ideas on both first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing classrooms cannot be overstated. Nowadays, most teachers incorporate process-oriented activities into their writing instruction. These include:

- Pre-writing activities to generate ideas about content and structure
- Encouraging brainstorming and outlining
- Requiring multiple drafts
- Providing extensive feedback
- Facilitating peer responses
- Delaying surface-level corrections until the final editing stage
- Displaying finished student work

Process-oriented research has also led to the widespread application of various instructional practices, such as:

- Cooperative writing
- Teacher-student conferences
- Problem-based writing tasks
- Journal writing
- Group discussions
- Mixed portfolio assessments (Hyland, 2009)

These practices are now common components of the methodological repertoire in both L1 and L2 writing classrooms, reflecting the significant impact of process-based approaches on writing pedagogy.

Based on the information provided in the search results, the key points regarding the limitations and criticisms of the process approach to writing. While there is substantial case study and anecdotal support for the process model of writing, there is actually little empirical evidence that process-writing techniques lead to significantly better writing outcomes. As a result, this lack of strong evidence is not surprising, as the "process approach" encompasses many different approaches applied unevenly and in varying ways across different contexts. In addition, there are serious reservations about the individualistic emphasis of process-oriented methods, which tend to overlook the social aspects of language use and learning. This may handicap ESL students from more collectivist cultural backgrounds.

Thus, no single method can automatically produce good writers, as the process of writing involves a rich mix of elements, including the writer's experiences, background, sense of self, audience, situation, and purpose. Writers, situations, and tasks differ, so a universal approach cannot be applied with the same results across all contexts. While the process approach has been influential, it faces limitations in terms of empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness, its uneven application, its individualistic focus, and the inherent complexity of the writing process itself, which resists a one-size-fits-all solution.

Strong and Weak Aspects of Process Teaching Approaches

- Major impact on the theory and methodology of teaching writing to L1 and L2 students
- A useful corrective to preoccupations with 'product' and student accuracy

- Important in raising teachers' awareness of what writing involves-contributing to a professionalisation of writing teaching
- Gave greater respect for individual differences among student writers
- Raises many new research questions which remain to be answered

Weak Aspects

- Overemphasises psychological factors in writing
- Focuses on the writer as a solitary individual and fails to recognise social aspects of writing
- Based on individualistic ideologies which may hamper the development of ESL students
- Ignores important influences of context, especially differences of class, gender and ethnicity
- Downplays the varied conventions of professional and academic communities
- Uncertain whether this approach greatly improves student writing (Hyland,2009,p. 25)

In short, the process-writing perspective allowed a deeper understanding of writing that was not possible before when it was seen only as finished products. This perspective, however, overemphasises psychological factors and fails to consider the external factors, which help and guide problem-definition, frame solutions and ultimately shape writing.

1.2.3. Ethnographic Approach to Writing

A third, writer-oriented perspective on writing is called the Ethnographic approach to writing. The latter aims at addressing the criticisms directed to cognitive process models of writing by placing greater emphasis on the actual performance of writers rather than their cognitive processes. Therefore, rather than building a single unified theory, this perspective encompasses several lines of inquiry that incorporate the writer's prior experiences and the impact of the immediate, local context on the writing process. This writer-oriented perspective has had a significant influence on both how we conceptualize writing and how it can be studied effectively.

As a result, writing, according to this perspective, is a multifaceted social activity that unfolds within specific contexts, shaped by the writer's personal attitudes, past experiences, and the broader political and institutional environments in which it occurs. Researchers have delved into the intricacies of writing by closely observing writing acts, conducting participant interviews, analyzing surrounding practices, and employing various research techniques to unveil the nuances of local writing contexts. These detailed accounts offer valuable insights into the experiences of writers and their perceptions of the challenges and requirements presented by the immediate context in which they engage in writing. By focusing on the interplay between individual writers and the contextual factors influencing their writing processes, researchers have enriched our understanding of how writing is not only a cognitive endeavour but also a socially embedded practice that is deeply intertwined with the environments in which it unfolds (Hyland, 2009, p. 27).

According to Halliday (1985 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 46), context has three dimensions:

- *Field*: Refers to what is happening, the type of social action, or what the text is about (the topic together with the socially expected forms and patterns typically used to express it).

- *Tenor*: Refers to who is taking part, the roles and relationships of participants (their status and power, for instance, which influences involvement, formality and politeness).

- *Mode*: Refers to what part the language is playing, what the participants are expecting it to do for them (whether it is spoken or written, how information is structured, and so on).

This perspective delves into the physical and experiential contexts in which writing takes place, moving beyond mere speculation about writers' cognitive processes to explore how 'context cues cognition' (Flower, 1989). Central to this approach is the concept of context as the 'situation of expression' (Nystrand, 1987), emphasizing the impact of prior knowledge, assumptions, expectations, and environmental features that trigger specific cognitive processes. The primary aim is to elucidate how this context influences the way writers articulate their intentions in the written work they produce. Prior (1998) notes that writing unfolds within moments rich in tools and interactions, encompassing various activities like reading, talking, observing, and thinking, highlighting that writing is not an isolated act but a complex interplay of diverse activities. In essence, this perspective underscores the dynamic relationship between the context in which writing occurs and the ways in which writers manifest their intentions through their written expressions.

Studies on writing therefore seek to analyze, in detail, how writing is composed as an outcome of local and situated contexts. To accomplish these comprehensive or "thick" descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of writing contexts, researchers have heavily relied on ethnographic studies. The term "ethnographic" refers to research that is highly situated and meticulously detailed, aiming to provide a holistic explanation of behaviour. This approach draws on the understandings of insiders to avoid making prior assumptions as the researcher (Watson-Gegeo, 1988; Cicourel, 2007).

This perspective is inspired by Ethnography as a “type of research which undertakes to give, insider oriented description of individuals’ cultural practices” (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999b,p. 49). Therefore, Ethnographic methods in writing research typically involve detailed, long-term observations of a specific setting and the writing that occurs within it. In addition, researchers conducting ethnographic writing studies often interview participants about their writing practices and relevant personal experiences. Consequently, Ethnographic approaches in writing research frequently include recursive analyses of students' process logs, diaries, and other written materials. Researchers may also utilize questionnaires and closely examine classroom interactions to gain insights into the writing process (e.g. Jarratt *et al.*, 2006; Hyland, 1998). These studies often analyze various texts, such as course materials, manuals, and student writing samples, as well as teacher feedback on student work. In some cases, the researcher may actively participate in the class and observe students' daily activities to better understand the contexts and practices that shape the writing process(Weissberg, 2006).

However, the term "Ethnography" can evoke discomfort due to its anthropological roots, suggesting complete immersion in another culture rather than just a research approach with diverse methods. Swales' (1998) introduction of "textography" in his case studies within university departments provides a more accessible method for delving into the intricacies of working contexts without the need for a comprehensive cultural analysis. Textography focuses on exploring specific departments, academics, and their discipline-specific texts within a university setting, offering a more manageable approach to studying the richness of these contexts while sidestepping the need for a full cultural examination.

Situated researchers have shown a keen interest in the specific aspects of local settings, focusing on the roles individual writers play and how their interactions with local participants influence the writing process, particularly in collaborative settings. These contexts serve as arenas for interactions where

relationships and established rules can either facilitate or hinder the act of composing. More importantly, contexts are sites for interactions where relationships, and the rules which order them, can both facilitate and constrain composing (Willett, 1995; Storch, 2005) Thus, Chin (1994 cited in Hyland, 2009,p.28) “has shown how students on a journalism course saw the use of physical space in their department as barriers, which excluded them and restricted access to the material resources they needed for writing”.

The wider social and institutional contexts can have a significant impact on writers' experiences and perceptions of their own writing abilities. Writers from disadvantaged backgrounds or with limited educational resources may develop "writing apprehension" (Canagarajah,1996) .This can lead to writing apprehension" (Faigley *et al.*, 1981) and high levels of anxiety about their writing skills, writing situations, or writing tasks. This anxiety can seriously disrupt the writing process and undermine educational success, even for intellectually capable individuals. Such writers may avoid courses or careers involving writing, suffer from low self-esteem, and produce poor-quality texts, not due to a lack of ability, but as a result of the negative experiences and perceptions shaped by broader social inequalities it. Therefore, they may “feel that their writing is not sufficiently creative, interesting, sophisticated, or well expressed” (McLeod, 1987). Addressing these issues requires understanding the complex interplay between individual writers and the social worlds that influence their development and confidence as writers.

The focus on individual writers alone lacks a comprehensive theory of how experiences are shaped and interpreted within social communities. It also underestimates the influence of broader societal factors. As a result, this approach fails to move beyond the immediate local context and fully account for how a writer's evolving text may be a response to the expectations of readers. The neglect of the social dimension of writing has ultimately led research away from internally-focused process models towards more socially-situated perspectives on writing. A more holistic understanding requires acknowledging the ways in which writing is

embedded within and shaped by the wider social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which it occurs, rather than solely examining the writer's individual cognitive processes. These limitations have led to another perspective on writing which places the reader at the centre of the writing process as discussed in the section 1.8. Before dealing with the reader-based perspective to writing, we deem it necessary to discuss academic writing reality in the Algerian context. This choice is justified by the fact that who the students are and the context in which they write, often determine their readers. This will be the focus of the next section.

1.3. Self- appraisal , Self-efficacy and Academic Writing

Self-appraisal theory is a psychological theory that claims that emotions are the results of individuals' evaluation or appraisal of events that happen around them. Consequently, our emotional responses are caused by the ways we interpret or meaning we give situations. This theory then focuses on how individuals' emotions are developed through cognitive processes like thinking and interpreting. This theory also relates to Self-appraisal theory that tackles how individuals evaluate their past, present and future selves. These three types of selves represent individual self-concept that is the general view individuals have about themselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and intellectually. This implies how individuals think about, evaluate, and perceive themselves as they develop over time through experience, interaction, and reflection. It is clear that this directly implies to academic writing and writer identity as students' perceptions of themselves directly influence how their writing performance.

This is the focus of self-efficacy that is defined as students' "perceived capability" to perform tasks at pre-determined levels (Bandura, 1997). The notion of writing self-efficacy was developed based on Social Cognitive Theory, in which learning depends on the interaction between an individual's behaviour, personal factors (e.g., beliefs), and environment (Bandura, 1997). This perspective on learning is in tandem with Social Constructivism ,which in turn, assumes that

learning is constructed through social interaction and collaboration and knowledge is the result of individuals' interaction with others and their social environment.

In this sense, self-efficacy involves the “judgment of capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance” (Bandura & Schunk, 1981, p. 31). Such judgment influences students' task choices, effort, and achievement. Therefore, self-efficacy is a “dynamic attribute” that is not innate in an individual's pre-disposition but results from students' use of skills related to cognition, motivation, emotion, and behaviour to achieve different purposes in academic learning (Bandura, 2006). A review study (Schunk & Pajares, 2010) has shown that self-efficacy is related to various student factors such as awareness of goal setting, motivation, and the use of strategies, as well as social factors including culture and the learning environment. As such, self-efficacy implies “multi-dimensional structures”.

This relates to writing as it involves expressing one's ideas, emotions, and messages. This process requires a significant degree of personal regulation as writing activities are often “self-directed” (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Student writers, thus, rely on confidence and motivation to look for ideas and knowledge stored in memory and organize them into specific texts for specific purposes and situations. Consequently, the affective elements, such as self-efficacy belief, may shape the different stages of learning to write. For example, linguistic knowledge efficacy, self-regulatory efficacy, information organization efficacy, writing performance efficacy, and rehearsal and memory efficacy significantly affect EFL students' writing performance (Teng & Wang, 2023). Pajares and Valiante (2006), writers' self-efficacy beliefs are critical during the writing process. These beliefs are related to writers' capabilities, especially their ability to process linguistic knowledge and their confidence in managing the emotions that accompany the writing. In an empirical study,

For example, the study conducted by Brunning et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between learners' writing assessment scores and their self-efficacy in writing ideation (the process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas), writing conventions, and writing self-regulation. Results showed a good model fit for the three-factor correlated model; writing ideation and self-regulation were significantly correlated with writing assessment scores. Pajares (2003) also noted that self-efficacy beliefs can affect students' writing achievement because students' self-confidence in their writing influences their motivation to write. In another empirical study, Locke and Johnston (2016) explored teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the teaching of writing. A total of 140 high school teachers in New Zealand completed the self-efficacy scale, which comprised five dimensions. Findings demonstrated that self-efficacy for teaching writing has multiple dimensions. A study in an EFL setting with 609 Chinese students indicated that self-efficacy, in particular, linguistic self-efficacy, self-regulatory efficacy, and performance self-efficacy, was correlated with writing performance (Teng, Sun, & Xu, 2018).

As a result, learners with positive self-efficacy beliefs may utilize self-regulated strategies to adjust to the changing demands of writing tasks and improve their emotional preparedness to write. Therefore, there may be a noteworthy correlation between self-efficacy and writing. Greater self-efficacy may contribute to higher levels of writing achievement, and correspondingly, higher writing achievement may lead to greater self-efficacy (Kong & Teng, 2023). Enhanced writing self-efficacy could improve one's self-regulated capacity in writing. Students may struggle with self-knowledge and awareness of task characteristics, which would affect their ability to judge efficacy (i.e., how they calibrate their skills and performance (Singer & Alexander, 2017). Taking a comprehensive approach is crucial when examining writing self-efficacy in EFL writing contexts.

Consequently, self-efficacy beliefs are associated with Self-regulated Learning (SRL), which refers to one's ability to exert control over learning

processes through planning, goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Skilful self-regulators embark on learning endeavours with specific goals. Such awareness leads to a strong sense of self-efficacy to monitor their learning process and enhance their effort in the pursuit of desired learning outcomes (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000). Self-efficacy beliefs also play a key role in helping learners adopt agentive behaviours by stimulating their thoughts, affectation, motivation, and actions (Bandura, 1991). A reciprocal relationship appears to exist between self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning: a strong sense of self - regulation enables learners to be sensitive and adapt to feedback during the learning process, and the feedback they receive shapes their self-efficacy beliefs. Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) argued that strong self-efficacy beliefs predict intrinsic motivation, thus helping learners further self-regulate their learning. From a triadic viewpoint, a learner's level of self-regulation rests on his or her personal effort to self-regulate, behavioural performance, and nuances in environmental contexts (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) described SRL as comprising three parameters: personal processes, environmental events, and behavioural attributes. These parameters influence learners' capacity to monitor the effectiveness of self-regulatory and to respond to feedback (e.g., proceeding with a strategy if it works well or seeking an alternate when it does not). Research on self-efficacy beliefs is of great significance because it sheds light on learners' perceived metacognitive control over their behaviour and performance. However, the connection between self-efficacy and learners' writing performance does not seem to have received as much attention.

1.4. Academic English Writing in the Algerian Context

Writing is a vital skill that students are required to master when they join university as it contributes significantly to their academic success. Yet, its complex nature makes it demanding to most students. Many scholars have discussed the complexity and difficulty of writing. Nunan (1989, p. 82) , for example, argues that “writing is

an extremely difficult cognitive activity, which requires the learner to have control over various factors. These factors vary from academic background and personal interest of the writer to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena”.

Higher education in Algeria is witnessing rapid and intense changes which are also occurring at the global level as a result of advances in technology. The latter has transformed the world into a connected village thereby reducing the distance and space thanks to rapid communication in a globalized world. The spread of globalization is having a direct and indirect impact on all aspects of human life including higher education. Algeria is trying to take the wave to keep updated with globalization and face the new challenges at the level of politics, economy and education. One clear example is the adoption in the early 2000's of a new higher education scheme called the LMD system which is an acronym meaning Licence (Bachelor), Master and Doctorate. This is an education system widely used in many countries of Europe and North America.

The LMD system brought about many changes in teaching, evaluation and curriculum content. Some specific scientific disciplines and departments started using this new system as a pioneering project, but gradually all departments of all universities at the national level followed and now the LMD system is the norm. It has replaced the “Classical System” in which students used to study for four years to obtain an undergraduate degree. However, Teacher Training Colleges did not adopt this system at degree level as students still study for four years to become middle school teachers of English and five years to become secondary school teachers of English, as is the case of the participants of this study. Therefore, the LMD system did not affect student training, the curriculum or the assessment at ENSB, as it is explained next.

1.4.1. English Language Instruction at ENSB (Algiers)

The ENSB has lately launched a Master's degree program of English for the graduate students who had already started their careers as middle and secondary

school teachers of EFL all around Algeria and who wanted to get a higher education degree. Two specialisms are offered : Applied Linguistics and Literature. But, the change in higher education (henceforth HE) did not affect the participants of this study in any significant way as the LMD system was implemented in post-graduate education rather than in graduate education, as was the case at university.

This section is a brief description of the ENSB five-year degree curriculum and the three-year writing syllabus (first, second and third year) of academic writing . It is worth mentioning that academic writing is not taught in the fourth and fifth year, but students are expected to apply their knowledge and skills of academic writing in writing up their final year research paper or report on a topic related to English language teaching and learning. The latter is based on the data students usually collect during their training in schools, which lasts for about a month and takes place in two phases: two weeks before the winter and two weeks before the fall holidays.

During this training, final year students attend English classes at middle and secondary schools, observe teachers of English teaching their classes, and have discussions with their teacher trainers. Then they present a lesson or part of it with another classmate. This training helps students discover the classroom atmosphere and get ready for their professional career as EFL teachers by applying the teaching skills they learned at ENSB.

At ENSB, the curriculum of English includes English language teaching methods, pedagogy, applied linguistics, psycho-pedagogy, syllabus design , evaluation, the four language skills, Arabic language and Arabic psycho-pedagogy in addition to British, American and African civilization and literature which are taught to increase students cultural awareness of the English culture seen as vital to understand how English works and for a better communication orally and in the written form. Writing is an important tool for students' integration in the university

as both a social space within society and an institution that is ruled by politics and ideology.

University and higher education generally are thus the reflection of Algerian society at all levels. This is clear in the participants' linguistic and social backgrounds that are part of their personal histories or what they bring to the classroom and the writing process. This will be discussed in detail in the second chapter of the literature review focusing on writer identities as individuals, students, writers, and members of the academic writing community.

1.4.2. The Curriculum of Academic English Writing at ENSB

The teaching of academic writing at ENSB takes three years from the first to the third year of the five-year training the participants do as secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language. In the first year, they revise and consolidate their knowledge of paragraph writing, and study the main elements of a paragraph as a text (the topic sentence, supporting sentences and the concluding sentence) in addition to some related grammar points which are needed for each type of paragraph. Usually, grammar is integrated in the writing course and includes editing strategies where students are asked to correct their peers' paragraphs, their own paragraphs or do classroom correction of a randomly selected paragraph which contains different types of mistakes; students are asked to identify the mistakes in their own paragraphs and correct them successfully thereby developing their self-correction skills and eventually make them autonomous writers at least at the linguistic level.

In the second year, students are introduced to essay writing where they put their knowledge of paragraph writing into practice and are trained to write more extensive texts which take the form of the five-paragraph essay widely used at university. This type of essay structure is the norm everywhere in higher education whether in university departments, or teacher training colleges around Algeria. This is a sign that Algerian higher education just as in many other countries is

influenced by a dominant discourse related to English as a global language and therefore stands as the international academic writing discourse which has produced specific standards of good writing at university.

1.5. Understanding Academic Writing Discourse Communities

“Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion, invent the university, or a branch of it, like history or anthropology or economics or English. The student has to learn *to speak our language, to speak as we do*, to try on the peculiar ways knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing that *define the discourse of our community*” (Harris, 1989, p.13. original emphasis).

According to the above citation, students seem to constantly negotiate their access and positions in their writing community. They keep moving from being outsiders who try to have access to the community by surviving the gatekeeping function of academic writing through understanding and applying the writing conventions and attempting to move from the margin or periphery of the writing community into its center. Therefore, they try to have more active roles as writers by seeking recognition and validity by the other members of this community who can be writers, readers, teachers or classmates.

Students are required to write different types of texts or genres for academic purposes like reading summaries, scientific reports, presentations, and essays. The latter are a key genre at university and higher education in general. Although all types of essays are important because they are needed in specific situations, the argument essay is one of the most important type of essays students are required to write since it is widely used to assess students’ knowledge, critical thinking, understanding both in language-related modules like writing and reading and in content-related modules like applied linguistics, literature and educational psychology or psycho-pedagogy. This point will be developed later.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 370) claim that “Academic writing communities are typically discipline- specific groups of academics who share sets of theoretical,

methodological, and conventional notions about their discipline”. Likewise, Walvoord and McCarthy (1991) believe that disciplinary-specific standards are the primary consideration of many faculties, which aim at having students undertake writing tasks, which model real writing activities carried out by professionals in the outside world. Thus, the notion of discourse community is an important concept for advanced writing instruction that seeks to initiate students into their writing environment.

Discourse communities represent a mini-society in which students develop as writers by understanding and mastering Academic Writing Discourse (AWD) or speaking the language of their Writing Community (WC).“ Specific discourse communities make extensive use of different genres and conventions, which will be important for students to master” (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, p. 371). Along their journey to becoming writers, students should adopt and adapt to these conventions as they represent the features of good writing.

“Some of these genres and conventions will be specialized, but others will generalize across a number of disciplines. For example, the ability to form a coherent and well-supported set of arguments from multiple, and sometimes conflicting, resources is a skill that is valued in a number of disciplines.” (Ibid.)

This implies that as they join university, students are required to embark on new writing experiences that are more complicated than those they had in the past in middle and secondary schools. This also implies change in their writing behavior as a result of the change of expectations by university teachers including teachers of writing. Therefore, students feel the need to adapt to the requirements and expectations of university as a new learning environment if they are to succeed academically. The new environment also requires them to integrate the academic writing community as writers who are able to express their thoughts clearly, efficiency and more importantly critically.

Mastering these skills seems vital to gain access, acceptance and recognition within this community that is a result of a complex network of power relationships where students are constantly negotiating their changing positions and roles as writers and active members rather than passive consumers of the academic writing discourse and its standards and conventions. Yet, this is far from being an easy task even for the students who have a good mastery of English.

Discourse communities are important as they influence the way students write, the purposes and functions of their writing once they join university and become initially members or writers of this community. Yet, students are constantly challenged as members and should prove their competence and worthiness with each writing task while they improve and develop as writers with the writing challenges and demands of these writing communities. The latter are also resources of guidance and support through the advantages they offer their members including students. Swales (1990) outlines six criteria for identifying a discourse community:

1. A discourse community shares common public goals, even if the private goals of individual members are distinct. Stating public goals of groups serves a real function: “ it creates the illusion of agreement by allowing members to interpret the stated goals in their own way” (Cooper, 1989: p.212).

2. The discourse community is a forum for discussion and debate; discourse communities must have interaction among their members. These mechanisms may include meetings, correspondence, newsletters, etc.

3. Discourse communities will provide feedback and information to members through various participatory mechanisms. A major function of newsletters, journals, conferences is to support members with useful resources that match their interests and needs.

4. Discourse communities, as they interact, will develop discourse expectations and discourse genres as norms by which interchange regularly occurs. These genres will become norms for the community and may also become conservative in nature.

5.The discourse community develops along with a regularized set of genre expectations a specific set of terminology and specialized vocabulary. Community specify abbreviations, acronyms, and references will become commonly used.

6.The discourse community must have enough members to discuss matters of importance to a wider group and to generate content expertise and the regularized exchange of this information(Swales, 1990 cited in Grabe and Kaplan,1996,pp.108-109).

In the context of this study, these features of discourse community seem to apply to the writing classroom as a mini-society that reflects the discourse of academia and writing pedagogy in higher education. The members of this small-scale community are the teachers of writing, students, and administration staff like the department or school that make sure writing is taught and evaluated in a given way by all teachers at the same institution. This means that there is already an established discourse whether directly stated in the writing syllabus / curriculum or indirectly communicated via teachers' decisions, choices and behaviors in the writing classroom and even in content-based modules knowing that writing is a transferable skill that is needed in language and content-based modules as well especially in Writing Across Curriculum (WAC) settings.

1.5.1. Standards and Features of Good Writing at University

What makes a good essay at university? Why is the five-paragraph essay widely used in written communication?

Students at university, including ENSB, are required to write specific types of texts with specific features that usually result from the values and purposes of the academic discourse and academia as a community based on values, functions and priorities, just like any other community. Understanding and mastering these standards is vital for students' integration in their academic writing community.

As discussed earlier, academic writing discourse seems to have specific standards of good writing and expectations on students to write in a certain way

which is supposed to be relevant to the discipline. The way teachers and researchers in higher education write as members of academia is also a writing community with its own academic writing standards widely used in academic publications like research journals and books published by experts in different fields and recognized for their knowledge and expertise.

These writers, practitioners, researchers, teachers and students might agree on some standards of good writing like mastery of English, relevant content and well expressed and developed ideas and arguments, higher level of critical thinking, strong and assertive voice at times and uncertainty and hedging at others, good use of resources and references and maintaining a stable writer's voice which reflects who the writer is and how they see the world around them. Yet, clearly defining good writing in the academic context is still a source of controversy sometimes even among teachers at the same department.

Students just as teachers of writing are affected by this controversy and even though they share some common features or standards of good writing, the latter still remain very personal and vary from one student to the other. This was clear in the convergent definitions students gave of good writing and good argument essay in the questionnaire that will be discussed in the findings chapters. Consequently, the features of good academic writing are an issue worth discussing in this context.

Standardization represents the features and criteria of good academic writing as promoted in academic writing books, teaching materials and universities' websites. This implies that they are widely used and thus have an international status as it is the case of English. However, this does not eliminate the differences that exist between faculties at the same university, among universities and countries since these standards are used and practiced differently by different scholars, teachers and academia and writing community members including students themselves. Consequently, what makes good writing in the academic context, although common standards do exist, is still controversial both in theory and

practice. As a teacher of academic writing, I have realized that books of writing and teaching materials do influence my teaching of writing and classroom practice since I do not consider myself as an expert in academic writing and often feel that the writers of academic writing books are the real experts even though I know my classroom context better than the experts.

This question is controversial in the literature too as there is no agreement on what makes a good text in academic writing. This controversy is the result of the complexity of writing as a skill, ability and process. Defining writing is as controversial as defining good writing. Because there is a clear relationship between what writing is, what it involves in terms of skills, strategies and functions, why people write in daily life as well as why students at higher education need to write which is worth studying.

Teachers of writing do not treat the text or essay as a set of sentences presented in a given way or structure but make sure that this text fulfills a specific purpose by explaining, illustrating or discussing a topic of interest to the reader who learns something new or interesting by reading the text or essay. Therefore, teachers of writing often have some criteria, features or standards which they think make “good writing” and they encourage students to reproduce these criteria in the texts they write both in class and beyond especially that most teachers give homework to make students write at home when often for some reasons like time constraints, lack of motivation on students’ part or students’ unfamiliarity with some topics requiring extensive research, students do not write in the writing class.

The following table summarizes some features of “good writing” through the description of the writing performance from novice levels to distinguish.

Table 1.1.: *Description of Novice to Distinguished Levels of Writing Performance*
(Weigle, 2002, p.222)

Novice	Apprentice	Proficient	Distinguished
-Limited awareness of audience and / or purpose -Minimal idea development; limited and /or unrelated details -Random and / or weak organization -Incorrect and / or ineffective language -Errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are disproportionate to length and complexity	-Some evidence of communicating with an audience for a specific purpose; some lapses in focus -Unelaborated idea development; unelaborated and / or repetitious details -Lapses in organization and / or cohesion -Simplistic and or awkward sentence structure -Simplistic and / or imprecise language -Some errors in spelling, punctuation, and / capitalization that do not interfere with communication	-Focused on a purpose; communicates with an audience; evidence of voice and / or suitable tone - Depth of idea development supported by elaborated, relevant details - Logical, coherent organization -Controlled and varied sentence structure -Acceptable, effective language -Few errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization relative to length and complexity	-Established a purpose and maintains clear focus; strong awareness of audience; evidence of distinctive voice and / or appropriate tone -Depth and complexity of ideas supported by rich, engaging, and / or pertinent details; evidence of analysis, reflection, insight -Careful and / or subtle organization -Variety of sentence structure and length enhances effect -Precise and / or rich language -Control of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

1.5.2. Agendas for Writing at University

This section focuses on what is expected from students once they join university as was discussed by Raimes (1996). How far is the writing course influenced by the university as an institution, by the discipline and the department representing it? What is the role of teachers and practitioners or experts in promoting the academic writing discourse and encouraging students to write in a certain way which they consider would lead to good writing, a good text or a good essay?

According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996,p.341), “Students in advanced academic contexts have needs for writing which go beyond the basic goals for communication and for learning new information. Writing is no longer seen as primarily for personal expression or presenting school-based information, though they remain important issues. Rather, the advanced writer is also often concerned with analyzing and interpreting information critically, synthesizing disparate sets of information, creating information, arguing alternative perspectives, and presenting and promoting research”.

Since graduate students are expected to be proficient writers (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000), the purpose of academic writing for graduate students in higher education, according to Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis, & Swann (2003), is to enhance students’ thinking skills and content knowledge, to evaluate their writing skills and knowledge, and to encourage them to take part in academic communities.

The goals and functions of academic writing are reflected in the types of texts and essays students write that are discussed in the next section.

1.5.3. Texts / Genres in Academic Writing at University

Based on ideas inspired from Structuralism and the Transformational Grammar of Chomsky (1957, 1968) a basic principle of text or genre-based approach is that “texts are autonomous objects which can be analysed and described independently

of particular contexts, writers, or readers” (Hyland, 2009,p.8). Therefore, texts have a structure, are organized in terms of words, clauses and sentences that follow the grammatical rules of language (English in this case) used by writers to express their “intended meanings” (Ibid.).

The idea that texts can “function independently of a context” reflects a “mechanical” view that human communication works by transferring ideas from one mind to another via language (Shannon and Weaver,1963). Therefore, writing is removed or isolated from context and the personal experiences of writers and readers because “meanings can be encoded in texts and recovered by anyone who speaks the same language as the writer”. Consequently, writers and readers are supposed to share “homogeneous practices” so writing is treated like an object, and its rules imposed on “passive users” (readers). This view of writing is still “alive” in the teaching of business writing and, indeed, is implicit in some notions of learning in western education systems. Thus, in many schools, students are asked to write simply to demonstrate their knowledge of “de-contextualised facts” with little awareness of a reader beyond the teacher-examiner. In these situations, grammatical accuracy and clear exposition are often the main criteria of good writing. Unfortunately, this might also be the case at university.

From a perspective that regards texts as “autonomous objects”, learners’ compositions or writings are seen as *langue*, that is, a demonstration of the writer’s knowledge of forms and their awareness of the system of rules to create texts (writing standards). The goal of writing instruction ,therefore, becomes training in accuracy, and for many years, writing was essentially an extension of grammar teaching. Informed by a behavioural, habit formation theory of learning, guided composition and substitution exercises became the main teaching methods as they needed no context but the classroom and only the skill of avoiding errors. Therefore, the teacher was an “expert” passing on knowledge to “novices” who ,in turn, were expected to reproduce the “ prescribed texts”.

However, while this has been a major classroom approach for many years, the claim that good writing is “context-free”, and it is fully explicit and takes nothing for granted, reflects a rather “old-fashioned” and “discredited” belief that “meaning is contained in the message”. This implies that a text says everything that needs to be said and there are no conflicts of interpretations, reader positions, different understandings, because we all see things in the same way. Clearly, this fails to take account of the beliefs and knowledge writers assume readers will draw on in reading their texts. This is common in EFL students’ writing as they write for a familiar reader without account for other readers who do not share the same knowledge, social and cultural background of the writer.

In this regard, Nystrand, Doyle and Himley (1986 cited in Hyland, 2009,p.10) commented on the notion of “explicitness” saying: “A text is explicit not because it says everything all by itself but rather because it strikes a careful balance between what needs to be said and what may be assumed. The writer’s problem is not just being explicit; the writer’s problem is knowing what to be explicit about”.

Even academic articles, the most apparently explicit of genres, draw on readers’ assumed understandings. This is done through features such as references to prior research, technical lexis and familiarity with particular argument forms for which writers try to establish a coherent context and enrich “propositional meanings” (Bazerman, 1988; Hyland, 2004a).

In fact, focusing on accuracy for writing improvement may be misleading as there is little evidence to show that either “syntactic complexity” or “grammatical accuracy” are the best measures of good writing. As a result, many students can construct “syntactically accurate” sentences and yet are unable to produce appropriate written texts.

Moreover, while fewer errors might be a proof of progress, this may equally indicate the writer’s reluctance to take risks and reach beyond a current level of

competence. In other words, focusing exclusively on formal features of texts as a measure of writing competence overlooks how texts are the writer's response to a specific communicative setting. Written texts, thus, cannot be "autonomous" because they are produced in a particular situation and reflect it in their content.

The implication of this finding for the teaching of writing is that no particular feature can be said to be a criterion for "good writing" because what is 'good' varies across contexts. Consequently, it is hard to just list the features needed to produce a successful text without considering appropriate purpose, audience, tone, formality, etc. Simply, students do not just need to know how to write a grammatically correct text, but how to apply this knowledge for particular purposes and genres.

A myriad of approaches has considered texts as discourse, but all of them have tried to discover how writers organize language to produce coherent and purposeful texts. An early contribution was the 'functional sentence perspective' of the Prague School which sought to describe how we structure text to represent our assumptions about what is known (*given*) or *new* to the reader (Firbas, 1986). This was adopted and elaborated in the work of Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) in the concept of *theme-rheme* structure. Generally, theme is what the writer is talking about and rheme is what they say about it: the part of the message that the writer considers important.

A different area of research has tried to identify the rhetorical functions of particular discourse units by examining how pieces of text function and how they fit into a larger structure. Winter (1977) and Hoey (1983), for example, distinguish several patterns, which they label as *problem-solution*, *hypothetical-real* and *general-particular*. They show that even with no explicit signalling (signposting), readers are able to draw on their knowledge of recognizable text patterns to guess the connections between clauses, sentences or groups of sentences. For example, we all have a strong expectation of how a problem-solution pattern will progress,

therefore, we look for a positive evaluation of at least one possible solution to complete the pattern.

One model of how this is done suggests that readers call on their “conventionalized knowledge” to apply a coherent frame on a message. They interpret discourse by comparing it to their earlier experiences, which are organized in their minds as *scripts* or *schemata* (Schank and Abelson, 1977). Thus, individuals hold stereotypical understandings which they use as ‘scaffolding’ to interpret the texts they read daily, which allows them to decode texts as diverse as detective thrillers and postcards.

A second approach is more pragmatic than this cognitive model as it proposes that writers try to create texts, which are as relevant to readers as possible, and that readers anticipate this when making meaning of the text. This approach originates with Grice’s (1975) principles of conversational inference, which try to explain successful communication in terms of receivers’ mutual assumptions of rationality and cooperation.

Based on this notion, Sperber and Wilson (1986) argue that readers construct meanings by comparing the information they find in a text with what they already know about the context in order to establish meanings that are relevant. Thus, when we interpret a text, we assume that the writer is being “cooperative by thinking of what it is we need to know to fully understand the topic at hand, and therefore we look for ways of interpreting the text as relevant to the ongoing discourse.

In these theories, interpretation depends on the reader’s ability to provide required assumptions from memory, but the text itself also plays an important role in this process. Kramsch (1997) argues that the construction of meaning from texts is a rhetorical rather than a cognitive process, and suggests seven principles of text interpretation, which are inspired from current theories of discourse analysis. The idea that forms express functions and that they vary according to context is a central notion of discourse analysis and is the basis for the key notion of *genre*.

Because each writing community tries to promote certain writing genres and aims at training students to master them in order to succeed academically. Therefore, there are a number of writing genres widely used at university like the expository essay, which includes definition, description, narration and explanation. This type of essay aims at sharing information with the readers and teaching them something new or making them aware of a specific topic, which they already know or is new to them. There are different and numerous examples of expository essays that exist in the writing classroom. For example, when the teacher asks students to report on their experiences, compare or contrast between two different objects, schools or countries they have visited.

On the other hand, there is the argument essay, which directly and explicitly requires students to think critically. This does not mean that expository essays do not require criticality or critical thinking on the students' part. Nevertheless, argument writing is often associated with critical thinking in research and practice or writing instruction even if it is not done explicitly by researchers and teachers of writing.

Finally, argument writing englobes many types of expository writing such as explanation, illustration, definition and cause effect. All these types of essays become strategies or tools to develop arguments. For example, defining a concept, tell something about its history, previous studies, compare it to another concept like identify and voice in writing, take a position and back it up using citations etc. Argument writing activities are quite varied in the academic context of higher education.

Students in HE are expected to write a variety of texts in different genres like reading reviews, summaries, reports, research papers and essays. Defining the word genre is rather complex. Sometimes, genres are defined by their structure alone (e.g., a scientific report has five parts: introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion). However, this understanding of genre is too simplistic. Genres are

not fixed or rigid patterns to be followed mechanically. They are not templates into which we insert sentences and paragraphs.

For writers, genres offer flexible patterns that reflect how people in communities interact with each other. They provide strategies for analyzing and interpreting what is happening around them. Once one understands a current situation, he/ she can then use genres to focus on their creativity, generate new ideas, and present those ideas to other readers.

Therefore, essays are widely used by students both to show and share what they have learned in class and made sense of what they have been taught, read, heard or experienced. Thus, students write to learn and learn to write. This duality makes writing a key skill for students as it is widely used. Consequently, being able to write clearly, precisely and effectively seems to increase students' chances to success academically which is the aim of all students at university. Under this overarching purpose of writing, come other purposes that seem more specific such as reflecting, analyzing and evaluating information. Writing can also be used as a tool for better reflection as ideas students write down become clearer and thus are more likely to be evaluated, selected and used.

List of texts students are required to write at university:

- Essays: descriptive, narrative, process, cause/effect, persuasive, etc.
- Training or practicum reports
- Response papers: short essays that respond to or react to one or more texts the writer has read
- Exam essays: essays written in response to specific questions, common in take-home or open-book exams
- Research papers

- Literature Reviews : texts that present and discuss multiple sources on a particular topic, distinct from book reviews or reports
- Annotated Bibliographies : lists of works read with brief comments on each source
- Recommendation letters
- Emails
- Dissertations and theses

After discussing how context shapes writing and determines how texts are produced, the next section will tackle the role of readers in the writing process.

1.5.4. Toulmin's Model of Argument (1964)

A number of studies conducted in L1 have used Toulmin's (1964) model of argumentation (Connor and Lauer; 1988; Connor 1996). Connor and Lauer (1988) operationalized this model for a quantifiable, reliable analysis in order to evaluate the level of argumentative strength of the essays. In a series of studies, they found that this model was a powerful predictor of writing quality in the sample essays. The emphasis of this model is on the diversity of purposes and tasks is what makes it relevant to today's writing research.

Toulmin's model of argumentation (1964) contains six interrelated components for analyzing arguments, including:

- 1.Claim: the statement the arguer wishes to have accepted or to prove.
- 2.Data: evidence to support the claim.
- 3.Warrant: connects the data to the claim. This is the reasoning upon which the data relies.

4.Backing: further supports the warrant. This is not always included or made explicit.

5.Qualifier: defines the importance or the extent of certainty of the claim.

6.Reservation or Rebuttal: may anticipate a counter-argument or prescribe circumstances that may allow for exceptions. (See figure 1 below)

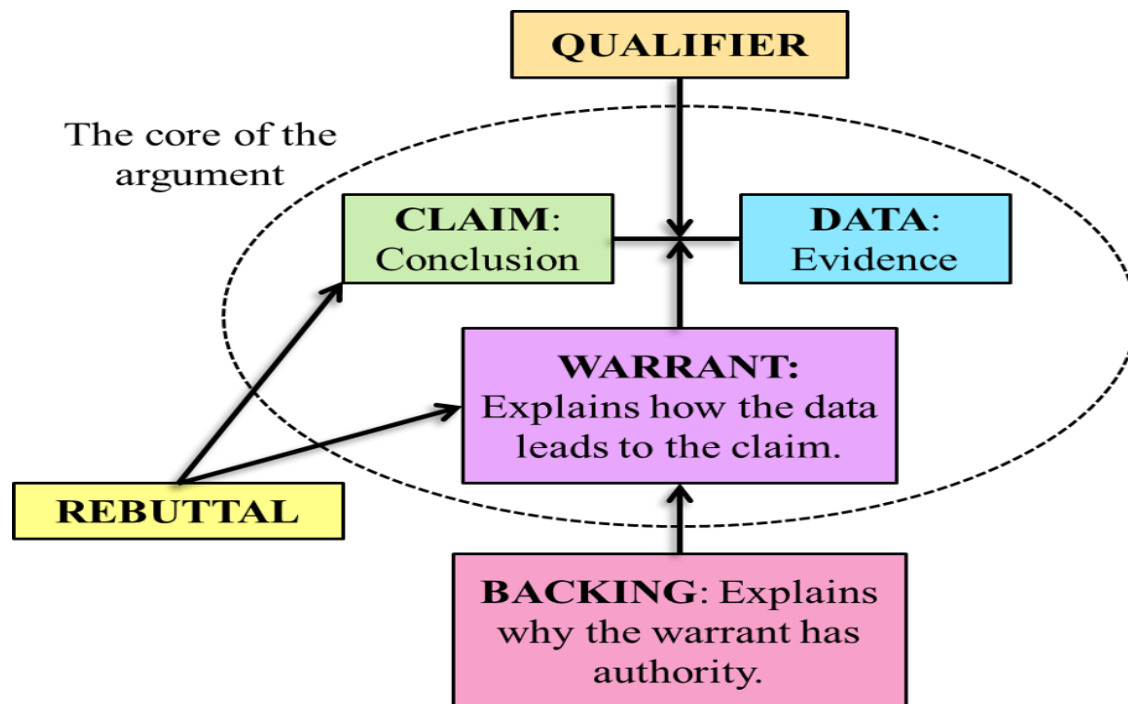


Figure1.1. Toulmin's Model of Argument (1964)

This model will be used as a tool to analyze the study's participants' argument essays. First, it provides the technical language need to describe the elements of an argument that is vital for the analysis of argument texts. Second, it provides the elements of argument to look at in the participants' essays and spot them easily instead of getting a detailed list. Third, it increases the validity of the analysis because it is backed up by a valid and acknowledged argument model.

Toulmin et al. (1979) further describe analyses of arguments in the specific fields of law, science, arts, and business management, showing how warrants (shared values or premises) determine the development of an argument. Toulmin et al.'s

(1979) model has been applied in writing pedagogy for native English speakers for a number of years. The model can be found in different textbooks on writing and argumentation. Also, Rottenberg (1985) present the model through a variety of readings. Finally, Karbach (1987) focuses on a need for different warrants for different argument fields. She shows how students' critical thinking skills can be challenged when they construct arguments on the same subject for different argument fields or audiences.

One of her examples deals with the differing argument developments in America between “language purists” and “linguists” regarding the issue of “English only as the official language.” Evidence from L1 instructional practice supports usefulness of Toulmin’s model in SL/ FL writing classes. It is appropriate for second and FL situations since it recognizes field-invariant aspects of argument (structure and development of argument) but allows for field independent evaluations of argument. Therefore, as Karbach (1987) explained, writing classes have greatly benefited from Toulmin’s model because it encouraged the development of arguments for different purposes.

1.5.5. Readers or Audience in Academic Writing

The final broad approach in writing expands the concept of context to encompass the purposes, goals, and intended uses of the completed text. Writers are seen as intentionally selecting words to engage with readers and convey their ideas effectively, drawing on the *interpersonal function* of language as described by Halliday (1985). This approach emphasizes the interactive nature of writing, where texts aim to resonate with readers, influence them, and often persuade them by aligning with their perspectives. Writing is viewed as a social activity that utilizes accepted linguistic resources to share meanings within a specific context, highlighting the importance of considering not just the act of writing itself , but also the intended impact on the audience. In this regard, writing is viewed as interaction,

construction, power and ideology. These perspectives will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

- writing as social interaction
- writing as social construction
- writing as power and ideology

1.5.5.1. Writing as Social Interaction

The notion that writing is an interactive process between writers and readers adds a crucial communicative dimension to the act of composing. This perspective moves beyond the stereotype of the isolated writer working in solitude, and instead explains the writer's decision-making in terms of anticipating and addressing the interests, understandings, and needs of a potential audience. As argued by Nystrand (1993), the success of a text hinges on the writer's ability to satisfy the rhetorical demands of readers by embedding the writing within a broader, non-local discourse context. This view emphasizes the interactive and socially situated nature of writing, where the writer must consider the reader's perspective and tailor the text accordingly, rather than simply producing content in isolation.

In a social interactive model, meaning is generated through “a unique configuration and interaction of what both reader and writer bring to the text” (Nystrand et al., 1993, p. 299). This perspective views a discourse as a negotiation between the writer's purposes and the reader's expectations, where the writer attempts to balance their intentions with the reader's understanding. According to Nystrand (1993), a text has “semantic potential,” encompassing a range of possible meanings that are largely determined by the writer's intention, the reader's cognition, and the objective properties of the text itself. Meaning is not transmitted from one mind to another, nor does it reside solely in the writer's cognition, but rather it is co-created between the participants through their interaction.

The process of writing involves the writer creating a text that aligns with the reader's expectations and assumptions, while the act of reading involves the reader drawing on their own assumptions about the writer's intentions. Hoey (2001) likens this to a dance, where the writer and reader anticipate and respond to each other's "steps" to co-construct meaning. Skilled writers are able to establish a shared frame of reference with their audience, anticipating potential misunderstandings and providing appropriate elaboration to ensure their purposes are effectively retrieved and understood. This interactive, mutually responsive dynamic between writer and reader is central to the successful creation and comprehension of a text.

The growing interest in using both peer and teacher feedback stems from the recognition that it can help students develop a stronger sense of audience for their writing. By exposing students to examples of target genres, teachers can promote an understanding of how audience shapes the production and reception of texts. This idea is rooted in Bakhtin's (1986) view of language as a dialogic process, where writing reflects the social uses and intertextual connections that writers build upon and anticipate. Each written utterance is seen as part of an ongoing conversation, refuting, affirming, and supplementing other texts. This perspective highlights how writing is inherently linked to and aligned with the broader social and textual contexts in which it is situated, rather than being an isolated act. Providing students with diverse feedback sources can therefore enhance their awareness of audience and the ways in which their writing is shaped by and responds to the broader discursive landscape.

1.5.5.2. Writing as Social Construction

The alternative perspective on readers shifts the focus from individual encounters to viewing interaction as a series of rhetorical choices within a community context. In this approach, the writer is not solely a *creator* or an *interactant* but a member of a socially and rhetorically defined *community*. Drawing from sociology and postmodern philosophy, this viewpoint emphasizes that knowledge and actions are

shaped by collectively organized conceptual frameworks. Writing is seen as a social activity where understanding goes beyond individual decisions to encompass the shared preferences and regular characteristics of texts within specific communities.

According to this perspective, a text derives its meaning and communicative power by reflecting the patterns and conventions of the specific community for which it is written. For instance, essays produced by biology students would exhibit very different forms of argument, interpersonal dynamics, and ways of presenting information compared to those written by business students. This view contrasts with the interactionist approach, which moves from individuals to groups, as the constructionist perspective proceeds from the social group to the individual. From this standpoint, writing is a form of cultural practice that is inherently tied to the structures of social organization within a given community.

In essence, writers must establish their credibility by situating themselves and their ideas within the context of existing ideas and texts in their communities, demonstrating the value of their contributions. The concept of a discourse community highlights that language is not used to communicate with the general world but with specific social groups, each with its unique norms, conventions, and ways of operating. This term emphasizes the interconnectedness of writers, readers, and texts within a shared rhetorical space, underscoring how individuals rely on common conceptual frameworks to structure their experiences and achieve goals through language. (Bartholomae, 1986).

The sources provided emphasize the significance of discourse communities in shaping writing practices and communication. Discourse communities are defined as groups that share common goals, values, and writing standards, using specialized vocabulary and genres to communicate. These communities play a crucial role in influencing how individuals communicate, aligning themselves with shared beliefs and values through language choices. Writing within these communities serves as a means for organizations to establish their identity and for

individuals to signal their membership within them. By engaging in writing, individuals participate in a culture of shared beliefs and values, contributing to discussions and shaping the discourse within their respective communities.

The research results highlight how writing is fundamentally shaped by the discourse communities and institutional practices in which it is situated. Language choices in writing reflect the social environment, evoking specific, recognizable responses to recurring tasks. Through these repeated writing practices, individuals actively construct and participate in the institutions they are a part of. The texts created by authors are influenced by their understanding of reality, which is in turn shaped by their membership in particular social groups and discourse communities. Discourse itself serves as a reservoir of shared meanings that give identity and definition to a culture or community. In this view, writing is not merely an individual act, but a means of constructing and engaging with the social environments that profoundly shape one's understanding of the world. This supports Barton's (2007, p. 34-5) social perspective on literacy (including writing and reading) as explained below:

1. Literacy is a social activity and is best described in terms of people's literacy practices.
2. People have different literacies , which are associated with different domains of life.
3. People's literacy practices are situated in broader social relations, making it necessary to describe the settings of literacy events.
4. Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.
5. Literacy is based on a system of symbols as a way of representing the world to others and to ourselves.

6. Our attitudes and values with respect to literacy guide our actions to communication.
7. Our life histories contain many literacy events from which we learn and which contribute to the present.
8. A literacy event also has a social history, which help create current practices.

The concept of discourse communities is crucial in understanding the role of context in writing. Discourse communities are groups of individuals who share common goals, values, and communication practices, which shape their writing and communication styles. These communities are characterized by shared genres, language, and conventions that serve specific purposes and achieve particular goals. The concept of discourse communities is important for writers as it helps them understand their audience, context, and communicative methods, enabling them to tailor their writing to effectively convey their message (Bazerman ,1994,p. 128).

Although writing is often considered as a solo and isolating process where the writers are thinking, analyzing and writing down ideas on their own, and therefore physically absent, the reader is always part of this process as effective writers usually write with a specific reader in mind. This applies to EFL students writing for academic purposes in HE as it is the case of the participants of this study. In the academic context, students have a specific audience , which is usually within the same discipline as they are or in related disciplines as students do write not only in the writing class but in other content modules as well(for example, linguistics, literature, civilization, etc.) and this is why some scholars prefer to use the concept of writing across the curriculum especially that the teacher of writing is not the only teacher responsible for improving students writing skills. As a result, writing should be the concern of all teachers in HE.

1.6. EFL Students' Writing Difficulties at University

Nunan (1989) argues that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity, which requires the learner to have control over a number of factors. These factors vary from academic background and personal interest of the writer to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena (Dar & Khan, 2015; Haider, 2012 cited in Nunan, 1989,p.82)

Because participants' experience of writing is marked by struggle or difficulties, it seems important to review the studies focusing on students' difficulties in writing and argument writing in L1/ L2/ and EFL in order to understand the differences and similarities between the findings of these studies.

Good writers also struggle with writing. However, the students who are less competent seem to struggle more and with more aspects of writing. This means that writing is a complex skill or activity that poses challenges to all students with slight differences.

According to Weigle (2005, p. 128) , expertise in writing, even in one's first language, "is attained only rarely and only with great effort" . Likewise, writing is considered the most difficult skill to acquire by many English L2 writers (Nunan, 1999), because it entails far more than mere control over its linguistic elements (Weigle, 2002).

Lee and Tajino's study (2008) revealed that Japanese students tended to perceive academic writing to be difficult. These students also perceive the language-related components (for example, expressing ideas in correct English, expressing ideas clearly & logically, using appropriate academic styles) as more difficult than structure/content related components (for example, linking sentences smoothly, synthesizing information /ideas, proof-reading written assignments).

Since argument writing is heavily based on critical thinking (CT henceforth) to the point that some scholars refer to argument writing as critical writing, it is

necessary to discuss how critical thinking serves argument writing. Because the aim of argument writing is to convince the reader, students should use some higher order skills like selecting good from bad arguments, organize them, use different sources of evidence effectively, and try to meet the readers' expectations. Those skills seem to shape and determine the quality of writing and thus its effectiveness in convincing the reader.

However, academic discourse and writing conventions may often limit students' freedom to grow as writers by allowing them a safe space and freedom to discover who they are, the abilities they have and how they can use them to have a voice in writing. This feeling of oppression seems also to harm the way L2 students see themselves as writers and thus their writer identities. For example, writing conventions oblige students to fit in a mould which dictates or imposes the criteria of good writing and thus classifies them into categories, labels and boxes such as good or bad writers depending on their abilities to reproduce the imposed standards of academic writing which dictate how they should write. This labelling might be unfair and exclusive of the students who are struggling to find their path in the messy labyrinth of the writing process as they try to build their own writing habits based on their personal differences and specific experiences of writing past and present.

1.7. Contrastive Rhetoric and Writing Across Three Languages: Arabic, French, and English

Contrastive rhetoric (henceforth CR) examines differences and similarities in ESL and EFL writing across languages and cultures as well as across such different contexts as education and commerce. It considers texts not merely as static products but as functional parts of dynamic cultural contexts. Although largely restricted throughout much of its first 30 years to a fairly rigid form, student essay writing, the field of CR today contributes to knowledge about preferred patterns of writing in many English for Specific Purposes situations. Undeniably, it has had an

appreciable impact on the understanding of cultural differences in writing, and it has had, and will continue to have, an effect on the teaching of ESL and EFL writing.

According to Atkinson (2003), two competing views are the received view and alternative, nonstandard views. The received view conceives of culture as based largely on distinct geographical and national entities, which are presented as relatively unchanging and homogeneous (e.g., the Japanese culture). The alternative views stem from postmodernist-influenced perspectives and have evolved from critiques of the traditional, received view. In connection with the latter, Atkinson (2003) discusses concepts such as identity, hybridity, essentialism, and power, all of which appear in criticisms of the traditional view.

So used, these terms indicate the shared perspective that cultures are anything but homogenous, all-encompassing entities, and represent important concepts in a larger project: the unveiling of the fissures, inequalities, disagreements, and cross-cutting influences that exist in and around all cultural scenes, in order to banish once and for all the idea that cultures are monolithic entities, or in some cases anything important at all.

According to Hatim (1997), orality has been suggested as explaining the differences between Arabic and Western rhetorical preferences by researchers such as Koch (1983). Koch claimed that Arabic speakers argue by presentation, that is, by repeating arguments, paraphrasing them, and doubling them. Hatim (1997) admits that Arabic argumentation may be heavy on through-argumentation (i.e., thesis to be supported, substantiation, and conclusion), unlike Western argumentation, which, according to him, is characterized by counterarguments (i.e., thesis to be opposed, opposition, substantiation of counterclaim, and conclusion). Yet for Arabic speakers, Arabic texts are no less logical than texts that use Aristotelian, Western logic.

It may be true that this Arabic form of argumentation generally lacks credibility when translated into a context that calls for a variant form of argumentation in languages such as English. However, for Arabic speakers and writers, argumentation remains a valid option that is generally bound to a host of sociopolitical factors and circumstances, not with Arabic per se. It is therefore speakers and not languages that must be held accountable.

Hatim's (1997) contribution to textual analysis of Arabic and English contrasts is significant. He explains observed differences from an empirical, text analytic point of view. His explanations were meant to show the legitimacy of different styles of argument across cultures, but he ended up generalizing about preferred argument patterns.

Wang (2012) claims that one of the differences between academic writing in L1 and in L2 is at the sentence level. He claims that there is a tendency among Chinese students to use short sentences when they write in Chinese; therefore, that made them write short sentences in English, as well.

Kaplan (1966) points out that English speakers "use a predominantly linear paragraph organization in expository texts". The Chinese students, on the other end of the scale, tend not to write their essays in a direct approach (Shen, 1989).

Reid (1993, p. 270) says "writers from different backgrounds organize and present written material that reflect the preferences of each particular culture". She claims that students' cultural differences will have an influence on the linguistic features used in writing in English. Therefore, when the international students start their academic lives in English-speaking countries, they encounter difficulties regarding the new conventions they are expected to be familiar with.

1.8. Argument Writing: Features and Importance of this Genre at University

Genre, according to Eggins (2004,p.55), is known through its generic identity, that is, the way it is similar to other texts of its genre “or reminiscent of other texts circulating in the culture”. For Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Halliday (1985) genre, and in particular generic identity specifically lies in three dimensions. First, the co-occurrence of a particular contextual cluster, or its register configuration. This means that “a genre comes about as particular values for field, tenor and mode regularly co-occur and eventually become stabilised in the culture as “typical” situations” (Eggins, 2004, p. 58). Secondly, the “text’s staged or schematic structure”. The schematic structure refers to “the staged, step-by-step organisation of the genre”. According to Eggins (2004, p. 59), “each stage in the genre contributes a part of the overall meanings that must be made for the genre to be accomplished successfully”. Lastly, is the realisation pattern of the text. This refers to “the way a meaning becomes encoded or expressed in a semiotic system” (Eggins, 2004, p.65).

From its name, an argument essay writing , also known as persuasive writing, suggests a sort of argumentation which is the process of thinking about and developing a sound argument either orally or in the written form. This type of essay is widely used in HE, university and teachers’ training programs as it is the case at ENSB where this study took place. People in general, argue in different situations and for different reasons, and almost every day whether at home, work or university and elsewhere and with different people.

Argumentative writing or genre refers to a genre of writing which involves arguments, facts, evidence, reasons, description or explanation which support the side being argued, use reference to expert authority whom the reader is apt to believe, to make the writer’s position seem indisputable (Crossley and Wilson, 1979; Smalley and Hank, 1982). It is also concerned with the analysis,

interpretation and evaluation of the world around us and its emphasis is on persuading someone to our point of view (Derewianka, 1990, p. 75). Because of the varying demands inherent in the genre argumentative writing is found one of the most difficult writing genres in learning to write . Genres such as argumentation are thought to require students to process information deeply and to construct relationships among ideas, thereby attaining increased understanding and recall of curriculum material.

Students also argue in class for different purposes as part of their learning in general and writing learning and practice in particular. Because the argument essay is widely used at university by almost all teachers of the different modules, students find themselves deemed to master this type of essay in order to get good grades as it is widely used in exams. For example, students can be asked to reflect on the great depression in the US at the beginning of the 1940s and evaluate one of Roosevelt's amendments using arguments and details of the US economy at that time.

At ENSB, students are required to write different types of essays during the academic year mainly in the second and third year of their five-year English degree course. Usually, they are given options both of essay types and topics. These options might vary from three to five according to the number of essays taught in each semester. If the number of essay types is two or three, they are given more options on topics to write about.

Students therefore are often put in a position where they have to play by the rules and follow up the standards of good academic writing as taught and explained by teachers of writing and maybe other content modules teachers who might indirectly give guidelines for good writing. The latter explain to students how they expect them to write, that is to produce good essays, and avoid making mistakes of grammar and other types of mistakes , especially that they are final year students who would graduate by the end of their final year. The good essay should be a five-paragraph essay, which shows how dominant and widely used this essay structure

is in higher. The next section deals with one of the early models of argument writing developed by Toulmin (1964).

1.8.1. Cognitive Perspective on Argument Writing

The cognitive perspective (Graham, 2018; Hayes, 1996; Hayes & Flower, 1986; MacArthur & Graham, 2016) views argumentative writing as a problem-solving process that requires self-regulation to achieve the author's rhetorical goals (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Graham & Harris, 1997). Problem solving is done in a problem space that results from the person's internal representation of the task environment (Newell & Simon, 1972). The internal representation amounts to the problem solver's understanding of the task environment, and the problem space is a network of paths for transforming this understanding into the goal. In the cognitive view, problem solving operates within an information processing system that is constrained by the writer's available capacities and resources (Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981). Skilled writers manage these constraints by setting goals and then planning, writing, and revising their essays. Research shows that the failure to strategically allocate limited cognitive resources adversely impacts writing performance (Ferretti & Fan, 2016).

Writers draw on their knowledge of argumentative discourse, the topic, their interlocutor, and critical standards of evaluation to write arguments (Ferretti & De La Paz, 2011; Ferretti & Lewis, 2019). Expert writers possess fluent linguistic skills, genre and topic knowledge (McCutchen, 1986; 2011), and are skilled at setting goals to guide the writing process. In contrast, novices are less fluent, possess less genre and topic knowledge, and have difficulty strategically regulating the writing process (Graham, Harris, & McKeown, 2013; Harris, Graham, MacArthur, Reid, & Mason, 2011; McCutchen, 2011). In contrast to experts, novices write down topically relevant information that is used to generate related information (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Difficulties with self-regulation are seen in all aspects of the problem solving of unskilled writers (Graham et al., 2013).

1.8.2. Sociocultural Perspective on Argument Writing

Sociocultural theorists investigate how social mediation shapes meaning-making in historical and cultural context (Bazerman, 2016; Beach, Newell, & VanDerHeide, 2016; Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006; Newell, Beach, Smith, & Van Der Heide, 2011). In the sociocultural view, writing is a semiotic tool that supports communication and social relationships, is learned and practiced in social situations, and is used to accomplish inherently social goals (Bazerman, 2016; Graham, 2018; Newell, Bloome, Kim, & Gof, 2018). Given the focus on communication and social interaction, writing research in this tradition focuses on the situations within which people write and the influence of those situations on the writer's participation in social activities. The writing context is never static (Bazerman, 2016). New texts become available, new communicative relationships develop, and new social practices emerge that influence human communication. Hence, the sociocultural tradition focuses on the interactions that take place among people over time and in different situations, and how writing creates shared meanings and representations that have consequences for the participants (Bazerman, 2016; Beach et al., 2016). Sociocultural theorists also believe that writing development is influenced by participating in situations that afford opportunities to appropriate semiotic tools and social practices (Bazerman, 2016; Newell et al., 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter was an overview of research on academic and argument writing in EFL contexts. Through this review, there was clear shift in the ways writing is understood and conceptualized from a mechanical process of jotting down words on paper to a human process of thinking and self-express in a specific context. The latter seems to determine what is expected from both the writer and reader and how the text is constructed to meet those expectations that are often shaped by social and ideological values. In addition, key concepts related to academic and argument

writing were defined such as genre, text, discourse, audience, and cognitive process and critical thinking in order to clarify the elements of writing as a complex process of communication between writers and readers via texts in specific contexts. Furthermore, the criteria of good argument writing as a popular and widely used genre at university were discussed referring to Toulmin's students (1964) model of argument that is based on four elements; claim, data (evidence), warrant, backing, quantifier, and reservation or rebuttal. The context of this study was explained to pave the way to the next chapter related to writer identity in L1, L2, and EFL. The relationship between writer identity and L2 writing and its nature will be clarified; the different perspectives of writer identity research, related concepts as well as writer identity construction in the academic context and finally Ivanič's (1998) model of writer identity will be suggested as the selected model to analyze the collected data.

Chapter Two

Writer Identity: Understanding a Complex Concept

Introduction

Writer identity is a fairly recent area of research that has gained much importance lately. Because this notion is directly linked to how writers write, it is as complex as writing. This concept has been studied from different perspectives that produced different definitions. This chapter, key issues on writer identity will be discussed in relation to the relevant literature. This chapter includes five sections. Section 2.1. defines the concept of writer identity. Section 2.2. defines the notion of voice. In section 2.3.the relationship between writer identity and voice is discussed. Section 2.4.deals with the difficulties and challenges faced by the writer to express his/ her voice in writing. Finally, section 2.5. is devoted to the different aspects of voice, in relation to social and cultural context, the writer's positioning or role, the linguistic aspect of voice and voice as expressed in different discourse of writing.

2.1. Defining Identity

The concept of identity in this study aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of Norton's (2013, p.45) work, which defines identity as multiple, a site of struggle, and continually changing over time and space. Therefore, identity is a struggle of habitus (Bourdieu,1990,pp.66-67) and desire, of competing ideologies and imagined identities. Governed by different ideologies and possessing varying levels of capital, learners position themselves and are positioned by others in different contexts.

As an internalized system shaped by ideology, habitus is the system by which people make sense of the world. It configures in learners an idea of their “rightful” place in society and predisposes them to do what they believe is expected of them and to develop relations that are deemed appropriate. It is “a system of durable,

transposable dispositions and principles which generate and organize practices and representations” (Bourdieu1990,p.53). As disposition, habitus provides a conceptual understanding of what is reasonable and possible and a tendency to think and act in ways that correspond with a prevailing ideology. At the same time, also because of dominant ideologies, learners are positioned in certain ways by virtue of their gender, race, ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation. How learners are perceived by others is shaped by prevailing notions of what it means to be man or woman, Black or White, middle class or working class in a specific society. In the same way, also because of habitus, learners in turn position others and accord or refuse them power. Indeed, it is through such mechanisms that power secures itself, and it is through a deliberate and critical awareness of how power operates that ideologies can be challenged (Norton, 2013,p.72).

While the concepts of “positioning” or “subject position” are metonymic of the imposition of power, they can also allow learners to regard themselves as “choosing subjects” (Davies and Harré, 1990, pp. 87-106), who can rethink this “place” that has been filled and internalized. Although Bourdieu viewed habitus as a set of dispositions that are durable and shaped by history, he recognized that “guided by one's sympathies and antipathies, affections and aversions, tastes and distastes, one makes for oneself an environment in which one feels ‘at home’ and in which one can achieve that fulfilment of one's desire to be which one identifies with happiness”(Bourdieu2000, p. 150). What learners desire can also be shaped by habitus; however, it is through desire that learners are compelled to act and exercise their agency. Whether it is because learners want to be part of a country or a peer group, to seek romance, or to achieve financial security, learners invest because there is something that they want for themselves, it is part of the structure of desire, as comprehensively theorized by Motha and Lin (2014,p. 12). Further, it is in the realm of the imagination, what Norton has called imagined identities (Norton, 2013,p. 52; Kanno & Norton, 2003,p.242) that learners are able to express this

desire. Imagination allows learners to re-envision how things are as how they want them to be.

2.2. Defining Writer Identity

The concept of writer identity refers to “the different selves writers express when they write” (Hyland, 2001,p.44). In every text writers produce, “there is a variety of selves or identities that result from a combination of linguistic choices. Writing is recursive in nature” (Zamel, 1998,p. 87), thus writer identity is no exception and is far from being a fixed entity possessed by the writer and expressed through language and text. Therefore, “writers may create different identities and switch between real or imagined identities imposed by their discourse situations using language as a resource” (Cherry, 1988,p. 267). This might be because each writing task is a unique experience that students constantly develop along their journey to becoming writers.

Researchers have studied the different ways in which writers present themselves in their texts (Cadman, 1997; Cherry, 1988; Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hyland, 2002a; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Weldon, 1999). They claim that writer identities are partly limited by the dominant ideologies of privileged literacies, and partly open to the writers’ interpretations of these limitations as a result of their personal and sociocultural experiences (Hyland, 2002b,p.1099). Writer identities thus are directly related to the choices writers make in their discourses.

Studying writer identity is complex as it involves untangling a multitude of layers in the text. In an effort to tackle writer identity in an analytical way, Clark and Ivanič (1997,p. 137) distinguished three aspects of identity that writers bring to any act of writing. The first aspect that writers create is the autobiographical self, and beliefs about the ideas on the text. The second aspect that writers also create is the discoursal-self, used to claim membership to a group with whom they share practices and discourses. Finally, writers create the authorial self, which manifests itself as authoritativeness in relation to the contents of the text.

In relation to the third aspect of writer identity, the authorial self, there are several ways for writers to be, or appear to be, relatively authoritative and to bring their authorial presence into their writing.

Among the studies on writer identity, it is important to mention Ivanič's (1998) seminal research on writer identity. Ivanič (1998,p. 25) claims that "writing an essay is more than mastery of the academic register. It is an identity project in which student writers position themselves in relation to different discourse communities".

Ivanič's framework of Writer Identity (1998,p.15) is informed by Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor that "distinguishes the character, defined to represent a certain type of human characteristic, and the performer, who evokes a particular human characteristic in a performance". This distinction of character and performer leads to Ivanič's (1998) classification of four aspects of writer identity:

(1)the autobiographical self that is associated with a writer's representation of his/her past experiences (writer-as-performer);

(2) the discorsal self that refers to the self-portrait the writer presents in writing and is related to the notion of a writer's 'voice' (writer-as-character);

(3) the self-as-author that refers to the student-writer's sense of ownership of the discourse of his/her academic discipline; and

(4) possibilities for selfhood which is concerned with the possible positionings available to the writer in a literacy event.

Ivanič, (1998) however, states that the main focus of her research falls on the writer's discorsal-self . In her later articles, she shifted her focus from the textual, represented by the discorsal self, to the contextual dimension of writing. Later, in 2005, Ivanič introduced the concept of "relational identity", which is

concerned about the writer's anticipation of the reader and how this perceived reader-writer relation can have an impact on a writer's textual production. This concern with the contextual becomes more salient in an article published one year later in 2006, in which Ivanič draws on the sociocultural theory of learning (primarily Activity Theory) and identifies five dimensions of identity for investigation: (1) identity is relational; (2) identity is discursively constructed; (3) identity is not so much a state as a process of identification; (4) identity is networked; (5) identity is continuously reconstructed.

Although the concept of discursive identity is preserved from the earlier framework, the new framework accentuates the ongoing construction of identity and the situatedness of learning and writing. The changing framework implies Ivanič's attempts to capture the contextual elements in writing and finally to demonstrate how the textual is mediated by the contextual. This interest in contexts is symptomatic of the research agenda of the social theory of writing (e.g. Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2001, 2003) which points out that studies of writing need to include the social contexts in which a text is embedded.

This implies that the self is in a way the result of the individual's interaction with their environment, which refers to the writing community in this study. What they are coming from is general enough to cover the group, community, class, society and even the world as nowadays it is hard and unrealistic to claim a clear divide between the local and global in language learning and teaching and the same seems to apply to academic writing too.

Therefore, words are essential for thinking about what we see and feel and experience. Words also are essential for expressing these thoughts. When joined in a coherent language system, they bring forth the emotional, ethical, and intellectual contents of our minds in ways that interpret experience and share meaning. Because other people can share meanings, the symbol system of our language allows us to act through words. We use language to manage our environment to conform to our

needs. When the environment does not suit our needs, we use language to induce cooperation in rearranging these needs. This correlates with Herndl (1993,p. 353-354) claims that discourse is inextricably linked to institutions, organizational structures, disciplinary and professional knowledge claims and interests, and the day-to-day interactions of writers. Therefore one should put into question the current traditional rhetoric's notion of writing as a neutral, apolitical skill. It is obvious that teaching discourse inevitably involves the construction of professional and cultural power since discourse is recursively linked to social practice and institutions, one of which shapes the other.

This clearly shows that language is not neutral and so does writer identity and the texts students write. These texts are constructed in a specific context and discourse, that in turn are influenced by shared and conflicting values, ideologies, and power relationships.

2.3. Defining Voice

Starting from speaking, using a loud voice may signal anger, suppression or power exertion. A flat voice may signal boredom or the absence of enthusiasm. Therefore, variations in how voice is produced signals differences in the meaning being conveyed. Unlike the relatively clear role of voice in speaking, voice in writing is more complex as the features of voice identified in spoken interaction are not as clear as in written form. For example, one of the characteristics of writing is that it does not carry phonetic and prosodic qualities of the identities of the writers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001,p.12). Recognizing the voice that writers have is not as easy as recognizing it in someone's speech.

However, it does not mean that voice does not exist in writing. According to Ivanič and Camps (2001), voice does exist in written language, and it is “the heart of the act of writing” (Kirby, Kirby, & Liner, 2004, p. 76). In a similar vein, Hyland (2002, p.5) argues that “writing always has voice in the sense that it conveys a representation of a writer”. Synthesizing these views, one may come to the

conclusion that voice in writing does matter because it tells something about who the writer is.

In the same vein as Ivanič and Camps (2001) and Hyland (2002), Elbow (2007) argues that voice in writing refers to the true self and the rhetorical power, and that everyone has capacity to write with power as he or she has voice. Elbow's argument implies that voice does exist in writing and that writing with voice is very important. While Elbow (2007) theorizes the notion of voice as individual rhetorical power in writing, other researchers such as Kinloch (2010) and Brooke (2012) use the notion of voice to refer to a broader concept that involves the writers' social contexts. Kinloch (2010), for example, shows in her research with American adolescents from Harlem that non-mainstream adolescents are able to participate in community action projects by integrating their voice into their writing. Through their critical narrative writing, the adolescents were able to project their strong voice in order to more effectively represent their community. Similarly, Brooke (2012) stated that voice in writing really matters, because it can be used to raise community issues related to place-based education. While the concept of voice in these two examples of how adolescents write with voice in Kinloch's and Brooke's studies differs from what Elbow (2007) argues, it appears that voice in writing can be social in nature as well as self-representative. Even though the notion of voice in writing is still under debate (Bowden, 1995), most experts in the field are in agreement that voice is an important component of writing.

Additionally, voice is also claimed to have correlation with the quality of writing (Zhao & Llosa, 2008). The notion of voice in spoken interaction is part of the identity markers of the speakers. But, voice in writing also serves similar functions related to the identity of the writers. Hyland (2008: p.6) argues that "as writers we show who we are by the choices we make in our texts in much the same way that our speech, clothes, and body languages index our social class", indicating that voice in writing tells something about the writers. Similarly, Ivanič and Camps (2001) affirm that despite the absence of the phonetic and prosodic quality of

speech, the identity of the authors can still be recognized through the lexical, syntactical, and organizational aspects that any authors use in their writing.

The term “voice” is frequently used in L2 writing research and in writing pedagogy. Researchers investigate voice and voice-related issues, while teachers try to ‘teach voice’, and students and other writers in academic settings are struggling to demonstrate their voices in their writing. During the last decades, there have been an increasing number of scientific articles that discuss comprehensive research on voice. However, the use of the term has led to confusion, not only in writing pedagogy and in textbooks for composition, as Bowden (1995) demonstrated, but also in writing research. Both previous and newer writing studies have pointed out that the term voice is diffuse and problematic, and used to “mean almost anything” (Elbow 1994 in Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p.84).

It is clear that the term is understood and used in different ways and in different contexts, such as writing at school and writing in higher education. In some researches on English as a Second Language (ESL), the term voice is used to take up issues of power, accusing Western writing culture of favoring an individualized voice (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Stapleton, 2002); however, these discussions about voice are often limited to the use of ‘I’ and the presence of the writer in the text. The confusion in the discussion about the importance of voice is not only that the term voice is understood in different ways, but that some researchers take a common understanding for granted and fail to clarify their interpretation of the term.

Tardy (2012: p.234) describes voice as “a somewhat controversial concept in academic writing” that contributes to “scholarly disputes over the role it should play in the academic writing classroom”. Sperling and Appleman (2011) note that some researchers are apologetic about using the term. While other writing researchers criticize the “overemphasis on voice” (Stapleton, 2002). In writing

research and pedagogy, others point out its usefulness, although acknowledging the problems tied to it (Lillis, 1997; Phan & Baurain, 2011; Yancey, 1994).

One reason for the different meanings of voice is that the meanings are based on different theoretical concepts and different research interests: “The recent literature on academic writing shows an open discussion about the meaning and importance of the construct of academic voice which varies according to the perspective adopted” (Castelló, Iñesta, Pardo, Liesa, & Martínez-Fernández, 2012:p.98). Discrepancies in the understanding of the concept voice are, for example, visible in the articles by Stapleton and Helms-Park (2008) and Matsuda and Tardy (2008) in which they respond to each other’s points of view: Whereas Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) are concerned with ‘individualized voice’, Matsuda and Tardy (2009) regard voice as socially constructed, emphasizing the importance of the reader in the construction of voice.

2.4. The Relationship Between Writer Identity and Voice

When trying to define what voice is in writing, many teachers have generally struggled to understand the specific meaning of voice. The common understanding seems to be that having a good voice in writing creates a certain “flow” that makes the writing sound relevant and academic or professional. Even though teachers evaluate writing based on the voice created by the students, they themselves are sometimes unable to correctly identify what creates this “voice.” Breaking these language features down gives teachers a way to teach the idea of “voice” and then properly grade the students based on how they use the features. Language in this context is understood as a social, communicative process (Martin & White, 2005). Social roles and relationships are constantly being established during any form of communication. Modality features are where these relationships and roles are created. Improper use of these modality features can create a gap and impedes communication. Coffin and Hewings (2004,p.72) argue that “using these features

incorrectly, without the correct balance, can cause the writer to be interpreted by the reader as rude or coarse, instead of knowledgeable and having expertise”.

For example, an email sent from a student to a professor would use different modality than a text message from the same student to a close friend. If a student tried to send an email to his/her professor using the same modality used in the text message, the professor could take this the wrong way, which might cause a problem in this situation. Understanding language this way “shows how social reality can be differently interpreted and indeed (in some cases) consciously manipulated through its linguistic encoding” (Coffin, Donohue & North, 2009, p. 228). In typical North American academic writing, a writer’s voice is determined by the features that he or she uses and how those features are read and interpreted by the reader.

The use of these features makes academic writing as much of a social process as speech, even though there is no direct, instant communication. Unlike spoken communication, communication between writer and reader has the potential to occur generations and cultures apart, meaning that writers have to create social distance, while still properly representing their social stance. “The primary task of casual conversation is the negotiation of social identity and social relations” (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p. 22), which is different from academic writing.

In academic writing, even though writers have to negotiate social identity and relations within their writing, their primary task is to present information in an objective, authoritative voice. According to Smyth (1994, as cited in Coffin & Hewings, 2004, p.167), “[a]lthough the interpolation of the writer into a text may arise in the context of professionally or vocationally oriented disciplines...and in professional academic writing..., it is frequently discouraged in undergraduate writing”.

Differences between these two types of communication are unique to each genre and can be seen within the different choices of linguistic features. Where speaking is concrete, based on present and visual notions, body language, and

temporal cues, writing is abstract, relying on generalizations, nominalizations and passives to include more information into a concise space. As a result, “writing an argument is, at the very least, a negotiation between the writer and the reader” (Lee, 2010, p. 71).

When trying to create a voice in academic writing, students who are newer to this medium tend to rely on conversational features, instead of writing-specific features, as argued by Schlepppegrell (2004, p. 60) “[s]tudents who rely too heavily on dialogic features in their writing enact an interpersonal stance that may detract from the points they are making.” An example of this conversational feature is when writers use “I” or “you” as clause subjects to talk about their personal feelings or to talk directly to the reader, which creates a conversational voice, instead of authoritative. Another example of different features creating different voices can be found in the use of mood adjuncts. If a writer relies too heavily on intensity mood adjuncts, their writing will end up sounding conversational instead of authoritative. For example, intensity adjunct in the following clauses, “The pyramids of Egypt are very large” or “A lot of people were angry about the Senate’s behavior.”

These intensity mood adjuncts give the writing less of an academic voice and rely more on conversational features, which is typical of writers who have not yet learned how to negotiate their voice within academic writing. Introducing modality into the writing has an effect on the relationship between the writer and reader. As Coffin (2002, p.14) claims, “Modality, in other words, serves to introduce explicit negotiability into a proposition and hence, unlike the positive declarative, does not assume or simulate solidarity between writer and reader”.

The voice that is typical in Western academic writing is one of objective authority and power, but writers need to maintain a balance in order to convey information, while not coming off as rude. According to Bloor & Bloor (2004,p.229), “The exertion of power by individuals with certain social roles in particular social situations is often revealed in the form of language, as is the

corollary, lack of power”. As noted earlier, the main linguistic feature that shows power is modality. A high obligation modality, for example, will typically be used by a person with more power than the readers / listeners.

In academic writing, the writer will portray him/herself as the authority. Thus, he/she will typically use either mid or high obligation modals. The reason for using these modals is that the audience expects the author to be a person with some amount of authority, but someone who also allows room for other options to be possible. This modality helps create the voice of the author, which can be a difficult concept for some ESL/EFL students to understand, because “modal verbs are problematic for ESL students, as their semantic and pragmatic meanings are highly variable and are also influenced by cultural norms” (Hinkel, 1995, as cited in Schleppegrell, 2000, p. 128). According to Coffin & Hewings (2004, p.12), “non-Western cultures have a different way of integrating the writer into the writing, allowing a different approach to voice and authority”. These cultural differences can cause issues in the beginning of their career for writers coming in and learning this style of writing.

In a study conducted in 2016 in Nigeria by Muhammad, the results showed that the students tend to express their identity in writing cognitively, using linguistic and socio-linguistic features based on their logical knowledge and on their level of awareness in ESL writing (Muhammad, 2016, p.45).

2.5. Writing, Meta-discourse and Voice

"Meta-discourse implies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating" (Hyland, 2005, p.3). Meta-discourse is "discourse about discourse" and refers to the author's or speaker's linguistic manifestation in the text to interact with the receivers (Vande Kopple, 1985). For some scholars (e.g. Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore et al., 1993) different levels of

meaning can be found in a text; propositional and metadiscoursal. Vande Kopple (1985, p. 159), for example, claims that: Many discourses have at least two levels.

On one level, we supply information about the subject of our text. On this level, we expand propositional content. On the other level, the level of meta-discourse, we do not add propositional material, but help our receivers organize, classify, interpret, evaluate and react to such material. Meta-discourse, therefore, is discourse about discourse or communication about communication (p.83). He further develops his discussion about the definition of meta-discourse, and explicitly makes the point that meta-discourse items are non-propositional, non-truth conditional: "They [meta-discourse items] do not expand the propositional information of the text. They do not make claims about states of affairs in the world that can be either true or false" (p. 85).

This assumption about the non-truth conditional, non-propositional status of meta-discourse expressions can be seen in other recent studies too. Crismore et al. (1993, p. 40), for example, in their influential paper define meta-discourse as: "linguistic material in texts, written or spoken, which does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information given". Similarly Hyland (1999) stresses non-propositionality of meta-discourse as follows: "One important means by which texts depict the characteristics of an underlying community is through the writer's use of meta-discourse.

All academic disciplines have conventions of rhetorical personality which influence the way writers enter their texts to organize their arguments and represent themselves, their readers, their attitudes. This is largely accomplished through non propositional material or meta-discourse. What remains difficult is how to make a distinction between meta-discourse and propositional content. Halliday (1994 cited in Hyland and Tse, 2004, p. 160), for example, proposes the test of falsifiability to identify propositions. He states that "propositional material is something that can

be argued about, affirmed, denied, doubted, insisted upon, qualified, tempered, regretted and so on". However, Mao (1993 cited in Hyland, 2005, p. 19) seems to be sceptical as he believes that meta-discourse and propositional content can both be falsified. The picture, therefore, remains vague.

Hyland (2005) draws on Myers (1990) who claims that academic papers are sometimes rewritten by the editorials for different audience. When it happens the content is the same, but the meaning may change drastically through re-textualization (Hyland, 2005, p. 21-22). He, therefore, concludes that "meaning of a text is not just the propositional material...It is the complete package". By "complete package" he means both proposition and meta-discourse content, and he believes that meta-discourse is an essential and inseparable part of meaning. The point is that propositional-meta-discourse distinction is made for the sake of exploration and research (Hyland and Tse, 2004).

Another issue which is addressed in the literature of meta-discourse is if it is syntactic or functional. Adel (2006, p. 22-24) believes that "meta-discourse is a functional category that can be realized in a great variety of ways". She believes that an item which is meta-discursive in some point due to its relation with its co-text and its use, may not be meta-discursive in another. Hyland (2005, p24-25) draws on examples like the following and states that text items are meta-discursive in relation to their co-texts.

A) I think she is crazy. First she screamed at me. Second she tore up the mail.

B) When I told her the news, first she screamed at me. Second she tore up the mail. While the sequence markers (first and second) are used in A to list the arguments and to persuade the listener that the intended person is mad, in B they are used to unfold the experience .

Adel (2006) and Hyland (2005) further argue that meta-discourse items may play different functions in different texts or even they may fill two or more functions at the same time, as described in Table 1 below.

According to Halliday (1994) believes when people use language, they usually work toward fulfilling three macro functions. They try to give expression to their experience, to interact with their audience, and to organize their expressions into cohesive discourses. In other words, He states that people communicate with messages that are integrated expressions of three different kinds of meaning; ideational, interpersonal, and textual:

- The ideational function: the use of language to represent experience and ideas. This roughly corresponds to the notion of propositional content.
- The interpersonal function: the use of language to encode interaction, allowing us to engage with others, to take on roles and to express and understand evaluations and feelings.
- The textual function: the use of language to organize the text itself, coherently relating what is said to the world and to the readers. (Halliday, 1994 cited in Hyland, 2005, p.26)

For Hyland (1999, p. 7) , “textual meta-discourse is used to organize propositional information in ways that will be coherent for a particular audience and appropriate for a given context". He believes that the writer of a text predicts the receiver's processing difficulties and requirements, and accommodates them by using certain devices. He also states that interpersonal meta-discourse "allows writers to express a perspective toward their propositional information and their readers. It is essentially an evaluative form of discourse and expresses the writer's individually defined, but disciplinary circumscribed, persona” (Amiryousefi: 2010, p 159-60).

Table 1.2. : An Interpersonal Model of Meta-discourse (Hyland, 2005, p.49)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	Resources
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	In addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences and stages	Finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above; see figure; in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	According to X; Z states;
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meaning	namely; e.g.; such as; in other words
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to authors	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	Consider; note; you can see that

2.6. Different Aspects of Voice

Although it is neither possible nor desirable to ‘categorize’ the selected studies, we have organized this review in line with the five aspects of voice that were the focus of the reviewed studies: 1) social and cultural aspects of voice, 2) writer positions, and 3) developmental aspects of voice. Further, 4) linguistic features which the studies identified as ‘voice features’ are presented and discussed. Finally, 5) the reader-based approach used in two studies is examined, and considered with regard to future research.

2.6.1. Social and Cultural Aspects of Voice

A number of studies have explored voice with the aim to investigate variations related to the social and cultural context. For example, how the disciplinary field, the language or the genre have an impact on the writer's voice. A study that investigated “Cultural identity in academic prose” compared scientific articles in three different languages and three different disciplines” (Breivega, Dahl, & Fløttum, 2002; Fløttum, 2006, 2010). The authors found that the impact of the discipline was greater than the impact of language on the writer's voice. Cross-

cultural differences were investigated by Dontcheva-Navratilova (2012,p.135) who analyzed master theses written by German and Czech students of English, and found “that Czech novice writers opt for more explicit writer visibility and use a considerably higher rate of author-reference pronouns and it-clauses than German novice writers”. However, these features were mainly related to less powerful authorial roles (as organizer of the text or recounter of the research process) in the Czech students’ texts , but the German students used the same constructions in order to express claims and opinions.

Lorés-Sanz (2011,p.173) also examined “the interplay of cultural and disciplinary factors” in research articles within the discipline of Business Management, written by L1 and L2 writers in English and in Spanish. Focusing on the use of first-person pronouns, she found most author visibility in the English texts written by L1 writers and least in the Spanish texts written by Spanish writers.

Variations of different ‘disciplinary voices’ were also highlighted in the study by Hyland (2008), who compared specific interpersonal features that construct authorial voice in research articles in different disciplines. Using his interactional model as analytical tool, he found more stance markers in the ‘soft disciplines’ than in the ‘hard sciences’. He explained these findings in relation to the different disciplinary communities’ ways of knowledge construction.

Other studies of variations in disciplines have focused on specific parts of research articles. Both Pho (2008) and Stotesbury (2006) focused on abstracts. Pho compared abstracts in the fields of applied linguistics and educational technology, and showed similarities regarding various linguistic features of authorial voice/stance. Stotesbury (2006) studied subfields within economic sciences and found more impersonal stance in the humanities abstracts than in the natural sciences abstracts. Silver’s (2012) analysis of introductions from three different disciplines (microbiology, history of science, art history) showed significant variations in the ways the writers construct their voice.

Using Swales' (1998) model in the analytical approach, Silver (2012) described two voices: a paradigmatic and a narrative voice. The paradigmatic voice was most common in introductions from microbiology where the authors created their research space through "objectivist, empirical 'reminders'". In contrast, the narrative voice was found in introductions from history of science and art history where the writers were "engaging the readership and experimenting with alternative forms of rhetoric".

Cultural impact from a different angle was shown in Gross and Chesley's study (2012, p. 90). They showed how contextual aspects such as industrial funding might influence the writer's voice. Analyzing the use of hedges in research articles, they found that researchers presented their results "in a way that encourages readers to give more credence to their claims than their evidential base permits". They found fewer hedges in articles with industrial funding than in those without.

Another sociocultural aspect that has impact on the writer's voice is genre (e.g. Bondi, 2012; Kuhi & Behnam, 2011). Bondi's (2012) comparison of academic textbooks and journal articles revealed that evaluative language and the voice of the "Academic Arguer" is more prominent in journal articles whereas the voice of the "Recountner" and "Interpreter" is conspicuous in textbooks. Although voice was not the main focus in Kuhi and Behnam's (2011, p. 131) study, their analysis of different academic genres (research articles and different types of textbooks) in applied linguistics, showed how "contextual and institutional forces" have an impact on "the production and reception of academic genres".

While some of the reviewed studies explicitly aim to show the influence of the genre on the writer's voice, other studies do not discuss the impact of the genre in the presentation of their results. This might lead to questionable conclusions about voice since the type of text used as data in a study is an important aspect when discussing voice features. The reader's expectations concerning the writer's voice and the voice the writer wants to create will differ depending on the type of text,

the audience and the purpose of the text. Is the text written in a composition class with the purpose to improve writing and language skills? Or is the text a part of disciplinary writing where the writer is trying to appropriate the knowledge in the field and become a member of the discipline, developing his/her disciplinary voice? Are the texts reflection texts, or assignments that are written and evaluated in order to get a grade? Different genres offer or allow the writer to use different voices. For example, the voice will be different in a typical school genre compared to the voice in a scientific article.

The voice constructed in rhetoric and composition classes will differ from voices constructed in a content class because they are constructed in different contexts with different purposes and readers, and thus related to different identities and relationships. One can question whether a writing task such as that described in the study by Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) is meaningful for getting information about ‘overall quality’ and ‘voice intensity’ in L2 writing where the students were supposed to write about a subject “that was designed to stir debate”. Likewise, using writing samples from a task which is limited in time and opinion-based without using source texts as data as in Zhao’s study (2012) in order to measure voice strength is problematic. Thus, general conclusions about voice that do not take contextual aspects into account are questionable.

2.6.2. Writer Positions or Roles

Studies which focus on writer ‘positions’ or ‘roles’, exploring various ways writers represent themselves in their writing, show how it is possible to highlight different types of voice used for different purposes (Bondi, 2012; Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2012; Flottum, 2010; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Ivanič and Camps (2001, p. 28) build on Halliday’s division of the three functions of language, and identify three types of positioning: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Ideational positioning is related to how writers position themselves to the topic they write about (similar to what is called ‘stance’ in some other studies), while interpersonal positioning refers to the

way writers interact with their readers. Textual positioning is related to “the mode of communication itself”.

In other studies, voice as writer position is revealed through the roles a writer takes on. Through identifying first person pronouns in combination with verbs, Fløttum (2010, p. 271) explains how the author appears as writer, researcher, arguer, and evaluator. For example, I summarize or I describe position the author as writer, while I argue or I claim position the author as arguer. In a similar way, Bondi (2012) analyzes different roles of the writers in academic history with reference to Coffin (1997 in Bondi, 2012, p. 106): the Recounter, the Interpreter, and the Academic Arguer, which signal different authorial voices. The Recounter mostly gives a “narrative account of events”, and the Interpreter explains these events, while the Academic Arguer evaluates statements, or draws in current discussions in the field.

Dontcheva-Navratilova (2012) presents the following roles of the author as related to different degrees of authority, expressed by personal and impersonal structures: the author as Representative (member of a larger community), as Discourse-organizer (guiding the reader), as Recounter of the research process (commenting on the collection of data and research procedures), as Opinion-holder (expressing attitudes and elaborating arguments), and as Originator (putting forward claims and commenting on findings).

The different positions or roles of the writer identified in these studies can give valuable insight into the differences between novice and more experienced writers, for example investigating developmental issues of voice. We would suggest that the position of the Writer and the Recounter will be more visible in a novice writer text whereas the positions of the Researcher, Interpreter, Representative, and Arguer are probably more prominent in texts written by more experienced writers. Novice writers tend to, and are expected to, account for existing knowledge in the field, whereas experienced writers are concerned with elaborating arguments and

placing their arguments in current discussions in the disciplinary community, contributing to new knowledge in the field.

Bondi (2012, p. 103- 4) points to an interesting aspect in the discussion of the development of the disciplinary voice when comparing authorial voices in textbooks and in research articles, questioning how useful textbooks are as models for writing in the light of Myers (1992) study : “what makes them easier for students to read ‘may make it harder for them to deal with other text types they encounter later in a scientific career [...] because they get no sense of how facts are established”.

2.6.3 Developmental Aspects of Voice

Studying developmental issues regarding voice, two longitudinal studies showed how the writer’s voice might shift over time. Pérez-Llantada (2009,p.192) analyzed “the preferred linguistic realizations of authorial voice of four non-native English (Spanish) scholars both as novice and expert writers with a time span of 10-15 years between their publications”. Dressen-Hammouda (2014) examined six researchers in geology over a period of 10 years.

Different research methods and conclusions reflect different assumptions about how the writer develops voice. Pérez-Llantada (2009,p.192-195) emphasizes “individuality as a key in the research construction processes”, focusing on personal pronoun references, considering I-constructions as markers for an involved authorial voice. Because of the variation in the results, i.e. different researchers used the features in different ways both as novice and as expert, she draws the conclusion “that academic communication is a highly personal affair”. In contrast, Dressen-Hammouda (2014) shows how the development of the disciplinary voice is related to the increasing expertise in the disciplinary field; through qualitative analysis within an ethnographic approach, she identified 13 indexes/categories, which she used in the analysis of texts in the field of geology. Focusing on quite different features in the texts, these two studies show how different methodological

approaches result in different conclusions and different theoretical concepts of voice.

2.6.4 Linguistic Aspects of Voice

The great variation in linguistic features that the studies focused on when analyzing voice revealed different understandings and underlying assumptions about voice. Many studies used Hyland's (2008) interactional model as basis for the analysis of voice features, some of them selecting certain features of the model. Hyland distinguishes between the dimensions stance and engagement, relating both to the concept of voice. He relates stance "to the writer's 'textual voice' or community recognized personality", and "the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments" (Hyland, 2008,p.7). According to him, stance is realized in a text through linguistic features such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mention. Engagement, on the other hand, refers to the writer's dialogue with the reader, how the writer includes the readers in the text, "as discourse participants, and guide them to interpretations" (Hyland, 2008,p.7). This orientation towards the reader is realized through features such as reader-mention, directives, questions, knowledge reference and asides. Especially self-mention and hedges are features that many studies used in their analysis of voice.

The terms stance and voice seem closely connected. Hyland (2012,p.136) considers voice broader than stance "as it concerns the control of features which readers recognize as legitimate and authoritative". Several studies mention and identify stance as part of voice, and sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably, as for example, Pho (2008,p.232) who uses both 'authorial voice' and 'authorial stance', "i.e. expression of the writer's judgments or attitudes towards a proposition or an object" . Thompson (2012,p.132) describes stance as an aspect of voice, "as it contributes to the impression of the writer in the text"

whereas Stotesbury (2006) seems to understand voice as “personal stance”, expressed by the use of first person pronouns.

As mentioned above, a large number of studies are concerned with the use of first person pronouns. In some studies the use of first person pronouns was the main category in the analysis of voice (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2012; Hewings & Coffin, 2007; Lorés-Sanz, 2011; Nunn, 2008; Pérez-Llantada, 2009; Stotesbury, 2006), while other studies used them as one category among others (Breivega et al., 2002; Flottum, 2006; Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hyland, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Kuhi & Behnam, 2011; Zhao, 2012). For example, Lorés-Sanz (2011,p.174) emphasizes the importance of first person pronouns and claims that they “play a key role in the modulation of the writer’s voice in academic texts” and “can help construct a credible image for writers”.

Likewise, Pérez-Llantada (2009) and Stotesbury (2006) consider the use of first person pronouns as a signal for a strong authorial voice. In contrast, Hewings and Coffin (2007) suggest that it- constructions allow a more impersonal stance, and thus can convey a more powerful authoritative voice. At the same time they point out that the use of I, combined with verbs of “mental perception” such as think or believe, can invite the reader to discussion, giving the reader the possibility to have a different view, where the verb indicates that what follows is the writer’s subjective opinion.

The focus on first person pronouns as a feature of voice seems to have contributed to the confusion about the concept of voice and to reducing voice to debates about the use of I. Stapleton (2002,p. 188), for example, criticizes the “overemphasis on voice” , presupposing that the use of the first person pronoun is considered as a signal for a powerful voice in existing writing research. On the one hand he criticizes the focus on the use of I as a key element of voice in writing research, but at the same time he seems to consider the use of I as a powerful tool to express voice when using it in his own conclusion: “I made this choice on the

hope that by introducing it [I] in this section, somehow, readers would feel my voice as I was reaching the heart of my argument” (Stapleton, 2002,p.188). The contradictions in his reasoning seem to be similar to the studies mentioned above. These studies demonstrate the confusion and ambiguity that come from limiting the concept of voice to first person pronouns.

In a similar way, identifying hedges has caused problems in the analysis of voice. In a study by Zhao (2012,p. 209), the raters sometimes considered the lack of hedges as a marker for a strong, authoritative voice, whereas they described writers as confident authors when they used hedges “in a more sophisticated way”. Thus, hedges can be a signal for both a weak and a strong voice. In addition, the decision about what kind of words should be included in the analysis of hedges might be problematic. Sometimes a word that appears as a hedge does not have the function of a hedge, or conversely, an expression functions as a hedge even if the words themselves are not defined as hedges. Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) categorized hedges as a marker for a weak voice that showed no commitment to assertions.

A more balanced ranging is presented in the study by Pho (2008) who shows how hedges, (i.e. modal verbs) , might have different functions in different moves in the abstract. An interesting contribution to the use of hedges is the study by Gross and Chesley (2012,p.97) who describe hedges as a way to demonstrate the researcher’s commitment to “social norms for scientific conduct” when researchers present findings with caution, showing “the desire to embody in their prose the organized skepticism the scientific community so values”.

These studies show that categorizing and measuring the frequency of predefined categories in order to evaluate voice strength is questionable. Even Zhao (2012,p.201) who was concerned with “whether and how the strength of an author’s voice in written texts can be reliably measured” concluded her study by pointing out that qualitative evaluation is better than frequency-based rubrics when

measuring voice strength. Analyzing the way certain features are used, what kind of hedges are used, in which part of the text, in which genre, and in which context, is probably more useful than counting the frequency of these features.

Of the many studies that built on Hyland's model in their analysis, some added features that are not described in the model. Zhao (2012) and Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) added a category that included the reiteration of central point, i.e., how clear the main argument is expressed in a text. These two studies added the overall presence of the author's voice, which goes beyond the sentence level.

Another feature identified in some studies was the use of other voices. Breivega et al. (2002) and Fløttum (2006, 2010) analyzed how writers position themselves through the use of other voices, both explicitly through references, and implicitly through the use of *not* and *but*. Likewise, the study by Castello et al. (2012, p.104) included the category "dialogue with referenced authors" in their analysis of academic voice as one feature of text quality in their study of undergraduate revision processes. In the Voice Intensity Rating Scale that Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003, p. 249) used one category also comprised the use of "counter-voices" looking for how clearly writers separate their own view from an opposing one, and thus displaying a strong voice.

Components that go beyond the word and sentence level, are also shown by Thompson (2012, p.124), who demonstrated how writers "maintain a voice of authority in their writing by skillfully modulating the interplay between averral and attribution".

Thompson (2012, p.120) proposed a three-level model of stance and voice when examining PhD theses, and aimed "[t]o illustrate the gradations of voice" at different levels in the text, i.e. the proposition level and intermediate levels. As mentioned above, he showed how writers create an authorial voice when using other voices (the interplay between averral and attribution) at the proposition level. At intermediate levels, Thompson analyzed the use of meta-discourse (showing textual

coherence, i.e. clear connections between propositions and sections), and the evaluation of one's achievement in the conclusion or summary chapter and showed how these features contribute to create a voice of authority in PhD theses.

To sum up, the variations of voice features identified in the different studies reflect the differences in the understanding of the concept voice. On the other hand, they demonstrate “the amalgamative effect” of the use of different features which lead to the construction of voice, showing the holistic nature and complexity in the concept of voice. In addition, the different ways certain features are categorized and interpreted might also contribute to confusion about voice. (Matsuda, 2001,p.40)

An important question is also related to the purpose of finding certain voice features when analyzing texts. For example, while Ivanič and Camps (2001,p.3) aimed to raise “critical awareness about voice” that “can help learners maintain control over the personal and cultural identity they are projecting in their writing”. Zhao (2012, p. 220) intended to support students “to write with a strong authorial voice and use that voice appropriately and effectively in their writing”. These aims indicate different consequences for writing pedagogy: while the first implies different possibilities and gives the writer a choice, the latter indicates that there are certain general features for a strong voice that are teachable and learnable.

Even if the construction of the writer's voice is always constrained, “framed by the options our disciplines make available” (Hyland, 2008, p. 20), Ivanič and Camps (2001,p. 7) point out that “the individual can exercise the power to conform to or resist the social forces that are privileging one voice type over another” which is only possible through making visible and increasing the writers' awareness of how different features can lead to different voices they can use in different contexts.

2.6.5. The Reader-Based Approach to Voice

Hyland's interactional model has contributed to insights into voice-related issues in academic writing. At the same time, the use of a model with predefined categories can entail the risk of taking these categories of voice for granted, ignoring other features that might contribute to the construction of the author's voice. In addition, the dialogic nature of language is not taken into account: how meaning and voice are created in the interaction between the writer and the reader who are "co-constructing voice at a particular space and time" (Tardy, 2012, p. 40). This co-constructing of voice is always related to issues of identity and power relations which will influence both the writer's creating and the reader's perception of the author's voice.

The studies by Matsuda and Tardy (2007; 2009) highlight the importance of the reader in the construction of the author's voice. Instead of using predefined categories, i.e., defining voice features a priori and then identifying these features in the data where the researcher defines voice, Matsuda and Tardy entrusted the reader with the identification of voice features. They analyzed the statements and assessments of peer reviewers, using written reviews as well as interviews as data for their analysis, and thus identified certain features which seem to be important in the construction of the author's voice. Among other features, the readers mentioned breadth of knowledge, theoretical lens, rhetorical moves, and representation/positioning of other scholars in the field, features which go beyond the word and sentence level and which are related to the content of the text.

Similar to Tardy and Matsuda (2009), Dessen-Hammouda (2014, p. 16) argues for "creating a posteriori categories based on the empirical analysis of context, rather than a priori categories based on pre-existing, socially decontextualized categories". She points out that the perception of the voice is related to insider knowledge. Only through thorough examination of the context

and the practices in the disciplinary community is it possible to get access to and identify these features.

Two other studies mention the reader's role in the construction of voice in a more implicit way. The verb 'sound' in the title "I am how I sound" in Ivanič and Camps' article (2001, p.6) presupposes a reader who hears the sound of the author's voice: "this positioning is recognized by readers insofar that they share the same sociocultural context".

Similarly, Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003, p.260) briefly mention the reader, even if they are not otherwise concerned with the reader's importance in the construction of the writer's voice in their study. In their presentation of the Voice Intensity, they mention the reader in one of the rating categories: "The reader feels that the author is expressing his or her special views on the topic", thus indicating the importance of the reader when constructing the writer's voice.

Including readers and getting insight into the "implicit knowledge and interpretations people share in a disciplinary community" (Dressen-Hammouda, 2014,p.16) can give valuable insight into the complex processes, which lead to the construction of the author's voice. Both the writer and the reader bring with them 'their voices' and voice types from their culturally available resources which will influence their construction of the writer's voice: When reading the same text, a reader from science will probably construct a different authorial voice than a reader from the humanities.

Likewise, a reader who is experienced in a disciplinary field will probably construct the writer's voice in a different way than a novice in the field. They will have different expectations to the author's voice related to their previous experiences, to their values and expectations to academic writing, especially to the concept of voice in academic texts – values and expectations, which are shaped by their participation in certain discourse communities.

2.7. Voice in Different Discourses of Writing

Different assumptions regarding voice lay the ground for different premises for and outcomes of the research. In this review, the different approaches to voice can be related to what Ivanič (2004, p.224) calls “different discourses” of academic writing. She defines discourses of writing “as constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment which are likely to be associated with these beliefs” . Lea and Street (2000) and Lillis (2003) distinguish between the discourses of study skills, academic socialization, and academic literacies that result in different approaches to teaching and assessment of writing in higher education.

The approach used by Matsuda and Tardy (2007,2009), and Dressen-Hammouda (2014) can also be related to academic literacy research as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. These studies take the context into account when focusing on the reader and/or the insider knowledge of the disciplinary field, thus emphasizing the dialogic nature of writing where dimensions such as social relations and disciplinary identity play an important role in the construction of voice.

These different discourses of writing can also shed light on concepts and approaches to voice and on the research on voice. Studies concerned with measuring predefined linguistic features seem to consider the use of voice features as an individual study skill that can be taught and is transferable from one context to another. The teacher provides students with tools that they can use in their writing in order to create a strong voice. The main interest in writing research might then be to identify these voice features in different texts in order to measure and to teach voice strength , an approach which is related to what Lillis and Scott (2007,p. 13) call a “normative approach”.

In contrast, studies that emphasize social aspects of voice, aiming to find similarities and differences in different disciplines might belong to the academic

socialization perspective, which takes into account the context as for example culture, discipline, genre or language, i.e., the social aspects of voice. Thus, the focus in writing research and writing pedagogy is more on the disciplinary becoming, the socialization of the student who is in the process of becoming an acknowledged member of the disciplinary community through learning the appropriate genres of the community.

Within an academic literacies approach (Lea & Street, 2000; Lillis & Scott, 2007) the focus is more on aspects which influence the writing as for example identity, power, and social relations, trying to find explanations for why writers write as they do instead of identifying ‘bad’ or ‘good’ writing or strong or weak voice. In contrast to the skill and socialization approach, which lead to reproduction and maintenance of academic practices and conventions, the academic literacies approach emphasizes the dialogic nature of language where differences are acknowledged and kept in play, and the students’ experiences, interests and voices are valued.

This approach is a transformative approach (Lillis & Scott, 2007) that challenges existing writing conventions. Within the transformative approach of academic literacies research, it is not enough to analyze and identify voice features in a text; it is also necessary to conduct interviews and talk about texts which highlight the context, discussing “the struggles to sustain identity as writers while accommodating the demands of the university” (Le Ha, 2009, p.134). These studies often aim to raise critical awareness and help learners to take control over their writing and their voice, giving them the possibility to make choices about what kind of voice they want to project in their texts.

It is important to mention that the different approaches are not mutually exclusive (Lea & Street, 2000, Lillis & Scott, 2007). However, the academic literacy approach is more concerned with the context in which a piece of writing occurs or is situated, and is interested in how to create spaces for the students’

voices where they can challenge established conventions and “take control of their becoming path” (Le Ha, 2009,p.143).

The different approaches are also pointed out by Sperling and Appleman (2011, p. 70) who distinguish between two premises for research on voice: voice considered as a “quality of language” that can be taught, and voice as a “lens for understanding reading, writing, and learning processes”. The latter allows investigating and understanding how different voices are negotiated related to the context, to the genre, to the position of the writer and the reader, and how different voices can be created in the same text.

Writing cannot be dissociated from the writer and thus writer identity. The latter are the result of a given social and cultural context. Thus, it is important to discuss the notion of writer identity and how it has been investigated in the different contexts: L1, L2, and EFL. The studies reviewed also show that participants often refer to their personal thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, knowledge and experiences when describing what writing means to them. For example, some participants present writing as the process that they use to express themselves, share their experiences with the reader. If the writer is an individual and a member of a specific community which shares common social and cultural values, be it local (eg: writers in the Algerian context) or global (writers and readers who use English as a medium of communication), it seems not possible to discuss writing without linking it to writers' identities.

2.8. Challenges L2 Writers Face When Expressing Voice in Their Writing

In line with the different styles that L2 writers use in their writing compared to American mainstream people, focusing on analyzing voice in L2 writing has been criticized for the possible biases that researchers may have. Stapleton (2002), for example, argues that how researchers view the struggle that L2 writers experience in writing with voice is misleading because many researchers tend to analyze the

notion of voice by detaching it from the contexts. He further argues that the mismatches between the contexts and how their writing is assessed is one of the factors that leads to the misconception that L2 writers write with no voice. For example, most L2 writers who come to the U.S.A. write in the context of academic writing, yet the assessment of voice is done based on how voice is commonly viewed by people from American mainstream culture who are accustomed to write creatively. Apart from whether research on the notion of voice in L2 writing is misleading. It is therefore important for educators (i.e., writing instructors in particular) to get insights about the struggle that L2 writers experience in including the notion of voice in their writing.

Since the issue of voice in the U.S mainstream is often related to authorial identity, or authorial presence (Ramanathan, & Kaplan, 1996; Stapleton, 2002), voice is often overlooked as individual accomplishment rather than as “social/cultural accomplishment” in Sperling and Appleman’s (2011) term. This apparently results in the sense of lacking clear voice in L2 academic writing. Additionally, since that notion of voice in writing is also connected to the intended audience (Kirby, et al., 2004; Ramanathan, & Kaplan, 1996), L2 writers often have limited knowledge about the expectation of their intended writing audience. This is especially the case when the writers and their intended writing audience do not share the same cultural understanding.

Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996, p.22) argue that “audience and voice are largely culturally constrained notions, relatively inaccessible to students who are not full participants in the culture within which they are asked to write”. This implies that the challenges that L2 writers face in writing with clear voice in the U.S. mainstream can be due to their unfamiliarity with the audience and the expectation of how a piece of writing should be presented based on the commonality of U.S.A. mainstream expectation.

Furthermore, the contradiction between how self-representation is manifested in L2 writing and in the American mainstream culture can be one of the contributing factors that make L2 writing lack a sense of voice when analyzed by people from this culture. For example, self-representation in the American mainstream culture is indicated by the use of pronoun “I”, whereas, in academic writing, English as a second Language (ESL) writers show their self-representativeness through different types of positionings such as ideational, interpersonal, and textual positionings as indicated in the study of Ivanič and Camps (2001).

While the different ways of representing self in written forms seem to be in line with Stapleton’s (2002) critique, the concerns of voice for L2 writers can go beyond the use of pronouns and lexical choices. According to Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996), the different ways that L2 writers organize their thoughts and the differences in cultural values as well as the limited knowledge in their L2 possibly become the obstacles for L2 writers in writing with clear voice. With this in mind, it is not only the use of pronoun “I” and lexical choices that hinder L2 writers to write with clear voice. A study by Hirvela and Belcher (2001), for example, confirms that the notion of voice among L2 writers is complicated as it also refers to the L2 writers’ background knowledge about the concept of voice.

In their study, the aforementioned authors found that the notion of voice for mature and established L2 writers was problematic as it often conflicts with the existing voice that the writers have in their L1. From studying three graduate students who returned to the U.S. for their doctoral study, Hirvela and Belcher (2001) identified their difficulties writing with voice in English as part of the requirements in their degree and concluded that they are stimulated by their already established position in their home countries. As all of the participants in their study had already published articles in their home countries, they had already established voice in their writing.

Yet, the different demand and expectation as well as their status in a new country made it difficult for them to align themselves in their L2 writing. For most of them, finding a new voice that suits their needs was more important than just adopting the notion of voice as a representative of true self, given the fact that they already have sense of who they are. Within this context, the difficulties of writing with strong voice as expected in the U.S.A. mainstream culture were also increased by the cultural backgrounds of the writers that were often incongruent with the American mainstream culture expectation.

Unlike the notion of voice in mature L2 writing, writing with voice for immature L2 writers such as high school and university students can even be more challenging. This is especially the case when the writers come from a different non-western culture. Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) argue that since audience and voice are interconnected, it can be challenging for writers coming from non-mainstream culture to write with strong voice as they may not be familiar with the culture of the audience.

Additionally, the notion of self-representation in non-U.S.A mainstream cultures may also hinder L2 writers to write with individual voice. For example, within the U.S.A. mainstream, it is generally acceptable to use pronoun “I” to show authorship, but it is not necessarily the case for L2 writers who come from collective societies such as China and Japan. While it is certainly a generalization to argue that all L2 writers from collective societies do not write using pronoun “I”, the insight on how individualism is viewed in such societies explains the challenges that L2 writers who come from those countries face in using “I” in their writing (Matsuda, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999).

Shen (1989) also describes his struggle to write with individual voice in his composition class years ago when he was a student in a U.S university. For him, writing with authorial voice meant renegotiating his identity. Coming from China where collective societies view individualism as a kind of rebellion, Shen (1989)

found it hard to write using the pronoun “I”. As the use of pronoun “I” is considered to be subordinate to “we” in his L1, it took time for Shen to adjust to U.S mainstream writing norms where it is preferable to show the concept of “self” in writing. The case of Shen can be used as an example of the challenge that L2 writers experience in writing with authorial voice due to different cultural backgrounds, as in the case for Algerian students writing in EFL.

Similar to Shen (1989), Matsuda (2001) also recalls his own experience when he was an international undergraduate student in the U.S.A. He found it challenging to project the notion of self in his writing, as being himself in this context did not necessarily match who he was when he was in his Japanese society. For him, finding his own voice was not about discovering the true self; rather it was the process of negotiating his socially and discursively constructed identity with the expectation of the readers of his writing. Within these contexts, it is clear that the concept of voice is connected to the intended audience of his writing. While this was Matsuda’s case, it can also be the challenge that other L2 learners face when writing in a culturally different audience in which the expectation is different from their L1 writing audience.

Matsuda (2001) argues that Japanese writers do write with voice, yet it is not always transferable to the U.S. mainstream contexts. Furthermore, he argues that the way Japanese use the first personal pronoun is different from the use of the English first personal pronoun. Matsuda (2001, p. 42) concludes that the difficulties that Japanese students encounter in writing with clear voice in English are triggered by the fact that they lack familiarity with discursive options and discourse availability in constructing voice in their writing, rather than the incompatibility of the notion of voice with their cultural orientation toward self and society.

It appears quite clearly from this discussion that the different meanings or understandings of voice will influence the questions the researcher asks and the methods s/he uses in empirical studies; these will have an effect on the results.

While many studies have used text analysis to identify certain features of voice in academic texts, other studies have used interviews/talk about texts to focus on thoughts and interpretations of writers' struggles with voice in academic writing (Ivanič, 1995, 1998; Lillis, 1997, 2009).

These studies often use an ethnographic approach in order to understand voice-related issues in student writing. Ethnographic studies are often related to academic literacy research where the focus is on dimensions such as power relations and identity issues that give valuable insight into aspects surrounding student writing. Lillis and Scott (2007) emphasize the importance of academic literacy research, but recognize that ethnographic approaches can obstruct detailed analysis of texts.

While acknowledging the importance of the context in which writing occurs, the purpose of this literature review is to highlight studies that aimed to identify features of voice through analysis of texts, and thus raise consciousness about how the presuppositions about voice, the questions raised, the data and the methods used in the analysis of the data have an impact on what we can find about voice. Thus, this review aims to show how different approaches and methods in empirical research contribute to different aspects and understandings of voice.

Although parts of the complex field of research on voice have already been reviewed (Bowden, 1995; Correa, 2009; Javdan, 2014; Prior, 2001; Sperling & Appleman, 2011; Tardy, 2012; Yancey, 1994), no review has systematically presented the contributions that analyses of texts have made to our understandings of voice. The focus of previous reviews has been on theoretical perspectives that have contributed to different concepts of voice. Bowden (1995) and Correa (2009), for example, reviewed the use of the term voice from a writing pedagogy perspective. Bowden (1995) analyzed composition textbooks in the 1960s and 1970s, presupposing that textbooks influence most students' and teachers' knowledge and understanding of writing theory and pedagogy.

Emphasizing voice as a metaphor, he shows how voice is described and understood in the textbooks. Teaching was also the focus of Correa (2009,p. 103) in her review in which she addressed the problems of students who participate in ESL/EFL academic writing courses. She drew historical lines as she described and discussed “how notions of academic writing, text, and voice have changed over time and how these changes have influenced (ESL) and (EFL) writing approaches and methodologies”.

While Bowden and Correa focused on voice related to writing pedagogy, Prior (2001), Tardy (2012), and Sperling and Appleman (2011) focused on theoretical perspectives of voice. Prior (2001,p.57) explored “an alternative understanding of voice”, drawing on perspectives from Voloshinov and Bakhtin, describing how voice considered as dialogic offers “resources for getting beyond the binary of the personal and the social”. In a similar vein, Tardy (2012) outlined current conceptions of voice in written academic genres (Hyland & Sancho Guinda, 2012).

Although Tardy referred to some empirical studies, her focus was on different aspects of voice as related to different theoretical perspectives as discussed in the next section. In addition, she highlighted two studies “that have taken a reader-based approach to researching voice” (Tardy, 2012,p.41). Sperling and Appleman (2011) also reviewed theoretical perspectives on voice (drawing on concepts of Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Elbow, Chafe, Gee). However, their focus was not on writing in an academic context nor did they aim to provide a systematic overview of current research.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to discussing the main studies that cover writer identities and the model of writer identity (Ivanič, 1998). The different definitions of writer identity and voice were presented and the relationship between these two concepts was discussed. In addition, the different perspectives to writer voice were

tackled namely cognitive and socio-cultural . Furthermore, the ways discourse shapes writer voice were also dealt with. Another important issue was the difficulties facing writers expressing their voice were tackled as well as the different aspects of voice. Finally, key concepts related to writer identity like voice, authority, positionality were discussed. Research on writer identity and voice overlaps with research on writing as a human activity and the learning and teaching of writing as a skill. Throughout this chapter, it was clear that writing is a key element of writer identity construction as writers are known for what they do, how much they are involved in writing, and how they approach the writing process and interact with their writing environment (ecology). Just like writing, writer identity is constructed through the complex interplays between the individual and the social (Gu, 2010; Norton, 2000; Weedon, 1997). The next chapter (Chapter Three) is devoted to the description of the design and method of this research.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Method

Introduction

This research is a longitudinal exploratory qualitative case study that investigates a group of forty-two EFL students' perceptions and experiences of academic writing. It also focuses on how they construct and express their writer identity in argument essay writing at a Teacher Training College in Algiers (ENSB). This chapter aims at explaining the research methodology and contains four sections; section 3.1. is a discussion of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research design. Section 3.2. describes the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which this study stands. Section 3.3. is devoted to research design by focusing on sample and setting and research tools. Section 3.4. deals with procedures of data analysis. Section 3.5. discusses issues of data validity, reliability as well as researcher's positionality.

3.1. The Researcher's Role According to the Third Position Paradigm of Denzin and Lincoln (2011)

In the realm of research methodologies, various paradigms have emerged to provide researchers with different lenses through which to understand and study the world. One such paradigm is the Third Position Paradigm, as presented by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). This section aims to delve into the essence of this paradigm and explore its relationship with qualitative research.

The Third Position Paradigm offers an alternative perspective within the realm of research methodologies. It challenges the traditional dichotomy of Positivism and Interpretivism, positing a third way of conducting research that incorporates elements from both paradigms. This paradigm aims to bridge the gap between objectivity and subjectivity, acknowledging the role of the researcher's subjectivity in the research process while still valuing empirical evidence.

At its core, the Third Position Paradigm recognizes the importance of context and acknowledges that reality is socially constructed. It emphasizes the need to understand the complexities and nuances of a particular research topic, as well as the influence of power dynamics and social structures. This approach aligns well with qualitative research, which aims to gain a deeper understanding of human experiences and social phenomena.

Qualitative research focuses on exploring and interpreting subjective meanings, highlighting the importance of context and the lived experiences of individuals. By adopting the Third Position Paradigm, researchers can embrace the subjectivity inherent in qualitative research while still employing rigorous methods to analyze and interpret data. This paradigm encourages researchers to engage in reflexivity, acknowledging their own biases and assumptions throughout the research process.

Furthermore, the Third Position Paradigm promotes the use of multiple research methods, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This integration allows researchers to triangulate findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of their results.

The Third Position Paradigm also emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations in research. It encourages researchers to engage in collaborative and participatory research practices, involving participants as active partners in the research process. This approach ensures that the voices of marginalized communities are heard and that research findings contribute to positive social change.

The Third Position Paradigm has been adopted for the present study as a valuable perspective within the realm of research methodologies. By bridging the gap between Positivism and Interpretivism, this paradigm has provided me with a framework to conduct this research that acknowledges the role of subjectivity while

still maintaining scientific rigor. By embracing the Third Position Paradigm, , it has been possible to gain a deeper understanding of the complex phenomena of argument writing and writer identity and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the particular field of writing in EFL. The next section discusses research design and procedures of the study in the light of this research paradigm.

3.2. Research Design and Procedures of the Study

The present qualitative exploratory case study was chosen because it allowed me to delve deeply into the topic of writer identity; it provided an opportunity to explore the complexities, nuances, and individual experiences of writers in the specific context of Algeria . By administering a semi-structured questionnaire, written reflective accounts, and content analysis, I have gained rich insights into the factors that shape writer identity and the various dimensions of writers' experiences, because identity is shaped by a multitude of contextual factors, including educational settings, cultural beliefs, societal expectations, and personal experiences. This exploratory case study enabled me to understand the influence of these contextual factors on writer identity and to uncover the unique dynamics and complexities that contribute to the development and construction of writer identities.

Exploratory case studies are particularly useful when there is limited existing research or theoretical frameworks on a specific topic, in this case, writer identity. This methodology allowed for the exploration of new ideas, experiences, and perspectives that emerged from the data. Through the open-ended interview, I could elicit participants' personal narratives, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences related to their writer identity, thereby contributing to the development of new theoretical insights in the field.

3.2.1. Sample , Setting , and Subjects

Students participating in this study are forty-two (42) ENSB male and female students aged between 19 and 21 years old. They were selected from a class of fifty-five (55) students for specific reasons. The sampling process in this study was purposeful. The reason I chose this college as my research site was because I could get an easy access to the participants since I already knew them before I started conducting this study.

The second reason is that ,as a researcher, I believed that these students had acquired reasonable knowledge of essay writing especially argument essay, and had experienced academic writing and practiced it in both language and content-based modules. This has made them familiar with the academic writing discourse and its conventions and standards and therefore they could share their experience of academic writing as well as their journey of writer identity construction and expression that is the focus of this study. The participants are mostly Algerian female students except from four male students (Yacine, Salah, Youcef, and Yazid) studying in the Teachers' Training College. However, gender is not a significant factor in this study because its focus is on students' experiences of academic writing and their journey of writer identity construction regardless of their gender.

My first encounter with these students was as a teacher of academic writing in their first year at the same college (ENSB) after they passed the Baccalaureate exam and enrolled in the degree of secondary school teacher of English. The latter requires five years of study, one month training at a secondary school and the writing of a research report on an English teaching- related topic of students' choice.

During this period, I had prepared my Doctorate proposal and started reading about my research topic and preparing my data collection tools. Then, I informed this class about my research topic and the possibility of choosing them as research participants. In the academic year 2014-2015, I taught them paragraph writing in

English and revised its different types as most of them studied it at secondary school. The next year 2015 -2016, they studied the English essay with a different teacher of writing who was also my former teacher of Applied Linguistics as I was trained in the same college as a secondary school EFL teacher of English. During this period, they studied the different types of essays and were introduced to the argumentative essay.

Initially, I intended to put the participants into two groups; good and weak writers based on a placement test I designed. This test was to be corrected by two of my colleagues, but this procedure took too much time and was abandoned at the end. Then the data were collected without any placement test. The 42 participants were selected from initial fifty-five (55) students who volunteered to participate in this study. Given the fact that the aim of the study was to investigate the students' identity construction and experience of argument essay focusing on the writing strategies employed by both student writers, care was taken to reliably describe and understand students' perceptions of academic writing, their journey of writer identity construction and expression through the ways they tackle the task of argument writing. In order to select the participants, two criteria were taken into account.

Firstly, the students' regularity in the completion of the different research tools like questionnaire, and written tasks in order to cross check students' answers and check their consistency and thus their validity. Thus, the tasks completed by the students who were taught by other teachers were disregarded because the method and content they were taught might be different.

Secondly, the completion of the tasks and research tools administered to participants. Students who did not answer most of the questions in the students' questionnaire were discarded.

To further discuss the process of data collection, it is important to explain the context of this study by shedding light on the research setting , which will be the focus of the next section.

3.2.2. Research Setting

The research setting for this study on students' writer identity takes place at a teacher training college in Algiers, known as L'Ecole Normale Supérieure, Bouzaréah (ENSB). ENSB is a renowned institution known for its high academic standards and rigorous education programs in Algeria.

The research predominantly occurred within the classrooms and academic spaces of ENSB. These spaces include lecture halls, seminar rooms, computer labs, and libraries where students actively engage in academic writing activities. The researcher also interacted with participants during informal settings such as break times or in designated research spaces within the college.

The setup of the college provides a rich and suitable environment for exploring the experiences and understanding the journey of writer identity construction among the students. The diverse dynamics of a teacher training college contributes to a wide range of perspectives and experiences related to academic writing and writer identity. This research setting offers opportunities to observe and analyze various aspects such as how students engage with writing assignments, their use of writing resources, the availability and utilization of writing support services, and the impact of the college's academic and social environment on their writer identity development.

By conducting the study within the teacher training college setting in Algiers, my aim was to capture the unique context and experiences of students as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of academic writing, contributing to a deeper understanding of writer identity construction in this particular educational setting. The next section tackles a detailed description of the research tools.

3.3.Description of the Research Tools

The following sub-sections are devoted to the description of the research tools used in this study.

3.3.1.Description of Students' Semi-structured Questionnaire

The Questionnaire was used to collect data for the pilot study and additional data that could not be collected from students' essays. This research tool was chosen for its numerous advantages as described by Nunan (1992, p. 143): "It enables the researcher to collect data in field settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data such as free-form field notes, participant observers' journals, the transcripts of oral language".

I first used it for the pilot study that took place before the official data collection phase. I administered it to the students and received questions from them, and took notes on their reaction and difficulties answering some questions and understanding some concepts like "identity" and "community". Then, I improved the student questionnaire, re-ordered some questions as I gave importance to students' experiences of writing mainly and omitted open-ended questions on their perceptions of writer identity to avoid repetition as I devoted written account for this purpose. Some concepts like discourse, identity, genre, conventions were also made clear to make them easier to understand and I added some options to questions for students to choose from in addition to more guidance on how questions should be answered or what is required from the participant based on the feedback of some colleagues who are teachers of writing and also studying for Doctorate degree. This improved questionnaire became the semi-structured questionnaire that I administered to the study sample later on.

The questionnaires were written in English and filled out by students in English. I did not feel the need to translate them in Arabic as I believe students were able to understand the questions and answer them in English, respecting the clarity and meaningfulness of their answers. I was confident that the participants could

answer my questions easily even if at times I had to explain to few students only some unfamiliar concepts like writer identity, genre, conventions and critical thinking. So, my decision using English for the data collection process was motivated by my knowledge and familiarity with students' competence in English.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions organized into open-ended and closed ended questions. The close-ended questions were designed as yes/ no questions and options questions where students were asked to select the most important, relevant options based on their perceptions, preference, writing strategies. The rest of the questions were mainly open-ended and focused on students' perceptions of argument essay writing, good argument, structure and development of the argumentative essay, their writing strategies, and difficulties and how they solve them.

This questionnaire sought to gather information about students' attitudes towards (1) the teaching of writing and argumentative essay in particular (2) the strategies they use to write this type of essay, (3) the difficulties they face, (4) and how they deal with them. It consisted of 15 items that were distributed in two parts in the form of close and open-ended questions. All the questionnaire items were prepared according to the research questions and aims of the study. There are about 5 questions to cover each research question. Then I read the list of items again, deleted repetition and tried to organize the questions in a logical order to have a smooth flow from one question to another.

Students were given one hour and a half to think about and answer the questions. Before I administered the semi-structured questionnaire, I asked for their permission to participate in my study. All students agreed to answer the questionnaire and did answer it. I believe the students could not refuse maybe because I had an authority on them as a teacher. Yet, Some students did not answer some questions so I decided to disregard their questionnaires because they were incomplete.

The semi-structured questionnaire is divided into four (4) sections. The first section aims at collecting general information about the participants' writing ability, what they know about argumentation, its conventions and features, and what makes a good argumentative essay according to them.

The second section focuses on participants' way of approaching the task of writing an argumentative essay, the strategies they use and the different moves they go through while writing this type of essays.

The third section targets the problems students face when writing an argumentative essay and why some students may fail to transform their genre knowledge into an appropriate argumentative essay.

The fourth section is devoted to give students the opportunity to evaluate their writing ability, in general, and their writing strategies, in particular, and give us the reasons behind their writing weaknesses and what they could need to improve themselves as writers as far as the argumentative essay is concerned and give their final comments and suggestions.

This type of questionnaire was chosen as a research instrument in order to help shy students express themselves freely by guiding them at times through the suggested items, categories and choices and given them space and freedom to share their experiences via open-ended questions as explained by Freeman and Long (1990, p. 35): "...questionnaires are often used to get language learners to self-report their attitudes or personal characteristics".

After getting a general idea about participants' academic writing experience via the students' questionnaire, it was necessary to design another research tool specifically to gather data on participants' perceptions of their writer identity that is the focus of this study. Different options were possible like interviews and think aloud protocol. Yet, I opted for the written account for some reasons. This will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.2. Description of Writer Identity Written Accounts

In order to understand the thinking processes of individuals as they perform a task or problem-solving activity, the think aloud protocol is often used. This is a research method which involves asking participants to verbalize their thoughts and reasoning while completing a task, providing insights into their decision-making, problem-solving strategies, and mental models. This method is commonly used in various fields such as psychology, education, usability testing, and cognitive science to gain an understanding of cognitive processes and improve the design of systems, instructions, or educational material. However, this research method was not used for the following reasons : students preferred to write at home, noise when students reflect loudly in class all at once, not all students had the possibility to record their reflection because they did not have a smart cell phone, and finally, I, the researcher could not check this process if it were done at home. Therefore, the think aloud method, although very useful for identifying thinking processes, was discarded and replaced by students' written accounts on writer identity.

Written accounts can be collected through various methods such as journal entries, reflective essays, or self-assessment exercises. They provide valuable insights into students' self-perception as writers, their motivations and goals in writing, and how they navigate their own writing identities. Besides, analyzing students' written accounts on writer identity could help me understand their attitudes and beliefs towards writing, identify any issues or barriers that may be hindering their development as writers, and tailor instruction and support to meet their individual needs. It also provided a basis for fostering a positive writing environment that encourages students to develop their writer identity and engage more effectively in writing tasks.

To collect data on students' perceptions of their writer identity through the written accounts, I provided two direct questions for guidance: 1) Do you consider yourself a writer? And 2) Why?

This task resulted in reflective essays. Reflective essays are a type of writing that encourages individuals to reflect upon and share their personal thoughts, experiences, and insights on a particular topic or event. These essays require writers to critically analyze and evaluate their own learning, growth, or development in relation to the subject matter. They are also meant to promote self-awareness, deepen understanding, and encourage critical thinking as they involve exploring thoughts and emotions, examining the impact of an experience or event, and considering the lessons learned or the implications for future actions.

Written accounts can be collected through various methods such as journal entries, reflective essays, or self-assessment exercises. They provide valuable insights into students' self-perception as writers, their motivations and goals in writing, and how they navigate their own writing identities.

Analyzing students' written accounts on writer identity can help educators understand their students' attitudes and beliefs towards writing, identify any issues or barriers that may be hindering their development as writers, and tailor instruction and support to meet their individual needs. It can also provide a basis for fostering a positive writing environment that encourages students to develop their writer identity and engage more effectively in writing tasks.

To collect data on students' perceptions of their writer identity I used written accounts on students' writer identity that were guided by two direct questions: Do you consider yourself a writer? Why?

This task resulted in reflective essays. Reflective essays are a type of writing that encourages individuals to reflect upon and share their personal thoughts, experiences, and insights on a particular topic or event. These essays typically require students or writers to critically analyze and evaluate their own learning, growth, or development in relation to the subject matter.

Reflective essays are commonly used in academic settings, especially in courses that require students to reflect on their learning experiences or personal growth. They can also be utilized in professional contexts, such as in fields like education, nursing, or psychology, where practitioners are encouraged to reflect on their professional experiences and identify areas for improvement.

The participants' reflective essays typically follow a structured format that includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The introduction provides background information and sets the stage for the reflection. Body paragraphs delve into specific experiences or aspects of the topic, presenting the writer's thoughts, observations, and analyses. The conclusion wraps up the reflection by summarizing the main points and offering final insights or implications. The participants were given one hour and a half to think and answer these questions after they had answered the questionnaire that tapped their experience of academic writing in general. This research tool allowed me to obtain elaborate answers that reflect different aspects of students' writer identity such as their understanding of writing as a skill, features of good writing as text and genre focusing on the argument essay, their perceptions of "the good writer", self-evaluation of their own writing skills both weaknesses and strengths, and finally their struggle constructing and expressing their own writer identity in argument essays.

Finally, because students' perceptions of themselves as writers are believed to shape their writing performance and the way they express themselves as writers, it was necessary to see how this process of writer identity expression takes place in reality via analysing students' argument essays and therefore I decided to use participants' argument essays as a final research tool to complete the phase of data collection.

3.2.3. Description of Students' Argument Essays

The whole class was asked to write an argumentative essay on a topic of their choice as a first homework task, and then were assigned a second written task on writer identity. However, only the students who completed the semi-structured questionnaire were requested to do these two tasks.

The participants had to write a composition of 200-300 words within one and a half hour. Compared to other types of essays like the narrative and descriptive essays where student writers employ less sophisticated processes such as retrieving information and writing it down, the argumentative essay is believed to be more demanding in terms of sophisticated strategies. Hence, in line with the aim of the study, this kind of writing task seems more suitable to eliciting differences and similarities in composing between students who consider themselves as writers and those who do not.

As was noted in the introduction, the study was not conceived as an evaluation of the participants' ability to write argument essays, but as a more open-ended exploration of the issues related to students' experience and identity as writers. My concern in conducting this research is to generate a rich exploratory description of how students construct and manifest their writer identity in argument essays and how this identity shapes how they write and the quality of their texts. This description should provide the basis for a critical examination of the main issues in students' experience of writing and enable me to explore a number of key dilemmas in order to gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural settings of EFL academic writing and how these can influence how students see themselves as writers and how they write.

3.3. Procedures of Data Analysis

Data collection tools were designed and administered in a strategic way so each one would pave the way to the next one; as a ladder each step leads to the next. As explained earlier, I piloted the students questionnaire in order to find out ambiguous

and repetitive questions and how they could better be distributed in the three sections of the questionnaire. I asked ten students to answer the questionnaire in class. I also consulted some colleagues at ENSB who were teaching writing at that time and obtained feedback from both students and teachers to evaluate the clarity, readability and effectiveness of the questions and how they are presented in terms of language (vocabulary, wording, sentence structure, and the use of jargon). Some words were replaced by simpler ones and others were eliminated like genre by type of writing or put between parentheses like type of writing (genre) so that students relate the explanation with the technical vocabulary or jargon.

Later on, and based on the responses I obtained from the pilot questionnaire, I designed the improved questionnaire on students' academic writing experience writer identity. This is a focused follow-up questionnaire where I invited participants to reflect on their writer identity. Because writing, writer and writer identity are strongly inter-related, this written task also revealed a lot on students' perceptions of academic writing and their knowledge and experience of academic writing. This allowed me to cross check data validity and make sure that students' answers were consistent to some extent and no serious contradictions were prominent in the collected data. Lastly, I designed the interview, which was the last tool, administered.

As for the argument essays, I collected them over one week, I also allowed some students to submit their essay a few days later because they were absent or did not complete the task on time. I started reading the questionnaires and organising the data. I did not read students' essays straightaway, but I read and analyzed them at a very late stage of my data analysis phase, together with writer identity written accounts data that were part of the final stage of data collection.

To summarize, the data collection took place in three stages:

- In stage 1, I collected primary data by piloting the students' questionnaire which I started analysing before other data. These data gave me insights and helped me reflect on particular issues to design the other research tools.

-In stage 2, I improved students' questionnaire by reorganizing it, eliminating repetitive questions and removed the questions on writer identity. I also improved the wording of the questionnaire using more familiar vocabulary and explaining unfamiliar concepts.

- In stage 3, based on students' experience of academic writing, I designed a written task I later on called writer identity written accounts that resulted in reflective essays on writer identity. This research tool could replace the think aloud protocol that was discarded for practical reasons explained later in the study. In this research tool, I asked participants to reflect on their writer's identity by answering two main questions; 1) do you consider yourself as a writer? 2) and why?

-In stage 4, I moved to collect students' argument writing essays in the second term because other topics were to be covered before such as the narrative, descriptive, comparison contrast and cause- effect essays as described in the writing syllabus. I collected students' argument essays and started content analysing them and reflecting on the issues they raised. (See table 2 below that summarizes these stages).

Table 3.1.: *Summary of Data Collection Procedures*

Stages	Explanation
Stage 1: Piloting Questionnaire	I designed an initial questionnaire that allowed to obtain raw data on participants' experience of academic writing at ENSB. This stage helped me spot and correct wording mistakes, finding out difficult and unfamiliar vocabulary that I replaced by more common words. For example, I used the

	word personality at first to refer to writer identity. In the initial questionnaire I asked participants about their perceptions of their writer identity. Later on, I decided to remove these two questions and ask them in the written accounts on writer identity to avoid repetition. Students did not have enough time to answer 23 questions so I decided to eliminate some similar questions that had similar answers. Therefore, I reduced the number of questions to 15 instead.
Stage 2: Administering Questionnaire (improved version)	In the light of the insights I got from the piloting stage, I managed to improve the final questionnaire and administer it to participants in its final version.
Stage 3: Conducting written accounts	After getting data on participants' perceptions of academic and argument writing, their writing practice, knowledge and difficulties, I designed a focused written accounts on participants' perceptions of themselves as writers or their writer identity. This complex concepts required a separate research tool as it was not possible to include it within the questionnaire because I got brief and unelaborated answers from the piloting stage. Therefore, I gave students more time to reflect on this concept in the light of their academic writing experience at ENSB. In this way, the written accounts on writer identity served as a follow up tool for the questionnaire and helped collected richer data that could not be collected using the questionnaire.
Stage 4: Collecting argument essays	After getting insights on participants' perceptions of their academic writing experience through the questionnaire and

	their perceptions of writer identity through the written accounts, it was necessary to find out how they express their writer identity in argument writing by analysing their essays. This would allow me to discover if the participants' perceptions of writer identity match with their writer identity expression strategies.

After describing the research tools used for data collection and globally presenting the research procedures, the next sub-sections will discuss data analysis procedures in detail for each research tool.

3.3.1. Procedures of Students' Questionnaire Data Analysis

To analyze the data obtained from students' questionnaires, I used quantitative analysis for close-ended questions by doing a frequency count of all similar questions. However, the open-ended questions were analyzed using a qualitative method called thematic analysis. After putting all of students' answers together, I read them several times highlighting important keywords. I read them again to group examples on the same codes together and then organizing students' answers into final categories (codes) after clustering similar ideas together. Close-ended answers were put together and counted in order to get a percentage. In addition, open-ended answers were put together and carefully analyzed by looking at similar answers. Then, these answers were transformed into categories.

Content or thematic analysis “is a research method used to systematically analyze and interpret the content of a text or set of texts, in this case, reflective essays. It involves identifying patterns, themes, or categories within the text and analyzing the frequency, distribution, or characteristics of these patterns” (Braun and Clarke, 2006,p.79).

Below , I describe the three steps involved in conducting the content analysis of the participants' reflective essays:

Step One: Transcribing and Scrutinizing the Data

I first typed all the students' answers to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire to make it easy to read and analyse. Then, I grouped all the students' similar answers together for each question. I proceeded in the same way for all the open-ended questions ; then I put the answers of each question in one table and read all the answers several times looking for keywords and highlighting important issues. For example, when students gave me definitions of writing , I tried to look for the different ways students understand and perceive writing. Some of them think of writing as a skill that should be mastered. Others see writing as the process of generating ideas. Then I looked at the students' purposes of writing or why students write ; this is how I listed all the purposes for writing . I grouped similar purposes together as codes ,then I tried to give these initial codes specific labels that would be turned into final themes. I read the students' answers several times ,and finally, focused on how they described good writing with a set of criteria. I dealt with each open-ended question separately.

To keep the data safe and accessible, I saved it on different applications or social platforms like Gmail as well as OneDrive . Then, I started reading and scrutinizing the answers but this time my aim was looking for similarities and differences in the ways students describe the writing process, the purposes behind their writing practice, and what matter the most for them in relation to writing as well as the way they described good writing , the adjectives they used and the criteria they referred to. At this stage, I started focussing on students' language use, content and ideas they developed, the organization of their essays, and the impact they tried to have on the reader through their argument essays.

This process is more recursive and complex in nature rather than a simple and linear process. Reading back and forth the responses several times and revising the different codes in order to capture the most accurate ones was quite demanding. Finally, the codes were grouped together. Then, a certain logic emerged from the

codes that helped me develop the themes; thus, I proceeded in the same way, that is reading and scrutinizing the participants' responses several times.

Step Two: Reflecting on the Data

To reflect on the data I used a research diary where I jotted down daily notes and remarks and drew different graphs that helped me visualize the data and emerging issues. Besides the print research diary, I used a digital research diary by creating a messenger instant private message where I reflected on the data by commenting on the initial codes and trying to describe them and grouping similar students' answers together as examples to illustrate those codes. Those short paragraphs were then sent to my email, then to the main text of the thesis where I elaborated on them and thus they became an integral part of my methodology chapter. I also had some informal discussions with a Doctoral student (whom I will call Khaled). During those discussions, I explained how I understood the responses and created initial codes and the possible links between them, and I checked with him whether my coding procedure was correct.

Step Three: Putting the Data Together

At this stage, I started seeing the emerging issues in relation to my research problem and questions thanks to the conversations I had with my critical friend who was also a Doctoral student. During those conversations, I tried to describe my data in my own words and give it meaning focusing on "what the data is trying to tell me". This has helped me put the data together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to see the whole picture and main themes of the data as one body. These conversations were both face to face and via WhatsApp. This process of reflection helped me organize the data into tables, which led to obtaining the initial codes.

Finally, I created the table where I put all the students' responses in a first column, and all my comments in a second column, in addition to highlighting keywords and similar expressions, and using different colours; this helped me

getting the initial codes and organizing the data in the best way possible. Being a visual learner the colours helped me making sense of the data and seeing similarities and differences and the tendencies and frequencies of the patterns; I repeated this procedure over and over until all the data was completely analyzed.

3.3.2. Thematic Analysis of Students' Written Accounts on their Writer Identity Data

Students' written accounts were meant to allow participants to reflect on their writing experience as a whole and more specifically their opinions, perceptions, and beliefs about their writer identity. This task resulted in reflective essays. These contained qualitative data that required thematic analysis just like the open-ended questions of students' questionnaire. The thematic analysis was done in six stages:

Stage 1: Preparing the Data

The first step involved collecting and organizing the textual data. First, I typed all the students' answers. Late on, I read these answers again and grouped similar answers together so I could find out the similar issues they raised. Data organization is the vital step in the process of thematic analysis. This process started directly after typing the students' answers and getting a complete transcript. This transcript was saved and put on a separate Word document for easy access.

Stage 2: Defining Coding Categories

In this step, I tried to identify coding categories or themes that represent the main ideas or concepts present in the data. These categories emerged from the data itself keeping in mind the research questions and if the data could possibly answer them. I tried to ask myself questions like :why do students write? They write to whom? How do they perceive writing and good writing? And what they have learned from their writing learning experience? These questions helped me put the data into categories like students perceptions of academic and argument writing. For example, the aim of argument essays, how they should be structured, what makes

good arguments, why it is important to acknowledge the opposing view, and why it is difficult to convince the reader of the writer's position. My reflection revolved around four major aspects of writing I believe are important and summarize the process of writing that are : 1)the writer as an individual,2) the reader as a co-writer and audience, 3)the text as the materialization of the writer's identity and finally,4) the context where the three previous elements interact.

I started looking for general codes to identify the key concepts in the data related to the different aspects of their journey as writers, as well as the experiences with academic writing and mainly argument essay at ENSB. The initial codes revolved around the student's perceptions of writing as a skill, art or talent and the reasons for writing and the purpose behind this practice, difficulties they meet when writing an argument essay, the strategies they use to deal with these difficulties in addition to the role of the reader in this process. Readers can be perceived as real like the teacher and peers; they were also imaginary. I also kept a kind of virtual research dairy by writing notes and remarks on WhatsApp and Messenger to keep the process of reflection going and write down new insights related to the codes and possible themes. These remarks and notes were regularly saved to my personal email and integrated into my data analysis regularly.

Stage 3: Developing a Coding System

Once the categories were defined, I developed a coding system to systematically assign these categories to specific segments or chunks of the text. I did this manually first by highlighting and underlining relevant text. Then, I did the same on word document file after typing the students' answers.

Stage 4: Applying the Coding System

In this step, I applied the coding system to the entire text dataset. This involved reading and re-reading the text to identify relevant segments and coding them accordingly.

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining the Coding System

After the initial coding was completed, I reviewed and refined the coding system to ensure consistency and accuracy of the codes. This involved consolidating and revising codes and categories based on new insights or emerging patterns in the data.

Stage 6: Analyzing and Interpreting the Data

After coding the data, I analyzed it to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among the categories. This analysis consisted of comparing codes within the transcript, examining variations in students' responses, and identifying themes or commonalities. The interpretation of the data was based on the literature available on writer identity in academic writing as well as my own expertise, knowledge, and experience as a researcher and a teacher of academic writing.

At the beginning I identified general themes related to the notion of writer identity like the writer, reader, text, and context. After that, I tried to dig deeper into each aspect of this process. I focused on the writer and the way students see themselves as writers in terms of their linguistic abilities and strategies. Then I moved to their perceptions of the reader and the impact they have on him, and why the reader is important in the writing process. I used a notebook to reflect on my data and track the initial themes that emerged from the data.

This reflection helped me refine those themes in order to get the final ones by reorganizing them and deleting some because I was then able to better name them after reading the data several times. At first, I wrote all students answers to the questionnaire in a copybook and starting writing remarks. Then I decided to type them, which allowed me to better understand and analyse them. This was a reliable way to keep the data safe especially with the unexpected issues storing data online. I tried to look at aspects of their experience as the setting in which students write and how it influences their perceptions of writing, the frequency of their writing

practice, how they perceive the writing process, their writing skills and strategies, to whom they write and why.

I then organized these aspects into broader themes like the writer, context, reader and text as a reflection of students' language and identity as students and writers in the making. I believe these elements can summarize the students' experience of writing because of the strong link between students' experience of academic writing and their journey to writer identity construction and expression.

Building writer identity is an integral part of developing as writers in the academic context ,therefore, this writing experience represents the ground in which they writer identity grows up and the latter is a reflection of their writing experience in general. Patterns in data emerged gradually after many readings, reflection and writing. Writing about the initial themes helped me think deeply about the data and becoming more critical considering aspects of data that I could not see before like students resistance, negotiation of the academic discourse and strategies for writer identity construction and expression.

For example, when asked to define writing, students described it in different ways which reflect their beliefs and perceptions of writing, their past and present practice, the evaluation criteria and standards of good writing, the purposes of writing and the interaction with the reader. At first, I considered what students said word for word which was scratching the surface level of the data based on what students said. Then I started going deeper looking for the issues raised by relating what students said to some aspects of writing as a skill and process.

Stage 7: Reporting and Presenting Results

Finally, I presented and reported the findings of the thematic analysis. This presentation included quotes or excerpts from the text to illustrate key themes or patterns, along with an interpretation of the meaning and implications of the findings. The following table is an example of the process of thematic analysis of

students' written accounts on their writer identity. Important and relevant utterances are underlined.

Table 3.2. : *Illustration of Thematic Analysis of Students' Written Accounts on Writer Identity*

Students' answers	Codes	Themes	Comment
Student 26 IMANE: A1. Being a writer means having the ability <u>to express myself and all what I have in terms of ideas, beliefs, making the world know who I am through my writing.</u> It also means the <u>ability to convey any message</u> (simple, complex, form and domain) clearly and <u>effectively.</u> <u>Convincing and attracting the audience by tackling their problems.</u> A2. Yes and no. I'm a semi-writer because <u>I can introduce and express myself</u> but I am not really able to tackle the audience interests <u>and problem.</u> I don't write convincing messages in all kinds of writing but some of them. Student 1 Marya : A1. A writer is not the one who writes beautifully but purposefully. <u>He should have strong statements/opinions and is responsible for what he writes as he has an audience he may affect.</u>	-Expressing oneself (ideas, beliefs, opinions) -Convincing the reader (having a positive impact on them) -Writing With a purpose in mind -Changing readers' perception -Transmitting knowledge -Inspiring other people	Fulfilling the functions and purposes of writing that vary from one student to another	Being able to achieve the purposes of writing makes students, according to them, legitimate writers who should be recognized and valued by the reader because of the services and benefits they offer them through writing.

A2. Yes, writing is a passion for me. It makes me feel freedom, reinforces my existence and free from judgment and prejudice. I feel unique and responsible towards myself and my community and the world. <u>I could affect others and change their perception through writing.</u> Student 18 Chahrazed: A1. <u>A writer means having the ability to express oneself ideas, thoughts, feeling, and transmit knowledge. The writer is the one who can inspire other people through his writing and can express what others feel and give solutions.</u> It's also an art. A2. <u>Yes, I can write what I feel (good and bad experiences). I feel relaxed when writing which is my helping hand which destroys all the bad things from my mind.</u>			

I analysed students' written accounts on their writer identity and obtained a clear idea on how they perceive themselves as writers and why some of them denied being a writer. Some emerging factors seemed to shape students' perceptions and attitudes towards their writing experience and writer identity. But to complete this content analysis, it was necessary to discover how they express themselves as writers in their argument essays. This is developed in the next section.

3.3.3. Content Analysis of Students' Essays Data

Forty-two essays were content analysed to find out about how students transform their knowledge of argumentation into a text (essay) , how they manifest their writer identity and whether there is a consistency between what students said they write according to their responses to students' questionnaire and how they really write or not.

To analyse students' essays, I adopted Kuchartz (2014) model of text analysis, which is another concept to describe content analysis. According to him, qualitative text analysis is a powerful research tool that allows scholars to delve deep into the meaning and interpretation of written texts. It is particularly useful in the context of argument essays, where a thorough understanding of textual content and its underlying arguments is essential.

This approach involves a systematic examination of textual data to identify patterns, themes, and key concepts. Kuchartz (2014) emphasizes that qualitative text analysis is not about summarizing or paraphrasing, but rather about interpreting and understanding the underlying meaning of the text.

The process of content or text analysis was conducted following five main steps:

Step One: Reading and Interpreting the Text

At this stage, I Read the text multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of its content, arguments, and overall structure. Then, I took notes of any initial impressions or emerging themes. After that, elements of the text were highlighted like the thesis sentence, the use of personal pronouns, grammar mistakes, word choice, and conjunctions to gauge the students' linguistic proficiency and how the text was structured. The essays were read again and this time, the focus was on tracking students' content or arguments and taking some notes. These arguments were classified into categories and each category was marked in students' essays

using a given colour. This stage helped me getting familiar with the data and preparing it for further analysis by organizing it and creating some kind of structure.

Step Two : Building Categories

After initial reading, each category was read several times focusing on students' strategies, choices and decisions in terms of knowledge transformation and identity. I tried to locate aspects of text that relate to students' knowledge of argument writing like taking a clear position, presenting and developing arguments, acknowledging the opposing view, rebut it through counter-arguments as well as ways the writer is presented in the text through personal pronouns, word choice, order of arguments, writer's opinion and thoughts, and elements of writer's critical thinking. Later on, examples from each category were displayed in a table so that I could comment on them and analyse them separately. During this stage, I also read literature on how students express their identity in writing so that I could find out how this concept was tracked by other researchers especially that few studies only were conducted in the Algerian EFL context.

Step Three : Develop Code Segments of the Text

Based on the categories I got as a result of the previous step, I checked students essays again and selected chunks of their essays that match with each category for the sake of illustration. These scripts were chosen based on Ivanič's (1998) model of writer identity that includes four aspects; discoursal self, auto-biographical self, self as an author and possibilities for self-hood. Only the three types of self were tracked in students' essays. The last element is rather related to the students' writing context and their opportunities to present themselves as writers in their academic setting.

Step Four : Analysing the Codes to get Themes

In this step, similar codes were gathered together and general themes emerged in the light of the literature available on writer identity as discussed in chapter 2 and the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, I did a qualitative analysis of

the essays, focusing on the connections between the themes, concepts, and patterns identified. This helped me understand how participants express their writer identity and how their experiences and perspectives are shaped by various factors related to language, topic familiarity, writer, and their writing skills and strategies.

Step Five : Reporting on the Analysis Results

In this final step, I interpreted the findings of the content analysis, considering the cultural, social, and psychological contexts of the students' essays. This was done in the light of the social constructivist perspective to writing, Norton's (2000) theory of identity as well as Inavič's (1998) model of writer identity. This theoretical framework helped me gain insights into the students' writer identity and how they manipulate language to express and defend their position, develop arguments and try to convince the reader. The latter is influenced by their personal experiences, values, beliefs that represent their auto-biographical self, how they use language to present themselves as writers and build the discoursal self and finally how they play the roles of author, idea holder, teacher, friend, and sometimes expert trying to claim and negotiate more authority with the reader.

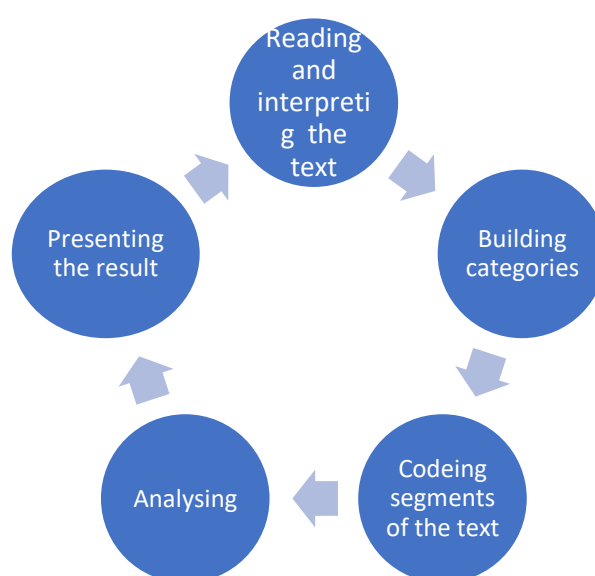


Figure 3.1.: General Process of Qualitative Text Analysis (Adapted from Kuckartz, 2014, p. 40)

After discussing data analysis procedure, the next section will be concerned with issues of data validity and reliability.

3.4. Issues of Data Trustworthiness and Transferability

Data were collected using different research tools. This has allowed the researcher to cross check the data validity via triangulation or data trustworthiness. Cohen and Manion (1989) define triangulation as a multi-method approach, which draws on a variety of methods, theories and data collection to strengthen the validation claims made by the research. A major strength of case study research, is that a wide variety of theoretical and practical sources can be employed so that a framework of triangulation was built into this case study design.

Some key questions related to the research questions were asked twice both in students' questionnaire and interview at the beginning and end of the process of data collection to check whether the participants' answers were consistent throughout this process. The results showed that the answers were quite stable and there were no considerable inconsistencies or contradictions. Except for few cases where students changed their minds on some questions.

For example, in the questionnaire, Sonia claimed that she did not consider herself as a writer due to some language difficulties like the limited vocabulary and grammar mistakes. Yet, after getting positive oral and written feedback from two of her teachers of writing, she changed her position both in the written reflection on writer identity and interview and declared that she is a writer who faces some challenges with writing and that she is trying to improve her writing skills and overcome these challenges. Assia too claimed in the questionnaire that her opinion is vital for her in writing and she cannot change it as it is an integral part of her willingness to express herself freely in writing.

However, during the interview, she has changed her mind and explained that she can give up or sacrifice her real and authentic opinion if she does not have enough details, ideas and arguments to defend it and convince the reader. In this case, she would change her position and opinion according to her topic familiarity,

knowledge, vocabulary and experience. Therefore, completing the task of writing becomes more important than self-expression especially in exams.

Furthermore, as a researcher, I evaluated collected data based on my own interaction, experience and knowledge of the participants via my daily informal observation and discussion in class. This observation was not systematic to be used as data collection tool but it helped me make sense of the collected data by linking it to its context and who the students are as individuals and writers. This advantage was the result of my positionality and familiarity and more importantly the trust I was able to build up with the students during two years of teaching starting from their first year at ENSB in addition to being in contact with them in their second year, fourth and fifth year.

In the next section, the issue of the positionality of the qualitative researcher is discussed. The aim is to explain and clarify the complex status of teacher-researcher, both as an outsider and insider, and its impact on students' essay writing and questionnaire feedback.

3.5. Researcher's Positionality in Qualitative Research

Firstly, my positionality as a researcher was flexible since I was an outsider and an insider at the same time. As a teacher who has authority in class, I was an outsider as many students did not feel at ease, open and talking personally about their writing. To them, I was not the understanding friend who could accept and support them unconditionally. Thus, they were afraid to be judged by me as incompetent or careless if they confessed that, for example, that they do not read often, or they just wrote when I asked them to do so, or that they do not like the way I teach writing because it is "ineffective" and does not help them improve as writers. If ever they dared saying so, this would sound disrespectful and could create conflicts between us even if I seemed to be open-minded and professional. Therefore, the authority relationship that characterizes our relationship seems to be an obstacle between us.

On the other hand, I was an insider as I was trained at the same college, by the same teachers, at least some of them, I went through the same itinerary as a

student ,which means that I was familiar with the system (how things work at this college), and I was familiar to the participant because I taught them writing for two years and oral communication for one year. The long period of interaction I had with these students helped me build a relationship of respect and trust even if my authority as a teacher had never disappeared. I gave several writing tasks to the students on different occasions where they had enough time to reflect on their thoughts, experience and strategies as writers without being obliged to say it directly to me or be embarrassed in any way. Therefore, making students feel at ease might have helped me collect more reliable and authentic data about students' experience of argument writing. Holliday (1997,p.120) explains the researcher's interaction with the research setting as:“The agency of the researcher is also being acknowledged more and more as an ideological force with impacts on relations with people in the research setting and the way in which they are perceived”.

Secondly, the nature of the data I collected was mainly qualitative since I chose the data collection tools that allowed me to some extent to gather enough data by making the participants at ease and give them the freedom to express themselves. This was possible by giving them enough time to think and asking them a variety of open-ended questions that gave them an opportunity for their personal experiences to emerge or be uncovered at least partially by each data collection tool. This was apparent in the collected data as students mentioned their previous experiences with writing in middle and secondary school, described their former teachers of writing who influenced them by helping them improve their writing, their topics of interest and how writing helped them cope with their reality that was hard to manage most of the time.

Thirdly, observation as an active participant is vital in any Ethnographic study. However, I did not observe my participants as any researcher who has the intention to conduct an ethnographic study would do for the following reasons. I did not have the intention to conduct an ethnographic study at the beginning of my research journey simply because I was not familiar with Ethnography as a research

framework or methodology. This is not common in my context unlike the case study, which was my first choice. Yet, I did observe my students in an unconscious way during my teaching without taking notes. I used to take notes of the important issues I noticed in class like the fact that students always avoided writing in class and preferred to have writing as a homework. I always wondered why such behaviour and I wanted to understand more. I also noticed that students care too much about form and revise their texts at the language level more than content. Through my classroom interaction with participants, I noticed that students know a lot about the theory of writing and how essays are structured, the aim and writing strategies, but they cannot easily apply this knowledge when they were asked to write. Of course, relying on my memory is neither valid nor reliable, but structured observation was not part of my research agenda. Nevertheless, this interaction and observation of students were part of my experience as a teacher of writing and a researcher and did guide me through the process of data analysis and interpretation.

Fourthly, I had both formal and informal interaction with the participants during an extended period of three academic years of my research (2014-2017). This was a real advantage for me as a researcher as it gave more validity to the data I collected, which was not the result of brief encounters with students. I had the chance to be in continuous contact with the students and had enough time to build trust-based relationship with them as a teacher in class and as a researcher outside of class. This chance may not be given to many researchers who are limited by a scheduled fieldwork and tight deadlines. In other words, I did not rush the data collection stage and thus the participants were to some extent at ease expressing themselves on different occasions with long intervals of time. This was not a choice, but I was obliged to do so as I was teaching and doing research was in the margin of my job as a teacher, I can say that I was a part-time researcher during the first five years of my research.

Finally, I belong to the same socio-cultural environment as the participants and thus I share many common values with them, which can be problematic as what

is familiar to me is also familiar to me, and often expressed in an implicit way. Also, it was difficult to distance myself from the data and be critical. However, being a member of the same community or society allowed me to share basic knowledge that outsiders cannot have to the point that sometimes I saw myself sharing the writing experience of my participants, but with slight differences that stem mainly from my personality as a student.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology adopted for the study, including information on the setting, participants, data collection tools, and methods of data analysis. The research tools used for data collection were described in detail, including students' questionnaire, written accounts on their writer identity, and argument essays written on topics of their choice. Utilizing multiple research tools allowed for the triangulation of data to increase validity and reliability. This chapter also explained the data analysis procedures, which included the use of thematic analysis on the students' questionnaire, written accounts on their writer identity, and content analysis of their argument essays. These methods are part of the analysis of qualitative data. Details on how the data were organized and codes were obtained and developed into themes are provided. Finally, this chapter discusses the role of the researcher as both an insider and outsider in the study, and dealt with the researcher's positionality in data analysis and interpretation. The next chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the results.

Chapter Four:

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Introduction

This chapter deals with the data analysis and presentation of results in the light of the theoretical framework that consists of both Self-Appraisal Theory and Writer Identity Model developed by Ivanič (1998). The data were collected through three research tools that are students' questionnaire on their academic writing experience (learning and practicing writing in class and beyond), written accounts on students' writer identity, and students' argument essays on topics of their choice. This chapter is organized into three sections following the order of the research tools as they were administered during the process of data collection. The first section (4.1.) aims to describe and analyse students' conceptions of academic writing at ENSB. It is a presentation and analysis of the results obtained from the students' semi-structured questionnaire that aims at setting the context of the study and focuses on students' experience of academic writing on the whole.

The second section (4.2.) focuses on participants' understanding of their writer identity; it presents and analyses students' writer identity written accounts that were meant to elicit their perceptions of themselves as writers in the academic context at ENSB. Finally, the third section (4.3.) is devoted to the analysis of the participants' writer identity expression in the argument essay. The aim is to reveal the strategies students use to express their writer identity in the argument essay.

4.1. Presentation and Analysis of Students' Questionnaire Data

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 42 participants. Their responses were analyzed quantitatively for close-ended questions and qualitatively (thematic analysis) for open-ended questions.

Q1. How would you define writing in English?

This question is an attempt to elicit students' opinions on an umbrella concept that is writing in English and to see how they perceive the experience of writing in English. Except for one student Fella, who did not answer this question, all the remaining participants provided a variety of responses that are analysed and presented in the following sections.

4.1.1. Students' Perceptions and Understandings of Writing

Because writing is a complex process of meaning construction, participants seem to have divergent understandings and perspectives of writing through the way they define it and the reasons they provide for writing in the academic context. These perspectives are discussed as follows:

4.1.1.1. Expressivist Aspects of Writing

Self-expression seems to be one of the key functions of writing, according to many participants (24/42). For example, Halima said that: "Writing is an important skill that helps us express our thoughts, ideas and emotions". Also, **Ilham** stated that: "Writing is a way to express yourself by words". **Meriem**, in her turn, expressed the same idea: "Writing is copying down ideas, expressing feelings, emotions, all what comes in our mind". According to these responses, writing is a skill which allows students to express both thoughts or ideas and emotions. This implies that it satisfies both cognitive or intellectual and emotional or affective needs. Therefore, writing is presented as a tool to express the students' thoughts and feelings that are two pillars of their personalities and identities.

It seems that writing is not used as an end in itself. The participants do not write solely to improve their English and writing skills and strategies, but they are also motivated by the strong need to present who they are to the reader, how they feel and their vision of the world.

In a similar instance, **Soraya** reported that: “Writing is self-expression because when writing we show off potential what we have inside”. Soraya unlike Halima linked writing to the expression of a potential that is a complex concept that might cover different aspects of students’ knowledge and skills at the same time. The latter could be about student’s feelings, thoughts, skills, creativity and knowledge.

Potential could therefore mean what an EFL student can do with English when writing. In this case, self-expression is an inevitable function or purpose of writing as well as a basic need for many participants. This implies that, through writing, this student aims at self-discovery by thinking about one’s potential then share it with the reader in writing. This seems to be a way to construct one’s identities as a writer by discovering who we are as individuals, reflect on our potential and then use it as a source for writing. This again shows that the self is at the heart of the writing process. Another participant mentioned self-expression as a purpose for writing but this time, she related it to one of the features of the argument essay that is expressing and defending the writer’s opinions. In addition, **Insaf** expressed the same idea saying: “It (writing) allows us to express ourselves, to defend our opinions and build our writing skills”. Insaf also mentioned another reason to write that is developing her writing skills through practice as the common proverb implies: “practice makes perfect”. However, this “instrumental” function of writing will be fully presented in the coming sections.

4.1.1.2. Writing as a Therapeutic Practice

Writing therefore is almost similar to seeing a psychologist or talking to a best friend and getting some steam out. This therapeutic function of writing is expressed differently by the participants but all of their descriptions revolve around feeling better, getting better, feeling relieved, being happy, satisfied and realizing their potential by knowing who they are, how they feel and what they think and what makes them different from others.

Through writing, the participants try to accomplish important psychological goals such as meeting their cognitive, emotional and social needs, understand their state of mind, affect, and behavior by discovering who they are through writing. This is clear in their choices of topics as when given freedom to choose the topics that often the case, except in exams where their options are limited, tend to write about the topics that interest them, are meaningful to them or reflect their personal experiences.

This seem to help participants practicing the therapeutic virtues of writing which are not possible to get if they just write to complete a classroom task and this is why in this case, they think writing becomes completely superficial and artificial as it is done for the teacher as a routine or an obligation rather than an empowering process of self-expression, self-discovery and self-realization.

4.1.1.3. Instrumental Aspects of Writing

Besides self-expression and therapy, the participants also seem to write in order to improve their English and practice their writing strategies and skills. As the saying goes, “practice makes perfect” and practice often leads to progress. The participants are aware of the importance of writing as a skill for their academic success therefore they write to master the skill of writing, develop better writing strategies, and discover their weaknesses and strengths and improve them eventually.

For example, **Rania** states that: “Writing is a very important skill for English learners. Through it we can see how good we are in using English words, ideas, and all what we have learnt before”. This shows that the participants’ profile as EFL students and pre-service teachers has an impact on the reasons why they write and the purposes they want to achieve via writing.

The value most students give to writing seems to stem from an awareness that their academic success implicitly or explicitly, depends to a great extent on

their mastery of writing skills and strategies which is also expected by most teachers in the academic context both in language and content based modules. This is referred to in the literature as Writing Cross the Curriculum (WCC).

In addition, **Anissa** claims that : “ Writing is an important skill, an effective tool to express ourselves or to transmit messages or ideas. It’s a silent way to get out what we have inside. It helps us to construct our language and widen the vocabulary.” This suggests that writing is also a means for students to communicate to teachers what they have learnt or what they know in order for the latter to evaluate it via writing which is usually the case of written summative exams. Therefore, writing becomes a tool for students’ learning evaluation be it formative or summative as **Nabila** clarifies: “ Writing is a way in which we use what we have learnt in our minds in order to express ourselves and our ideas”. Finally, **Wahiba** refers to writing as a skill that reinforces language learning:” Writing is an important skill that builds up your language learning, it is a way of self-expression in an effective way”.

This writing practice also helps them expanding their vocabulary, which seems more important to express themselves than grammar that comes as a second priority after vocabulary. This is what **Hana** stated: “Writing is an important skill. It’s a silent way to get out what we have inside. It helps us to construct our language and widen the vocabulary”. **Fatima** also mentioned both vocabulary and grammar as two sub-skills that can be improved through writing. She stated: “Writing is much amusing when you like the topic, because you use your vocabulary and test your grammar”. In the same vein, **Fouzia** stated: “Writing is an essential module in English, it teaches us to be aware grammatically, when we write, we take in consideration all the mistakes and neglect (avoid) them”. Lastly, **Siham** stated: “ Writing is how to transmit thoughts and opinions in a written form using English vocabulary”. Grammar is important to build meaning and make the text clear and readable and thus effectively communicate participants’ ideas and feelings to the reader and thus create a connection between the writer and reader which is vital for

having the position impact on them. This impact often determines the quality of the text and thus whether the writer is good or not.

In addition, **Hana** commented saying: “Writing is one of most important skills in English in which you represent the spoken language with letters”. It seems that participants’ ultimate motivation to write is their belief that writing is a vital skill and process that they should develop and master if they are to succeed academically. **Insaf** also stated that: “Writing is a process of jotting down ideas, opinions, and thoughts. It can help us improve our English... and build our writing skills”. Therefore, writing is a skill which has an instrumental function and value as the educational system heavily relies on writing for both teaching and evaluation students understanding, knowledge and academic achievement.

Therefore, the participants seem to be aware of the advantages of mastering academic writing and one way to do so is by improving their English, expanding their vocabulary and practicing grammar so they can write better sentences and well-structured paragraphs and therefore better essays that match the criteria of good argument writing as a genre.

4.1.1.4. Writing as a Process of Critical Thinking

Students seem aware of writing as a process as they mentioned some writing ways, steps, methods and strategies which they use to organize their ideas and thought and therefore structure their argument essays. This shows that they know and are aware that writing is a process . This implies that it is systematic and organized. For example, **Meryam** stated that: “ Writing is a piece of work that requires good organization and several criteria to well transmit the message or ideas”. Also, **Yazid** stated: “Writing is the act of transmitting our ideas using letters, text to address to an absent (reader). It has many forms (prose and poetry) and it is organized in many types (argumentation, description, narration)”.

Their responses prove that they know that effective and successful writing has a purpose, logic, structure and this is done in a systematic way following some steps or stages which form the process of writing. For example, **Hadjer** stated: “Writing is a skill which should follow some steps and specific organization according to each type (of essay)”. Hadjer thinks that each type of essay requires a specific structure. This shows the strong link between the aim and function of the essay and its structure. Organization is therefore an integral part of content in writing.

This is even more important in argument writing as it requires students to develop solid arguments and structure them in a logical way. **Salah** added that: “Writing is to collect ideas with the same topic and write them in a paragraph or an essay using the English language to transmit your ideas”. This shows that essay organization is seen in terms of sentences, paragraphs and essays and that there are different levels of organization within paragraphs, among sentences, and between paragraphs in an essay. This seems to help students keep the unity of the essay as it must be around one specific idea, thought, position or opinion. **Akila**, in her turn, emphasized the same idea: “Writing is to write simple, clear sentences with a good structure”. **Youcef** also stated that: “Writing is to write a set of sentences about a subject following some methods, organization and strategies”. Finally, **Sonia** confirmed: “Writing is the act of organizing our ideas and opinions, experiences into a set of paragraphs”.

This reflects their knowledge and practice of writing at ENSB as well as their past writing experiences before they join university. This knowledge seems to be the result of formal academic writing instruction or teaching. In this respect, most participants do not seem to resist the writing conventions since they help them write effectively and clearly as Meryam stated. Well-structured argument essays reflect participants’ structured and clear reasoning and logic which in turn reflect the development of their critical thinking skills. Structured writing is a key feature of good writing. Therefore, many students are willing to follow these steps to write as

they believe they help them organize their thoughts and increase their effectiveness of writing. This organization of ideas results of following several steps or sub-processes like planning, outlining, drafting and revising. To them, being a good writer means to be able to perform these tasks and processes successfully in order to write a final draft or essay.

However, some students prefer to write in their own way by skipping planning or outlining, and use freewriting instead of brainstorming, or structure their thoughts while drafting to gain time as they believe planning or outlining can be time consuming.

Q2. How would you define good writing?

This question aims at giving the participants an opportunity to reflect on their understanding of “good writing”. Because participants perceive writing differently as was discussed earlier, they also perceive “good writing” differently as it will be discussed in this section.

4.1.2. Students’ Perceptions of Good Writing

Students used many adjectives to describe good writing and thus the good writer. The latter reflect their perceptions and knowledge of writing that stem from their academic writing learning experiences. Those qualities are summarized as follows:

4.1.2.1. Linguistic Aspects

Some students believe that good writing is the one that demonstrates a good mastery of language. By this, they mean correctness or accuracy that is the result of the good use of grammar. Texts containing many grammatical mistakes are not good texts according to students who tend to think that mistakes are “crimes that students should not commit when writing”. The good writer for those students is the person who “... masters language and grammar”. He is also able to write “organized,

coherent and clear texts.” He should also have “selective vocabulary.” And has “good language.” and “rich vocabulary.” He is also “aware of his words and knows a lot about language”. For example, **Wahiba** stated that: “ Good writing means we have to know many things about grammar (tenses, punctuation)”. In addition, **Hadjer** shared the same vision saying: “Good writing is ... no grammar mistakes”. **Sarah** , in her turn, stated that: “Good writing is to write without mistakes”.

This strong rejection of mistakes reflects students’ conceptions of good writing and, at the same time, the values and beliefs of the writing instruction and the teachers of writing as sometimes students get these values from the way teachers teach and evaluate their writing. Mistake free texts are unrealistic and hard to achieve for both teachers and students because writing is a messy and complicated process where ideas get clearer with writing itself and one cannot get this done from the first shot but after writing many drafts and improve them via revision and editing.

However, in practice, both teacher and students seem obsessed by avoiding mistakes and aim at writing mistake-free texts, which makes writing even harder than it is and causes students to suffer from writing block as they get stuck starting writing simply because they often set the bar very high. Thus, language is a major obstacle to writing , as well as an important tool.

The second linguistic feature of “good writing” is related to vocabulary. Because ideas are often expressed through words, vocabulary seems vital for good writing according to many students. Therefore, self-expression which is a key function of writing cannot take place without vocabulary. For example, **Chiraz** stated that: “Good writing is knowing all things about writing skills. And having a rich vocabulary”. In the same vein, **Fouzia** stated: “Good writing means that you can express yourself and that you have a great vocabulary”. Finally, **Fatima** confirmed the importance of vocabulary saying: “ Good writing is being able to write about anything, being able to express yourself on paper, being cultivated in

all domains of life, plus having a huge store of vocabulary”. Fatima emphasized the number of words students should know so they can express themselves effectively in writing. The lack of vocabulary was often related to students’ struggle to start writing or “writing block” which was mentioned as an important difficulty for students. This is what **Celia** stated: “Good writing is to be able to write and respect the structure, the content, the spelling and to be able to use strong vocabulary, convince people, influence them by ideas and transmit a message through a piece of writing”.

According to students’ responses, vocabulary is vital because it helps them express themselves and get their ideas written down, but it is also important as a tool for reflection as it helps students think clearly and generate ideas. In addition, to write argument essays, students are not only required to think but to think critically as well. This criticality is built and manifested through language. This implies that students should select the best arguments and then present them in a logical way to convince the reader of their logical thinking. A text that confuses the reader because it is not logically developed makes reading the text difficult, interrupts the reader’s comprehension of the text, or causes the reader to give up reading the text altogether.

4.1.2.2. Creative and Ethical Aspects

Creativity is another criterion for good writing, according to some participants. Writing is a way of creating something out of language. It is a way of presenting familiar experiences in an unfamiliar and strange way. This quality is appreciated by some students who link it to good writing.

This creativity attracts the reader's attention and raises their interest in reading the text and eventually may help the writer influence the reader and convince them too. This is why some students like Yazid and Assia described the good writer as “an artist, philosopher, and a good teacher” who is able to use language creatively to impress and entertain the reader and teach them something

important about a given topic. **Yazid** stated: “ A good writer is a brilliant speaker, thinker and transmitter, has a great ideas, and personal spot towards your written dorm to attract people’s attention”. **Hadjer** also mentioned creativity saying: “Good writing is to be in high level of creativity, having best vocabulary, no grammar mistakes”. Creativity often leads to productivity and professionalism , which in turn, are related to the quality of writing. **Hana** stated: “Good writing for me is a writer professional who really knows how to be creative and productive”.

According to students, this creativity also requires the writer to use imagination to think differently and create his own style that becomes a signature that differs them from other writers because he has “an artistic style”. This imagination makes the writer “a source of inspiration” for the reader as some students put it. Some went further saying that the good writer “... has something interesting and beneficial to say.”

Some students were more pragmatic and realistic as they described good writing as “ the ability to write.” They also said that the writer should be “able to express ideas easily”. The writer also should be able to “tackle issues and produce texts.” Here writing is mainly a communicative process that allows the writer to get his message across. Thus, writing is functional as it allows the writer to achieve his aim or get a task done. In addition, he should have a “mastering of writing convention”.

In order to affect readers positively, writers should have some ethics like honesty, trustworthiness and responsibility. Participants described the “good writer” as someone who is honest, open-minded, tolerant, flexible and trustworthy. Consequently, good writers are expected to be compassionate toward the issues of their communities and address them objectively in their writing. This implies that they are not biased, incompetent or lack knowledge about specific issues. Ethical writers therefore, do not plagiarize, acknowledge other writers’ ideas, and have their own style of writing.

Ethical aspects in writing refer to the moral principles and values that writers should adhere to in order to have a positive impact on their readers.

Honesty is an essential ethical aspect, as writers should provide accurate information and represent facts truthfully. They should avoid exaggerations or distortions that can mislead or deceive readers. By being honest in their writing, writers establish trust with their audience.

Trustworthiness is closely tied to honesty. Readers rely on writers to provide reliable and credible information. A trustworthy writer is someone who has a reputation for being dependable and accurate in their work. They back up their claims with evidence and sources, ensuring that readers can trust the information presented.

Responsibility is another important ethical aspect. Writers have a responsibility to consider the potential consequences of their words and actions. They should be aware of their influence on readers and strive to promote thoughtful and constructive discussions. Responsible writers address social and cultural issues with empathy and avoid contributing to harmful narratives or stereotypes.

Being open-minded and tolerant seem essential ethical aspects for writers. A good writer should be receptive to different perspectives and respect diverse opinions. They should be willing to engage with ideas and viewpoints that may be different from their own, fostering an environment of inclusivity and understanding.

Flexibility is crucial for writers as well. It involves adapting to new information or changing circumstances. Good writers are open to revising their work in light of new evidence or feedback, making adjustments to improve the accuracy or clarity of their writing.

Avoiding biases and incompetence is vital in ethical writing. Writers should strive to present a balanced and unbiased perspective on the topics they discuss. Being knowledgeable about the subject matter is crucial to ensure the accuracy and

credibility of the writing. Writers should take the time to research and understand the topics they write about, avoiding misinterpretations or misinformation.

Lastly, ethical writers do not engage in plagiarism. Plagiarism involves using someone else's work or ideas without giving proper credit. Ethical writers respect intellectual property rights and acknowledge the sources that have influenced their work. They develop their own unique writing style and voice, reflecting their individual creativity and contribution to the literary community.

Thus, those students are positive about writing conventions as they believe they help them write better and are an important feature of good writing. Expressing oneself is an essential and existential need to students. For them, writing is mainly about expressing their feelings, thoughts and thoughts. Thus, they write to reflect on their lives, problems, and experiences. Through writing, they try to understand their reality in order to change it towards the better.

As a result, writing becomes a journey of self-discovery and empowerment as it allows them to find solutions to their problems through reflection and then action. Another function of writing, according to students, is that it links them to the world and helps them get out of their isolation as individuals who don't always have access to help and support in their immediate environment or do not find available and trustworthy people who can listen to them and help them solve their problems.

In other words, writing allows "distressed" students to create an alternative universe where they have more possibilities to dream, reflect, plan, and grow as individuals. This shows again the psychological functions of language and writing. Thus, understanding the students' psychology of writing could allow me to understand who the students are through how they write and what they write about. This idea is emphasized in the literature where there is a strong link between writers and writing. Thus, I believe that it is hard to me to understand how students write

without understanding how they see themselves as writers and why they do not see themselves as writers.

Finally, this understanding could provide me with important insights about participants' understandings and perceptions of writing in general and argument writing in particular. Therefore, the researcher decided to tackle the issue of writer identity for this reason despite the difficulty and challenges that this tricky and slippery concept poses to me as a researcher. In fact, I tried to avoid this concept before analysing the data but this issue appeared again in the data and thus I could not ignore it even if it would take my research in new directions, which makes it even more interesting to me. Creativity, productivity, trustworthiness, honesty and professionalism would eventually help students to develop their own writing style and becoming easily distinguished from other writers. This implies students' ownership of their texts and the recognition of "the self as writer" which is at the core of writer identity. **Youssra** expressed this idea saying: "Good writing is to be creative, having your special touch when you deal with a subject. Simply make yourself visible in a piece of writing".

Creativity and ethics are valuable, according to participants, because they allow writers to build trust with readers and thus can influence them positively as will be discussed in the next section.

4.1.2.3. Communicative Aspects

Because writing is considered by many students as a process of communication, good writing is meant to establish a connection, interaction, dialog and exchange between writers and readers via the text. The text then becomes a bridge between the two parts as co-writers and meaning makers. These communicative aspects are discussed in the following points:

(a) Ability to Influence or Impact the Reader Positively

The strong link between writing and reading re-emerges in the data as some participants believe that good writers are also "good readers". Being a good reader allows the writer to have an easy access to readers through language and be able to positively influence them. This also shows that writer identities cannot be built in isolation from the other "the reader" since the way we see ourselves as writers is also shaped by how we are seen by the readers of what we write. For example, an isolated writer who does not share his texts would always think that he is a great writer until he interacts with readers and shares his texts with them. Only at that moment, he can have a real and clear idea about his ability to write i.e., a real writer identity or identities. **Insaf** stated that: "Good writing means that you are able to express yourself, describe the world around you, narrate events, and convince people about a specific topic. It demands a person to have a critical thinking and to be open minded".

This means that writers cannot survive in isolation from readers whether they are real or imaginary and the interaction between them is vital for both. Some students said that the good writer is the one who "has an effect on readers." This effect can have different forms as explained below.

(b) Inspire the Reader: Helping Them Become Better Persons

Because the writer is presented as a teacher, philosopher and a source of inspiration by some students, readers can benefit from all these qualities when reading the texts written by the good writers. The learning process and exchange of ideas and experiences can only take place when readers interact with the text as they cannot always directly interact with the writers themselves because they are usually physically absent at this stage. Just as writers struggle in the physical absence of readers, readers also may struggle in the physical absence of writers.

Nevertheless, good writers make the struggle more manageable by writing clear texts that meet the readers' expectations and thus impact them in a positive way. For example, good writers can inspire the reader by provoking and challenging their thoughts, pushing them to rethink about them, assess them and then take actions. **Marya** stated: "Good writing is to know how to lead readers to think about what you wrote and to reach the audience's heart and mind with logic and good presentation of ideas". This positive impact is the result of the readers recognising the writer's identity by validating their skills and knowledge, which helps build a trust-based relationship between the writer and the reader and provides the conditions for this mutual learning and exchange of thoughts and experiences to take place. In the same vein, **Malika** described the good writing as : " ... a doctor who try to deal with the society problems into texts by giving advices". This role of the writer as a "social agent" or "change agent" is not possible if he/she does not feel a strong belonging to the community they represent, speak for and live it.

4.1.2.4. Aesthetic Aspects

Aesthetic aspects of texts are also appreciated and valued by the participants who consider the beauty of language and style as an important feature of good writers and texts. It is true that writing serves some practical or technical functions like getting a message across, but this does not mean that it is purely technical and does not allow room for the readers' to be entertained and their taste to be taken into account. Readers do not always read to grab a piece of information from a text and run away, therefore, they expect the writer to make the text beautiful, attractive and nice to read. Even if the aesthetic aspect of texts is not always a priority for readers, but it contributes to the success of the text as it facilitates and improve the quality of the reading experience.

For this reason, some participants mentioned this aspect by saying that good writers are able to produce, "marvellous and brilliant writing". They also have "an artistic style." This means that they "care for details and "know when to provide

details, are able to interpret images.” They also use “beautiful and attractive language.” This shows that writing is “a passion” for good writers and not a task only. Therefore, there is no way for good writers to fall into the trap of “plagiarism and imitation” as they have already developed their own writing style, which they are known for, and is part of their identity as writers. **Habiba** explained this aesthetic feature of language saying: “Good writing is the ability to express ideas, opinions, or issues by writing them in academic way with eloquence.”

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In the next question, the participants had to describe themselves as writers in English and evaluate their abilities and performance in English writing.

Q3. How would you rank yourself as a writer in English?

Very good Good Average Bad Very bad

Table 4.1.: *Students' Ranking Themselves as Writers*

Options	Very good	Good	Average	Bad	Very bad	No answer
Students' Number	01	06	31	03	01	00

Although as a teacher I would describe almost 30% of the class students as good writers (based on their first and second semester exam marks and daily writing performance), the majority of participants think that they are average writers. Only one student said she is a very good writer, six students claimed they are good writers, three said they are bad writers and one presented herself as a very bad writer. This clearly shows the considerable gap between how students see themselves as writers and how they are assessed by their teacher (s) of writing.

In addition, I believe no one is in a better position to judge students' writing skills, knowledge and experiences than students themselves since the teacher could only capture the external aspects of students' behaviours in relation to writing but not the real reasons behind these behaviours and the beliefs, perceptions and assumptions they stem from. This choice to ask students to self-assess their writing abilities was justified by the theoretical framework adopted to investigate the research topic and consequently analyse the collected data. Self-appraisal Theory is, I believe, the most appropriate option to capture, investigate and understand the psychological factors that determine how students develop as writers, construct their writer identity and approach their journey of writer identity construction in the academic context of higher education as well as EFL teacher education.

Q3. How often do you write in English?

In this question, the participants had to describe the frequency of their writing practice in English. This would elicit data on the extent to which participants engage in writing and invest time mastering this skill.

Table 4.2.: *Students' Frequency of Writing in English*

Frequency of writing in English	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Number of students	01	11	31	00

The table above shows that the majority of participants do not write regularly and this lack of practice was mentioned several times as a justification for students not seeing themselves as writers or judging themselves as poor or less competent writers. However, eleven students reported that they write often. Those students tend to have more positive attitudes towards their writing performance. One student only said that she writes always which is rare among students for reasons like the lack of motivation, time, lack of regular other readers or audience except from teachers and peers and holding some limiting beliefs that portrait writing as a hard skill to practice.

Q4. Do you write in languages other than English?

This question aims at finding out about participants' writing practice in other languages. This practice is supposed to help students develop their writing skill in English especially if the structure of these languages are similar as it is the case between French and English as claimed by studies on contrastive rhetoric.

Table 4.3.: *Students' Writing in Other Languages then English*

Answers	YES	NO
Students' Number	36	07

The majority of students write in other languages besides English. This shows that all of them are multilingual as master more than one language in addition to their mother tongue which is either Arabic or Tamazight. Yet, some of them prefer speaking rather than writing in these languages. This linguistic richness is a vital asset students bring to the writing experience that can contribute positively to their journey as writers.

Q5. If yes, say in which language.

In this question, the participants had to specify the language they write in other than English.

Table 4.4.: *Languages Students Write in Other than English*

Languages	Students' Number	Percentage
Arabic	10	23.80%
French	06	14.28%
German	01	2.38%
French + Arabic	09	21.42%
Spanish + Arabic	03	7.14%
German + Arabic	02	4.76%
French, German + Arabic	01	2.38%
French+ Dutch	01	2.38%
French+ German + Tamazight +Arabic	01	2.38%
No language other than English	08	19.04%
Total	42	100%

From the table above, it is clear that most participants are multilingual students who have learned at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (s) that is either Arabic or Tamazight (also known as Berber or both). Therefore, students come to university with a rich linguistic background as they are used to write in Arabic, French, Spanish, German and English.

This is also apparent in the language transfer students use in their writing especially from Arabic and French as they often think in these languages that they keep using at university for academic and personal purposes besides English. This point will be further discussed when analyzing students' argument essays.

Q6. What is the type of writing you find most difficult?

In this question, the participants had to describe the genre of writing they find most difficult.

Narrative Descriptive Exposition Argumentation None

Table 4.5.: *Students' Ranking Writing Difficulty based on Types of Essays*

Type of Essay	Number of Students	Percentage
Narration	10	23.80%
Description	03	7.14%
Exposition	13	30.95%
Argumentation	15	35.71%
Exposition and Argumentation	01	7.14%
None	01	7.14%
Total	42	100%

The table above shows that participants struggle with different types of essays as all of them can be difficult and this difficulty varies from one student to another. Yet, argument essay is the most difficult for 15 students compared to exposition that was reported as difficult by 13 students and narration by 10 students only.

Description seems to be the easiest genre as three students only believe it is difficult. One student claimed she does not find these types of essays difficult.

The difficulty in writing argument essays can be attributed to several factors. Crafting a persuasive and well-structured argument requires students to analyze and critically evaluate various perspectives, provide evidence, and effectively communicate their ideas. This type of essay necessitates the ability to form logical arguments, anticipate counterarguments, and articulate thoughts convincingly.

Exposition essays, while still challenging for some students, may require a different set of skills. In an exposition, students are expected to provide information or explain a concept without necessarily taking a specific stance or making a persuasive argument. This type of essay requires clarity, coherence, and the ability to present information in a logical and organized manner.

Narration essays involve telling a story or recounting personal experiences. While some students may find it relatively easier, others may struggle with structuring and developing a narrative effectively. Crafting engaging introductions, developing characters or events, and maintaining a coherent storyline can be challenging aspects of narrative writing.

Description essays, as indicated by the table, are considered less difficult by the majority of participants. This could be because description essays primarily involve detailing and illustrating a particular subject, object, or scene. While creativity and sensory language play a significant role in description, students may find it comparatively easier to focus on capturing the essence and vividly portraying their subject matter.

It is important to recognize and address the difficulties students face in different essay types. Providing targeted instruction, practice, and feedback specific to each essay type can help students improve their writing skills and overcome these challenges. Collaboration with educators and peers, as well as seeking guidance from writing resources, can also aid students in mastering various types of essays.

In the next question, the participants had to re-order four suggested criteria for good argumentation. This would elicit data on participants' perceptions of good argumentation and therefore good argument essay.

Q6. Here are some criteria of good argumentation. Re-order them according to their importance for you:

1. Taking a clear position
2. Using/ Selecting solid arguments
3. Using consistent/ logical development of ideas
4. Organizing the essay in an effective way

Table 4.6. : *Students' Ordering of Some Criteria of Good Argumentation*

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
1.2.3.4	10	23.80%
1.3.2.4	10	23.80%
1.3.4.2	08	19.04%
1.2.4.3	07	16.66%
3.1.2.4	02	4.76%
3.4.2.1	02	4.76%
1.4.3.2	01	2.38%
4.1.3.2	01	2.38%
4.1.2.3	01	2.38%
Total	42	100%

The table above clearly shows that students have different priorities when it comes to argument essay writing. Four students did not answer this question. The majority of them (35/42) who answered this question chose the suggested order. They believe it is vital to take a clear position as this informs the reader about the writer's position and results in clarity. Not taking a clear position might confuse the

reader and make reading hard and the process of convincing the reader. However, they differed in ordering the other aspects of argument essay.

It is important to note that without specific information from the table, we cannot provide further details regarding the different ordering preferences of the students. Each student may prioritize different aspects such as providing evidence, addressing counterarguments, organizing the structure, or effectively using persuasive language. These choices may be influenced by individual writing styles, personal preferences, or guidance received from instructors.

Understanding these different priorities can help educators tailor their instruction and support to better meet students' needs. By addressing the specific concerns or challenges students may have in different aspects of argument essay writing, educators can assist students in developing well-rounded and persuasive essays that effectively communicate their positions.

Ten of them, for example, chose the option number 2 that is selecting solid arguments focusing on the selection of argument and sixteen seem to value the consistent and logical development of these arguments; the way arguments are presented to the reader; the order of argument and finally three students chose organization as a priority.

The 10/42 students who chose the option of selecting solid arguments as their priority seem to consider choosing strong and compelling arguments to be crucial in constructing a persuasive essay. By selecting robust arguments, students aim to build a strong foundation for their claims and convince the reader of their viewpoint.

Sixteen students prioritize the consistent and logical development of arguments. This suggests that they value the progression and cohesiveness of their arguments throughout the essay. Students focusing on this aspect likely strive to

present their ideas in a logical order and ensure a smooth flow of thoughts. This can contribute to the overall effectiveness and readability of the essay.

Three students specifically chose organization as their priority. This indicates that they recognize the importance of structuring their arguments in a clear and organized manner. They may prioritize creating a well-organized essay with a clear introduction, body paragraphs that develop arguments effectively, and a conclusion that reinforces their main points.

It is interesting to observe the different priorities students have in writing argument essays. While the selection of solid arguments, the logical development of these arguments, and organization are all important aspects, the emphasis placed on each can vary. This variance reflects individual preferences and writing styles, as well as the guidance and instructions received from educators.

Q7. How would you define an argumentative essay?

In this question, the participants had to define argument essay. This aims at discovering how they perceive this type of essay or genre in order to understand the way they deal with argument writing as a process. Just as students perceive writing from different perspectives, they also perceive essay writing differently. Therefore, they gave different definitions for this type of essay.

4.1.3. Students' Understandings of Argument Essay

Some students see essay writing as a way to demonstrate their understanding of a topic or their ability to analyze and present information in a structured manner. For them, an essay is a formal piece of writing that requires clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. **Akila** said: "An argument essay is a set of paragraphs, introductory one, and at least two developing paragraphs in which you try to explain why you are for or against some things by giving arguments and concluding one". Also, **Fella** stated that : "An argument is a set of paragraphs in which the writer tries to convince or defend his point of view using arguments".

Others students view essay writing as an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas on a given topic. They see it as a chance to showcase their creativity and personal perspective on a subject. For these students, an essay is a form of self-expression and a way to convey their unique voice to the reader.

There are also students who perceive essay writing as a means to argue or persuade the reader about a particular viewpoint. They approach it as a persuasive piece of writing, aiming to convince the reader of their argument or position. To them, an essay is a tool to present evidence, counterarguments, and logical reasoning to support their claims.

Additionally, some students view essay writing as a means of practicing and improving their writing skills. They see it as a way to enhance their language proficiency, grammar, and overall writing abilities. These students often focus on the technical aspects of essay writing, such as sentence structure, vocabulary usage, and grammar rules.

Overall, the perception of essay writing varies among students, influenced by their personal experiences, educational background, and individual preferences. It is important to acknowledge these diverse perspectives to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students to develop their essay writing skills.

Indeed, the data obtained from the students' questionnaire can reveal the varying perceptions of essay writing based on their understanding of academic writing. By analyzing the definitions provided by participants, it becomes apparent that their comprehension and experience with academic writing play a significant role in shaping their perception of essay writing.

For instance, students who have a strong understanding of academic writing have provided definitions that emphasize the importance of structure, logical organization, and the inclusion of evidence and citations. Their definitions align

with traditional academic expectations and focus on the formal aspects of essay writing.

On the other hand, students who are less familiar with academic writing or have had limited exposure to it have provided definitions that reflect a more personal and less formal approach. Their definitions may focus on self-expression, creativity, and the ability to convey ideas rather than conforming to scholarly conventions.

The diversity in definitions provided by the participants indicates that their perception of essay writing is influenced by their individual experiences, educational background, and exposure to academic writing. Understanding these different perspectives can be helpful for educators in tailoring their instruction on essay writing to address the specific needs and expectations of their students.

Moreover, acknowledging and discussing these varying perceptions can create a platform for students to learn from one another and broaden their understanding of essay writing. It can foster a collaborative learning environment where students can exchange ideas, challenge assumptions, and develop a more holistic view of essay writing.

By taking into account the different definitions provided by students, educators can better address their needs and provide them with the necessary support and guidance to excel in essay writing.

4.1.3.1. Argument Essay is about a Controversial Topic and a Clear Writer Position:

Some students defined argument essay as the type of essay that discusses a controversial topic or issue. For example, **Radia** said: "argument essay is an essay where we find two contradictory topics we take a clear position defending our opinion and given arguments in order to persuade the reader". In the same line

Fouzia said: “ that's it's a type of writing in which we should take a position for or against them give a solid arguments in order to convince the reader”.

These students' definitions of an argument essay highlight the perception that this type of essay revolves around a controversial topic or issue. They emphasize the importance of taking a clear position and providing persuasive arguments to convince the reader.

The students' statement that an argument essay requires them to defend their opinion with well-supported arguments suggests that they see it as a persuasive piece of writing. This aligns with the understanding that argument essays aim to persuade the reader by presenting compelling evidence and logical reasoning.

The mention of two contradictory topics in the first student's definition indicates an awareness of the need to acknowledge opposing viewpoints in an argument essay. This reflects an understanding that presenting counterarguments and refuting them is an integral part of constructing a solid argument.

These students' definitions also imply that an argument essay should have a well-defined structure, although they may not explicitly mention it. They recognize the necessity of taking a clear position and organizing their arguments effectively in order to persuade the reader.

It is worth noting that these specific definitions provided by the students may not capture the entire range of perceptions about argument essays. However, they offer valuable insights into how some students perceive this type of essay as a platform to express their opinions, engage in debate, and persuade readers based on solid arguments.

Likewise, **Chiraz** claimed that: "argument essay is to take a position about subject for again and against and given the different position in details and at the end our opinion". **Chahrazed** also said:” it concerns with two opinions this opinions are totally different the first opinion has a point of view which is different

from the second one”. According to the definitions provided by these students, argument essay has to tackle or discuss a controversial issue that implies two opposing opinions or positions about that issue. Therefore, the writer’s main task in this type of essay is to try to take a clear position and then convince the reader that this position is valid, relevant and logical.

The definitions provided by Chiraz and Chahrazed further reinforce the idea that an argument essay involves a controversial issue and requires the writer to explore and present different positions or opinions on that issue. These students recognize that an argument essay involves discussing opposing viewpoints and presenting them in detail.

4.1.3.2. Argument Essay Aims at Convincing the Reader Using Solid Arguments

Presenting solid arguments is vital in the argument essay because this is the only way to convince the reader. For example, **Sofia** claimed that: “ an argument essay is the one in which we talk about the specific topic that we agree with or not and given arguments defending our position from this issue or problem”. Similarly, **Lyna** said that :“argument essay is a type of text or essays in which we defend a point of view or an opinion by using arguments, examples and trying to convince the reader”. **Leila** ,in her turn, explained that: “ This type of essay discusses a special issue where the rides are tries to bring different arguments in order to convince the reader about his own opinion”.

The definitions provided by Sofia, Samira, and Leila reinforce the understanding that an argument essay aims to convince the reader through the use of solid arguments. These students recognize the importance of presenting evidence and logical reasoning to support their position.

The students' statements highlight that an argument essay involves discussing a specific topic or issue, and it requires the writer to take a position and defend it using arguments. They understand that simply stating an opinion is not

sufficient; convincing the reader requires providing persuasive arguments, examples, and evidence.

The mention of trying to convince the reader reflects the persuasive nature of an argument essay. These students are aware that the goal is not just to express their viewpoint, but to make a compelling case that persuades the reader to share their perspective.

This implies that arguments are vital in the process of convincing the reader that the writer's position is valid. Rania said that it is a piece of writing in which two different opinions are being debated. According to **Hana**, an argument means: "... taking a position from the two sides select your ideas that have to be logical support your ideas and opinions with strong arguments and organize them". Therefore, this process of organizing and presenting solid arguments is directly linked to critical thinking. In the same way, **Nayla** commented: "it is an essay that defends a point of view using strong arguments example statistics, its aim is to convince the reader and push him to rethink about his ideas". The students think that the reader can change the reader's opinion about the topic through good argumentation.

The definitions provided by Rania, Hana, and Nayla emphasize the importance of solid arguments in convincing the reader of the validity of the writer's position. These students recognize that the process of presenting persuasive arguments is closely linked to critical thinking.

The connection between organizing and presenting solid arguments and critical thinking is evident. Critical thinking involves analyzing information, evaluating arguments, and making reasoned judgments. By engaging in critical thinking, students can identify the most compelling arguments and present them effectively in their essays. Besides, the recognition of the role of good argumentation in changing the reader's opinion highlights the transformative power of well-constructed arguments. This understanding reflects the students' awareness

that effective persuasion involves presenting strong evidence, examples, and statistics to encourage readers to rethink their beliefs.

Overall, these students' definitions emphasize the significance of solid arguments and critical thinking in convincing the reader of the validity of the writer's position. They recognize that a well-organized and well-supported argument has the potential to sway the reader's opinion on the topic.

4.1.3.3. Argument Essay Has a Specific Structure

In terms of essay structure, **Salima** stated that : “ An argument essay is a group of paragraphs, and each paragraph can deal with one argument in order to make the reader clearly understand the topic”. This usually refers to the five-paragraph essay widely used in academic writing. The student is concerned by the way arguments are organized in the essay.

Salima’s perspective on the structure of an argument essay aligns with the traditional approach commonly known as the five-paragraph essay. This approach involves organizing the essay into an introduction, three body paragraphs (each presenting a different argument), and a conclusion.

The student's mention of grouping paragraphs and assigning each one to a specific argument suggests an understanding of the need for organization and clarity in presenting arguments. This reflects an awareness that structuring the essay in this way helps the reader to grasp the topic and follow the development of the arguments.

The use of the five-paragraph essay structure is widespread in academic writing, particularly for introductory essays. It provides a clear framework for students to follow and ensures that each main argument is presented in a separate paragraph, contributing to the overall coherence and organization of the essay.

However, it is important to note that while the five-paragraph structure is a commonly used approach, there is flexibility in how an argument essay can be

structured. Some essays may require more than three body paragraphs to fully explore and support multiple arguments, while others may employ alternative organizational frameworks.

Moreover, as students progress in their learning process, they may encounter more complex essay structures that involve additional sections, such as counterarguments or refutations. These structures allow for a more nuanced and comprehensive presentation of arguments.

Ultimately, Salima's recognition of the need for structuring paragraphs around individual arguments in an argument essay demonstrates an understanding of the importance of organization and clarity in effectively presenting arguments to the reader. This also shows the link between logic, critical thinking and structure in this type of essay.

4.1.3.4. Arguments Should be Developed Using Relevant Details

Marya is more concerned by the details that should be used to develop arguments. She said that: "An argument essay is an essay that gives an opinion or fact and try to prove it by giving examples and explanations that help the writer to convince the reader and make him seem logical and to the audience". Therefore, according to her, this type of essay is based on logic as a tool to convince the reader. Because argument should be strong the strength depends on the details used to develop them. Strong arguments rely on solid and relevant details that make sense to the reader. These details rely result from the writer's knowledge about the topic . **Fatima** explained : "An argument essay is an essay in which you use your previous knowledge to develop ideas by which you try to convince the reader of the rightness of your opinion and arguments".

Marya's perspective highlights the significance of using relevant details to develop arguments in an argument essay. The student recognizes that providing examples and explanations is crucial in convincing the reader and making the argument appear logical and persuasive. This requires the use of logic as a tool to

convince the reader and links to the idea that strong arguments rely on solid and relevant details. By incorporating relevant and compelling evidence, the writer can make their argument more convincing and coherent.

Fatima reinforces this idea by stating that an argument essay requires using previous knowledge to develop ideas and convince the reader. This suggests that drawing on prior knowledge, research, and understanding of the topic helps in presenting well-informed and compelling arguments.

Overall, the respondents' perspectives reflect their understanding that using relevant details, examples, and explanations is essential in developing arguments in an argument essay. By providing strong and well-supported details, the writer can effectively convince the reader and make their argument more logical and persuasive.

4.1.3.5. Defending the Writer's Position, Opinions and Beliefs

Argument essay is also built on the writer's opinions and beliefs. For example, according to **Yacine**, “ an argument essay is an essay in which we defend or reject an opinion that we believe in it”. Therefore, the writer believes and is convinced that their own opinion is valid otherwise it is hard to defend it if they are not sure about their position and opinion. On the other hand, **Meriem** said that: “ an argument essay means to support a topic and defend my position is a strong arguments , illustrated examples, real statistics to convince the reader and to persuade them that I am right. In the same vein , **Insaf** stated that: "an argument essay is an idea you bring in order to support your position and strengthen it and make it stronger". **Soumia** said that: “it is in fact it is a process of reasoning that we use to defend our opinion and convince the reader”.

These perspectives indicate the writer's opinions and beliefs play a crucial role in constructing an argument essay. The writer must genuinely believe in the validity of their own opinion in order to effectively defend it. Without this

conviction, it would be difficult for the writer to present strong arguments and persuade the reader.

Furthermore, the use of real statistics and illustrated examples helps to bolster the writer's position and make it more persuasive. This concrete evidence and factual data provide substance to the argument and strengthen the writer's case.

In essence, an argument essay is not simply a regurgitation of facts, but rather an intellectual exercise in reasoning and persuasion. The writer uses their own beliefs and opinions, along with evidence and logical thinking, to defend their position and convince the reader. It is a process of presenting a well-reasoned and well-supported argument to solidify the writer's viewpoint.

As noted earlier, there is a strong link between argumentation, critical thinking, reasoning and logic. The process of writing a text reflects the way the writer thinks about the topic as well as their previous knowledge and experience with it. This is why students mention that topic familiarity is vital in the process of writing an argument essay. From the students' responses and definitions, it is clear that they have acquired a good knowledge of arguments writing. This knowledge seems to reflect the discourse of academic writing as it is taught in the writing classroom. Consequently, their responses demonstrate how their perceptions of argument writing is shaped by their learning process and writing experience that result from their interaction with the academic writing community and its members mainly teachers and peers.

Q8. According to you, what is an argument?

This question aims at inviting and encouraging respondents to reflect and share their knowledge of the argument essay as a common, popular and important genre in academic writing.

4.1.4. Students' Understandings of Argument

The participants described argument as an idea, thought, statement, opinion, position, proof, evidence that is logical and clear. Each idea reflects the writer's position and opinion and requires solid arguments to be developed and discussed in order to convince the reader as this is the main aim of the argument essay. However, they had different views on the function of an argument within an argument essay. This can be attributed to individual interpretations and experiences with academic writing. These views are presented in the next sub-sections.

4.1.4.1. Students' Understanding of Argument as an Idea or Thought

Fatima thinks that an argument :“... is an idea in which you develop information about a certain topic to try to prove yourself right”. In addition, **Yacine** stated that: “... it is a personal or logical idea that is related directly to our point of view in a way that is serves to persuade other and adopt this viewpoint”. **Meriem** also stated that : “ ... an argument is an idea or thought that should be convinced in fact we use argument to persuade my point of view towards something”. Similarly, **Insaf** said: “ I think that it is an idea you bring in order to support your position, and to strengthen it , and make it stronger”. Finally, **Lyna** said: “ it is a strong idea that help you to show your opinion and defend your opinion to convince the reader”.

The perspectives shared by the students highlight the concept of an argument as an idea or thought that supports and strengthens one's position. It is an idea that is developed by gathering and presenting information about a specific topic in order to prove oneself right or convince others of a particular viewpoint. The idea forms a personal or logical connection to the writer's point of view and serves to persuade others to adopt that perspective.

This understanding aligns with the idea that an argument in academic writing involves the development of a cohesive and well-supported idea that serves to persuade and convince others of a particular viewpoint. The students recognize that

an argument is more than just a mere statement, but a thought or idea that is substantiated and presented persuasively to effectively convey one's opinion.

4.1.4.2. Students' Understanding of Argument as a Proof

First of all, **Marya** described an argument as : “ a sort of proof of your ideas or the subject (topic). It is a sentence that explains the reason the writer thinks his idea or statement is correct and logical”. This description aligns with the idea that an argument is a statement or idea presented by the writer to support their position or viewpoint. It encompasses providing evidence, logical reasoning, and persuasive elements to convince others of the validity and correctness of that perspective. In essence, an argument is a means to persuade others by presenting strong points and supporting evidence.

4.1.4.3. Students' Understanding of Argument as Logic

Another perspective on an argument presented by some students described it as “a logical idea or reasoning”. For example, **Yacine** stated: “It is a personal or logical idea that is related directly to our point of view in a way that it serves to persuade others to adopt this viewpoint”. This aligns with the understanding that an argument involves presenting a sequence of logical steps or ideas to support a particular viewpoint. The logic in an argument refers to the cohesive and rational connections between the premises and the conclusion. The goal is to demonstrate that the reasoning is sound and that the conclusion logically follows from the evidence and premises presented. By emphasizing the importance of logic in an argument, the students highlight the need for coherence and rationality in constructing a persuasive case. For example, **Meryam** said that : “ An argument is a sort of proof of your ideas or the subject (topic). It is a sentence that explains the reason the writer thinks his idea or statement is correct and logical”.

4.1.4.4. Students' Understanding of Argument as a Fact

Soraya thinks that an argument is : “ ... a fact that is used to support your point of you and it enables you to convince the audience about your position”. **Sarah** believes that: “... it is a very strong factor of course by which we defend a thesis statement joining by examples”. This perspective suggests that an argument can also be seen as a fact that supports and reinforces one's point of view. Some students highlight the importance of using strong and compelling factual information to convince the audience about their opinions.

According to the participants, the inclusion of facts in an argument helps to establish a solid foundation and provides a basis for logical reasoning. By presenting verifiable information, the writer can back up their claims and make their argument more persuasive. This understanding highlights the essential role of factual evidence in constructing convincing arguments in academic writing.

4.1.4.5. Students' Understanding of Argument as Subjective and Persuasive Statement

Chiraz said: “... it is maybe an opinion a general truth which is used by the writer to demonstrate his idea and let the reader believe of what we think”.

The perspective expressed by Chiraz implies that an argument can be seen as a strong persuasive point of view or an opinion that is presented by the writer. This view emphasizes that an argument is not just a statement of fact, but a subjective perspective or belief that the writer wants to convey to the reader.

This understanding highlights the subjective and persuasive nature of arguments in academic writing. It signifies that an argument is not merely a neutral presentation of information, but a strong and assertive point of view that the writer wants to persuade others to accept.

4.1.4.6. Students' Understanding of Argument as a Reason to Support Writer's Position or Opinion

Halima thinks that an argument "... is "to give a reason why you are for or against". In the same vein, **Ilham** understands that: "... argumentation is given reasons and fact about why you think that your opinion is right". Also **Soumia** sees it as " a fact or a process of reasoning that we use to defend our position and to convince the reader".

The perspectives shared by these students highlight the idea that an argument serves as a reason or justification for the writer's position or opinion. They emphasize that an argument involves providing reasons, facts, and logical reasoning to support why the writer believes their opinion is correct or valid.

Q9. How often do you write argumentation?

In this question, the participants had to describe the frequency of argument writing to find out how often they practice this specific genre in and outside the classroom.

Table 4.7.: *Students' Frequency of Argument Essay Writing*

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
Always	01	2.38%
Often	09	21.42%
Sometimes	32	76.19%
Never	00	00%
No answer	00	00%
Total	42	100%

According to the table above, the majority of participants (32/42) write argument essays sometimes. This means that they do not practice this type of essay regularly even though it is one of the most important types of essays in their academic setting. Many of them mentioned that they would like to write argument essays more often. However, 9/42 stated that they often write this type of essay whereas only one student said that she always writes argument essays. The frequency of essay writing is likely to have an impact on students' confidence as writers and thus their perceptions of writer identity. The more students write, the more positive attitudes they have about writing and their potential as writers as the saying goes, "practice makes perfect".

Because the majority of participants do not practice writing argument essays regularly, despite it being an important type of essay in their academic setting, this suggests a potential gap in their essay writing practice and opportunities for improvement. The desire expressed by many participants to write argument essays more often indicates their recognition of the importance and potential benefits of practicing this type of writing. Writing argument essays regularly can help students develop their skills in presenting logical arguments, supporting their positions with evidence, and persuading readers effectively. The contrast in the frequency of argument essay writing between participants who do it often and those who do it less frequently may also reflect differences in confidence and perceptions of writer identity. Writing more frequently can contribute to a greater sense of competence and a more positive attitude towards writing. Regular practice allows students to refine their writing skills, become more comfortable with the genre, and develop a stronger writer identity, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Overall, the findings suggest that increasing the frequency of argument essay writing among students may have a positive impact on their confidence as writers and their attitudes towards writing. Providing more opportunities for students to practice this type of writing can enhance their skills, facilitate their development as writers, and foster a positive outlook towards writing as a whole.

Q10. Do you think that it is difficult to write argumentation?

In this question, the participants had to describe their perceptions of argumentation difficulty.

Table 4.8. : *Students' Opinions of Argument Writing Difficulty*

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
Yes	15	35.71%
No	23	54.76%
In between	01	2.38%
No answer	03	7.14%
Total	42	100%

Most students (23/42) claimed that writing argumentation or argument essays is not difficult. However, 15 reported finding it difficult and one student said it is in between; neither easy nor difficult. Three students did not answer this question. It is worth mentioning that some “good” writers admit that argumentation is hard though they write quite good essays in daily classroom practice, homework and the exam.

The perception of difficulty in writing argument essays can stem from various factors. It may involve challenges in organizing and structuring arguments effectively, developing persuasive reasoning, or finding and integrating supporting evidence. Additionally, the expectations and criteria for argument essays in academic settings can contribute to the perceived difficulty.

Q11. If yes, why? Give reasons.

In this question, the participants had to justify their opinions of argument writing difficulty.

Table 4.9.: *Students' Justification of Argument Writing Difficulty*

Students' Difficulties	Number of students	Percentage
Convincing the readers	16	38.09 %
Developing arguments	12	28.57 %
Generating ideas	07	16.66 %
Organizing arguments	03	7.14 %
Analyzing information	03	7.14 %
No answer	01	2.38 %
Total	42	100 %

As the table below shows, the majority of students did not answer this question and provided no details and one student said that she does not know why she finds argumentation easy to write. The remaining answered were thematically analyzed and the main reasons behind argumentation difficulties have been coded to obtain some themes that are presented as follows:

According to the table below, many students (16/42) believe that convincing the reader is the most challenging objective of argument writing. The second most challenging aspect of this type of essay is developing arguments (12/42) especially when the students are not familiar with the topic. Then, in the third position, 07/42 participants mentioned generating ideas ,which means that students struggle to start the writing process as it requires a lot of planning and decisions they should take based on the position they take in relation to the topic. Analyzing information and organizing arguments seem to be equally difficult and were mentioned by three students each. Finally, one student did not answer this question.

Q12. According to you, what makes a good argumentative essay?

- 1.Strong arguments
- 2.Effective ordering of arguments (organization)
- 3.Convincing examples (details)
- 4.Logical division of ideas (critical thinking)

In the this question, the participants had to describe what makes a good argument essay by choosing some suggested features. This allowed getting insights on participants' perceptions and understandings of good argument writing based on their writing experiences.

Table 4.10.: *Students' Criteria of Good Argument Essays*

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
Logical division of ideas (critical thinking)	12	28.57 %
Convincing examples (details)	10	23.80 %
Strong arguments	10	23.80 %
Effective ordering of arguments	08	19.04 %
No answer	02	4.76 %
Total	42	100 %

According to the table above, the majority of students (12/42) reported that logical division of ideas is required in argument essays. In addition, ten students claimed that good argument essays should include strong arguments and then of them mentioned convincing examples or details. Eight students believe that the effective ordering of arguments is also important as it has to do with the essay structure and part of the logic needed to generate arguments. Two students did not answer this question.

In the next question, the participants had to describe the logic behind ordering their arguments.

Q13. What is the order of arguments you use when writing the argumentative genre (essay)? Circle A, B or C. (Adapted from Reid 1982)

A: First Structure

- I. Introduction (thesis)
- II. Weakest argument that supports your opinion
- III. Stronger argument that supports your opinion
- IV. Strongest argument that supports your opinion
- V. Counterarguments and refutation
- VI. Conclusion

B: Second Structure

- I. Introduction (thesis)
- II. Counterarguments and refutation
- III./ IV. Arguments that support your opinion, arranged from least important to most important point or vice versa
- VI. Conclusion

C: Third structure

- I. Introduction (theses)
- II. Counterargument 1 and argument to refute it
- III. Counterargument 2 and argument to refute it
- IV. Counterargument 3 and argument to refute it
- V. Strongest argument that supports your opinion
- VI. Conclusion (Order A, B, and C are adapted from Reid. J. M., 1982, p. 102)

Table 4.11.: *Ways Students Use to Structure their Argument Essays*

Options	Number of Students	Percentage
Order A	08	19.04%
Order B	20	47.61%
Order C	13	30.95%
Order A+C	01	2.38%
No answer	00	00%
Total	42	100%

According to the analysis of students' argument essays, they used either block or point by point organization to structure their essays. In block organization, students gather a number of arguments based on a given logic usually the position to the topic (for or against) or point -by- point organization where they give priority to arguments versus counter-arguments of both positions together (for and against smoking in public spaces, for example). However, in this question, students are required to choose the structure they used to present their arguments based on their important whether they choose to structure their essays using block or chain or point-by- point organization. The three suggested structures where adapted from Reid (1982).

The table above shows that students believe that taking a clear position on the topic and putting this clearly in the thesis statement is their first priority, then presenting most important counter-arguments based on the position taken by the student writer and refuting them by showing logical weaknesses and providing

better alternatives also called counter-arguments which are in this case writer's arguments presented or arranged from the least to the most important or vice versa. This option often leads to block organization as the writer's arguments are put in a separate block after presenting, discussing and refuting the opposing view arguments.

It seems that this structure (block organization) is easier for students to manage as it results in better clarity and less confusion for writers unlike the point-by-point organization which is based on a mixture of arguments and counter-arguments that require more focus on the part of the writer so that the reader can follow the logic and does not end up confused.

Q14. Can you apply/ use all that you know about argumentation in writing an argumentative essay?

In this question, the participants had to explain whether they can apply their knowledge of argument writing in practice or not.

Table 4.12.: *Students' Ability to Apply their Knowledge of Argument Writing*

Answers	Yes	No	Not all of them	No answer
Number of students	10	31	01	00

The table above shows that the majority of participants (31/42) admitted that they are unable to apply all their knowledge of argument writing into their writing process. Ten students only reported that they do apply their knowledge of argument writing without any problems. Finally, one student said that she can only apply some of her knowledge and not all of it.

Q15. If no, what are the aspects that you find difficult to apply?

In this question, the participants had to describe the aspects of argument writing they find difficult. This question would elicit useful data on participants' writing

difficulties in practice and the extent to which they can apply or transform their knowledge of argument writing into a text.

Although most students seem to have enough and good knowledge about writing and argument writing, this theoretical knowledge is not easily transformed into a clear and well written text as the act of writing implies many difficulties and thus students claimed not knowing how what they know can be used in writing. However, some students claimed they lack knowledge of specific aspects of argument essay writing such as structure, knowledge about structure and organization.

After presenting participants' answers to the questionnaire, the next section (4.2) deals with the analysis of their written accounts on writer identity.

4.2. Presentation and Analysis of Students' Written Accounts on Writer Identity Data

This section aims at presenting the data obtained from the students' written accounts on their writer identity. Students in this task were asked to think about and answer two questions: Do you consider yourself as a writer and why? This task aimed to collect data on how participants understand the concept of writer identity and how they see themselves as writers. The way (s) students define the concept of writer identity are presented as follows:

4.2.1. Participants' Perceptions and Understanding of Writer Identity

This section is based on participants' answers to the first question. It aims at finding out about students' understanding of the concept of writer identity. This understanding both reflects their knowledge and experience of academic writing and shapes the ways they see themselves as writers and thus the ways they perceive their own writer identity.

4.2.1.1. Expressing Themselves Clearly

Self-expression is a vital psychological motive for participants to write. This shows that improving their English by enlarging the vocabulary and mastering syntax is not the only reason students write. This is seen in the participants' claim that writing is more of a need rather than a task to be completed as some teachers of writing might expect. Writing is a complex process which serves a myriad of social, linguistic and psychological functions for the writer and self-expression seems to be one of them.

For example, **Akila** wrote:

“A writer is someone who expresses messages in an honest way and he follows strategies to build his ideas, has his own style, which goes at the same time levels with the readers. He is also the one who writes clear articles and texts or novels so that he can communicate with his followers in an indirect way and by paying attention to his style of writing and in using grammar and vocabulary , ect. No, I am not a writer since I find writing somehow difficult. I face some problems expressing my ideas. I prefer speaking rather than writing and this is the most important reason why I am a bad writer. I prefer to express my ideas orally and I feel lazy in writing. Speaking is more comfortable for me. My problem with writing is that I cannot write what's in my mind since I am a good speaker so I cannot be a good writer”.

Salima , in her turn, stated that: “Writing is a means of expressing ourselves, your ideas and position too”. She explained: “Writing is an important skill that helps us express our thoughts, ideas and emotions” . **Meriem** also commented: “Writing is copying down ideas, expressing feelings, emotions all what comes in our mind”. This means that they engage in writing to feel better, to feel secured, safe and reflect on their worries and fear in order to find solutions or just to understand what is going on in their heads and discover their deep psychology or psyche which helps them find out who they really are, what makes them happy or sad and how they can

handle these feeling through writing. This therapeutic function of writing becomes almost an “urge” when participants do not feel at ease sharing those internal conflicts with other people like parents or friends. Therefore, to those participants, writing is more than a task they should complete as part of the writing class routine so it is not only a task, activity or homework but it has become a habit, which they practice outside the classroom whenever it is possible.

Though participants were expected to reflect on their reality and be objective in the way they write for academic purposes, being subjective seemed inevitable. Writing in general is about the writer and the way he/she sees the world and interprets reality, experiences and events, and the “self”. This participant seems to believe that real and authentic writing is and should be personal. By personal she means revolving around her personal life, experiences, lived situations and knowledge. These personal aspects seem to be valued by many participants as an asset they bring to the writing process, a source of knowledge and content for writing as their ideas are often generated from these personal experiences.

These personal experiences represent the participants’ social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds that serve as a basis for their perceptions, beliefs and vision of the work. Therefore, what participants bring to the writing process is the backbone of their voice and therefore writer’s identities that make their writing style different from other students and people in their writing community. This point will be further discussed in chapter two. Some participants prefer to this asset as their personal touch, creating their own writing style and being different and unique.

This again shows the relationship between the self or who are the participants as individuals and their writer’s identities. Yet, some participants believe what they bring to the writing process is not valued enough by the teachers of writing who, according to them, are not interested in their ideas and opinions in the same way they are interested in their mastery of English and writing strategies which seems

to be frustrating and demotivating for some participants who sometimes consider this as “unfair”.

As a result, it should reflect who they are, what they like and dislike, how they think, see the world and interact with their reality and environment. The environment be it social, cultural and even political seems to be an important source of participants’ knowledge, experience and attitudes and beliefs as they claim in the questionnaire.

Another respondent, **Ikram** explained: “ For me to be a writer is this ability to transmit the very chaotic ideas and feelings you have in a simple way no matter if it is direct or not. The important thing is that the person who reads would be able comprehend the content. It is also the capacity to say what people couldn’t say because they were silenced or could not put it in words. It is a matter of transmission above all. I value consciousness, honesty and creativity in the writer and having commitment and engagement to serve a certain issue through writing this the most important criterion. The good writing style is not enough to call someone a writer. Yes and No, basically, it depends on how much I am involved in the issue”.

Many participants clearly state that writing is a very personal and intimate process. For example, **Ilham** stated “...writing is something personal. Educational writing is not writing because it’s not personal or resulted from a deep experience”. This means that, according to her , academic writing does not provide the same security or freedom so that they can open up and share their personal life and experience.

Thus, they seem to always have red lines to stop at, a distance or space of what can be said and shared with the reader and what cannot because it is personal. In addition, many participants believe that they often write for the teacher who is seen as an authority figure, a key reader and an examiner and therefore they do not feel at ease sharing all their personal experiences as they are afraid of being judged or misunderstood by the teacher or looking rude and disrespectful.

The teacher's expectations seem to shape and determine the extent to which participants can reveal about their personal experiences in writing. Students feel more at ease in personal writing maybe because it is less judgmental and more supportive or because student writers feel more in control and more engaged as writers.

4.2.1.2. Having Some Freedom in Writing

Freedom of self-expression seems to be another function or purpose for writing for the participants. Through writing, they can freely express their thoughts, feelings, and get some steam off. Thus, freedom is a vital condition of writing if it is to meet these existential needs. However, this freedom is often restricted by the academic writing rules, standards and expectations as represented by the teacher as a key reader and examiner of participants' writing.

Consequently, to many participants, academic writing limits the expression space available to them as it tells them how to write, what is relevant and right to do in academic writing and what is not and thus should be avoided. For example, academic writing and thus good writing should be accurate and sometimes mistake free. This puts more pressure on students as they should think about how to write instead of what to write about and therefore form and accuracy are perceived as more important than content and ideas.

Respondents see freedom differently. For example, some students have no problems with the teacher choosing the writing topics for them. They think that this saves them time and confusion as they find it hard choosing a topic on their own. Others students see this as a threat to their freedom and even to their identity as writers. Same with writing conventions. Some see them as guidelines for good writing and others see them as a burden and obstacles to their creativity, self-expression and ability to write. To them, real writers are not told what and how to write but have the freedom to choose and take their own decisions freely.

Students generally tend to perceive writing as a liberating activity in which they enjoy a great deal of freedom, and liberty expressing themselves. They also consider writing as an empowering skill since it equips them with the tools to exercise an essential need that is self-expression as it reinforces participants' sense of self and identity and allows them to show who they are in their texts.

Other students emphasized several times the idea of freedom in writing as a vital condition for them to write. For example, one student said, "Writing is a little difficult for me. It is expressing your ideas freely". Another student said, "Writing is one of the English skills. It helps the students to express themselves freely".

Ilham stated: "Writing is much amusing when you like the topic, because you use your vocabulary, test your grammar. Nevertheless, repulsive when compelled to write about specific topics. Its brain jailing".

Soraya said, "... I prefer free writing to feel free".

Meryam said: "Writing is much amusing when you like the topic, because you use your vocabulary, test your grammar. But repulsive when compelled to write about specific topics. Its brain jailing".

Soumia also stated: "To be a writer is to write frequently and freely, being able of writing without mistakes and having a good ideas. Knowing what to write and about what you're writing".

Therefore, some students do not like to share their texts and prefer to keep them personal.

4.2.1.3. Manifesting Themselves in the Text

Indeed, writing is strongly related to the writer and many students emphasized this idea by putting expressing or manifesting the “self” at the centre of the writing process. For example, **Soraya** said, “Writing is self-expression because when writing we show off potential what we have inside.” Unlike the students who focused on the mastery of language as the most important aspect of writing, those students referred to themselves, their ideas, opinions, thoughts, as if it is vital for them to be reflected in the text they write. This need for self-expression is clearly expressed by student who claims that: “Writing is copying down ideas, expressing feelings, emotions all what comes in our mind. It can be talking and discussing some events using my own style.”

4.2.1.4. Handling the Writing Process Effectively

Students seem aware of writing as a process as they mention some writing strategies used with each step of writing like brainstorming, free-writing, planning, drafting, revising and editing. Therefore, they know that writing is systematic and organized. **Insaf** said: “Writing is a process of jotting down ideas, opinions, and thoughts. It can help us improve our English”. **Wahiba** also stated :”Writing is an important skill that builds up your language learning, it is a way of self-expression in an effective way”. Students know that effective and successful writing has a purpose, logic, structure and these criteria are achieved in a systematic way following some steps or stages of the process of writing.

Thus, students described their writing process and the steps they go through in order to write the final draft of their texts. This reflects their knowledge and practice which also reflects the writing instruction/teaching. In this respect, the majority of participants do not seem to resist the writing conventions since these steps are part of how writing functions and thus part of the writing conventions. Many students are willing to follow these steps to write as they believe they help them organize their thoughts and increase their effectiveness of writing. Some

students described writing as a process that involves several steps or sub-processes like planning, outlining, drafting and revising. To them, being a good writer means to be able to perform these tasks and processes successfully in order to write a final draft/text. For example, **Akila** stated: “Writing is to write a set of sentences about a subject following some methods, organization and strategies”.

However, other students prefer to write in their own way by skipping the steps of planning or outlining, and embark on free-writing instead of brainstorming; also they do not structure their thoughts while drafting to gain time as they believe planning or outlining is time consuming; so they prefer to combine two steps in one. Hence, these participants resist following these steps or skip them altogether because they believe that some writing strategies are better and more effective than others. In other words, they prefer to write in their own way or apply the rules in their own way to feel more freedom or to gain more freedom and space in writing.

4.2.1.5. Structuring Texts Logically and Effectively

Writers are expected to produce texts and their performance whether good or bad is based on the quality of those texts; many participants referred to the notion of quality in their responses, both implicitly and explicitly. Quality seems to be associated to different aspects of the texts. One aspect is structure or organization that seems vital to many students as it contributes to the text meaning especially in argument essay.

Many participants described “good writers” as those who produce “well structured” texts. Structure is often linked to logic and critical thinking that is sometimes referred to as “common sense” especially that students write to convince the reader of their opinions and positions and the way arguments are developed and presented or organized is a required criterion of a good argument essay.

For example, **Assia** stated that: “To be a writer is to be able to produce a piece of writing which contains coherent ideas and relevant examples and you need

to master some skills like vocabulary and grammar. You need first to gather your ideas about a certain topic and then organize them to produce a paragraph or an essay. You need to have the imagination and the critical thinking to analyze the topic. Yes, I consider myself as a writer but not a competent one. Sometimes, I write small paragraphs (exams and writing session) but writing is not my favorite hobby and I don't write very often".

Lyna also mentioned organization: "Being a writer means that you are able to write in an organized way (representing the form of the paragraph, knowing the characteristics of an academic writing and applying them). It consists also of forming the ideas related to the topic, which are the results of what you've learnt previously. I think that someone who reads a lot is a good writer cus he has many information that enable him to tackle many subjects (topics). No, I don't think I'm a writer because I'm not able to discuss any topic given to me. Sometimes, I've only simple ideas which cannot make my writing attractive for the reader. I can manage the shape of the essay, but not the information because I don't read a lot".

Youcef also claimed that: "A writer is the one who can produce a valuable piece of writing by following specific steps in terms of organization and content. Yes, I do consider myself as a writer because studying English for four years in high school of teachers especially in writing module provided me with the knowledge and support that helped me a lot in this domain. Now, I don't write for the sake of writing. When I write, I have an aim and a guide to follow in my writing. My teachers' evaluation during my study inspired me a lot (second and third year). So, I learned a lot from my teachers' remarks".

4.2.1.6. Thinking Critically and Creatively

Writer identity is related to criticality as good writers are believed to be critical and free thinkers who tend not to follow the crowds but are rebellion thinkers who defend their opinions and positions even if they differ greatly from what the majority thinks. This is also what makes them trustworthy and reliable because

readers trust them as a source of knowledge and they believe they are experts about the topics they write about. This also applies to academic writing as criticality is a major asset of writer identity and is a tool which students use to manifest their identity in the text.

For example, **Ikram** stated : “ I don’t write for the sake of writing.” I should not follow what others think blindly”. Students also admit that convincing the reader is a hard task and therefore they should manifest critical thinking and the ability to analyse and think logically to manage to convince the reader especially when the latter is an expert in the field or knows more about the topic they write about. Thus writing becomes more challenging and demanding. This criticality also seems to relate to writer’s creativity as those writers who cannot think critically tend not to be creative.

Another example is **Salah** who stated that: “To be a writer means to have many qualities and know how to use them like vocabulary, word choice, accuracy, a large imagination, and the ability to use words in an artistic way as a source of ideas and inspiration. Writing is an art and the writer should have a beautiful and attractive style of writing. No, personally, I don’t consider myself as a writer cus I don’t have or master these qualities. I rarely read books because I believe that a writer should be a reader first”.

Thus, creativity is another criterion for good writing, according to some students. Writing is a way of creating something out of language. It is a way of presenting familiar experiences in an unfamiliar and strange way. This quality is appreciated by some students who link it to good writing. This creativity attracts the reader's attention and raises their interest in reading the text and eventually may help the writer influence the reader and convince them too. This is why some students described the good writer as “an artist, philosopher, and a good teacher” who is able to use language creatively to impress and entertain the reader and teach them something important about a given topic. This creativity also requires the

writer to use imagination to think differently and create his own style that becomes a signature, which differs from other writers because he has “an artistic style”. This imagination makes the writer “a source of inspiration” for the reader as some students put it. Sofia, for example, went further saying that the good writer “... has something interesting and beneficial to say.”

According to **Sofia** , creativity also requires a certain degree of freedom: “Being a writer means you’ve the ability to express yourself, your ideas and thoughts by writing. A writer is someone who has good, simple and clear language. Who writes not because he is obliged to write (like the majority of students especially during exams), who has inspiration and imagination, is able to transmit a message by his writings. Yes, I didn’t consider myself as a writer cus my writing was somehow not good but I’ve changed my mind. Now, I think I’m a writer especially when two of my best teachers told me that my writing is good. My studies require writing especially next year (research paper) that’s why I’m doing my best to improve my writing skill trying to be as simple as possible”.

Mastery of English is another important condition to be a good writer. This aspect is discussed in the next section.

4.2.1.7. Using English Skilfully

Some students believe that good writing is the one that demonstrates a good mastery of language. By this, they mean correctness or accuracy that is the result of good use of grammar. Texts that contain many grammatical mistakes are not good texts according to students who almost think that mistakes are “crimes that students should not commit when writing”. For those students, the good writer is a person who “... masters language and grammar.” He is also able to write “organized, coherent and clear texts.” He should also have “selective vocabulary.” And has “good language.” and “rich vocabulary.” He is also “aware of his words.” He “knows a lot about language.”

This strong rejection of mistakes reflects students' conceptions and beliefs of good writing and at the same time the values and beliefs of the writing instruction and also embodied in the teachers of writing as sometimes students get these values from the way the teacher as role model teaches and evaluates their writings. Mistake free texts are unrealistic and hard to achieve for both teachers and students because writing is a messy and complicated process where ideas get clearer with writing itself and one cannot get this done from the first shot but after writing many drafts and improve them via revision and editing. However, in practice, both teacher and students seem obsessed by avoiding mistakes and aim at writing mistake-free texts; this makes writing even harder than it is and causes students to suffer from the writing block and get stuck starting writing simply because they often set the bar very high. Language is therefore a major obstacle when writing to non-native speakers of English .

Mastery of English is vital because it helps students to express themselves and get their ideas written down, but it is also important as a tool for reflection as it helps students think clearly and generate ideas. In addition, to write argument essays, students are not only required to think but to think critically as well. This criticality is built and manifested through language. This means that students should select the best arguments and then present them in a logical way to convince the reader of their logical thinking. A text that confuses the reader because it is not logically developed makes reading the text difficult, interrupts the reader's comprehension of the text, or cause the reader to give up reading the text altogether.

Some students were more pragmatic and realistic as they described the good writer simply as someone who "is able to write". Others said that he should be "able to express ideas easily". He also should be able to "tackle issues and produce texts." For example, **Miral** claimed that: " A writer is someone who can write very well as a skillful person since writing is a productive skill. Someone who can play with words to persuade readers and attract them. Who is great in spelling, punctuation to avoid committing mistakes. He can write anything (stories , novels, books, diaries, and

different kinds of writing). He should be educated person and have a great imagination. No, I can write stories and diaries but I'm not a writer because I should master spelling (I do many mistakes) while writing. I am not a reader as a good writer is a good reader. I am not familiar with words. Reading decreases mistakes".

As a result, writing is mainly a communicative process that allows the writer to get his message across. Thus, writing is functional as it allows the writer to achieve his aim or get a task done. In addition, he should have a "mastering of writing convention". Thus, those students are positive about the writing conventions, as they believe they help them write better and are an important feature of good writing. Expressing oneself is an essential and existential need to students. For them, writing is mainly about expressing their feelings, thoughts and thoughts.

As we have mentioned earlier, students write to reflect on their lives, problems, and experiences. Through writing, they try to understand their reality in order to change it towards the better. As a result, writing becomes a journey of self-discovery and empowerment as it allows them to find solutions to their problems through reflection and then action. It also links them to the world and helps them get out of their isolation as individuals who don't always have access to help and support in their immediate environment or don't find available and trustworthy people who can listen to them and help them solve their problems.

According to participants, good writers are also able to influence the reader in a positive way as will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.1.8. Influencing the Reader

The strong link between writing and reading reappears here again as some students believe that good writers are also "good readers." This allows the writer to have an easy access to readers through language and be able to positively influence them. This also shows that writer identities cannot be built in isolation from the other "the reader" since the way we see ourselves as writers is also shaped by how we are seen

by the readers of what we write. For example, an isolated writer who does not share his texts would always think that he is a great writer until he interacts with readers and shares his texts with them.

Only at that moment, he can have a real and clear idea about his ability to write and have a real writer identity. This means that writers cannot survive in isolation from readers whether they are real or imaginary and the interaction between them is vital for both. Some students said that the good writer is the one who “has an effect on readers.” This effect can have different forms as described by some participants below.

According to **Hafida**, having an impact on the reader means influencing them in a certain way: “To be a writer is to have the convenient intellectual level to write. If the writer wants to write something like a novel, he must have the competency to do that among those competencies utilize his linguistic skills in a proper way, the linguistic eloquence, he must consider grammar side. He is supposed to have his artistic skills to persuade the reader. For example, a personal touch between the lines to persuade the reader to read without boredom by using jokes, funny words. A good writer is a person who has his own different positive characteristics among them honesty, easy handwriting, open to the world, can discuss different subjects in his writings without discrimination, who has the ability to create new ideas and transmitting his information to the reader in the best way. No, I don’t consider myself as a good writer because I don’t have those capacities”.

(a) Good Writers Attract the Reader’s Attention

Because the writer is presented as a teacher, philosopher and a source of inspiration by some students, readers can benefit from all these qualities when reading the texts written by the good writers. The learning process and exchange of ideas and experiences can only take place when readers interact with the text as they cannot always directly interact with the writers themselves because they are usually

physically absent at this stage. Just as writers struggle in the physical absence of readers, readers also may struggle in the physical absence of writers.

(b) Good Writers Inspire the Reader: Helping Them be a Better Person

Good writers make this struggle more manageable by writing clear texts that meet the readers' expectations and, thus, impact them in a positive way. For example, good writers can inspire the reader by provoking and challenging their thoughts, pushing them to rethink about them, assess them and then take actions. As **Fatima** described: "... the writer can touch something in me, push me to be better." This positive impact is the result of the readers' recognition of the writer's identity by validating their skills and knowledge. The latter helps build a trust-based relationship between the writer and the reader and provides the conditions for this mutual learning and exchange of thoughts and experiences to take place.

(c) Writers are Representatives of Their Community: A Voice for Voiceless People

Writers are a voice for people who are voiceless, or who cannot voice their concerns for many reasons. According to **Radia**, "A writer is someone who is influenced by his environment (what he sees and hears around him). He should write about his beliefs and his personality is reflected in his writing, be ethical and avoid plagiarism and imitation as George Emerson said: "imitation is suicide". The writer should be cultivated and creative in style and selective in the way he uses words. The more he cares about details, the more his writings have an impact on the readers. Yes, I have the abilities to be a writer and I started writing a novel about my life focusing on details. I can reach a certain degree of effectiveness cus I'm writing about my own experience (real life). But, I still have to improve, widen my culture and knowledge in the field of writing especially methodology. What is important is that I am doing my best to write".

The next section deals with the results of the analysis of the students' argument essays, the third research tool used to gather information for this study.

4.3. Presentation and Analysis of Students' Argument Essays Data

The analysis of the participants' argument essays indicates that the subjects behave as writers since through their texts, they showcase as a source of knowledge to the readers and they try to share it with them. They also choose topics that reflect their reality and they write about real things from their own perspective. Throughout their essays, there is this notion of the "self" that represents the writer and this notion is clearer when students address the reader directly using pronouns like "you" and "we".

In addition, interacting with the readers by calling them to take action in relation to the topic, giving a piece of advice, or a solution are often examples of students awareness of self as writer even if some students do it unconsciously as they do not consider themselves as writers for a number of reasons among them their language problems mainly lack of vocabulary, grammar mistakes, and struggles in generating relevant ideas and fulfilling the aim of the text i.e., convincing the reader of the validity of their opinion.

At the linguistic level, they have good knowledge of argument writing, but self is apparent through the use of the personal pronoun "I" which may indicate that the students have developed a sense of confidence as writers to some extent by being able to share personal experiences with the readers, having something interesting to discuss and believing that it is possible to influence the readers at least by making them think about the topic not necessarily changing their behaviors. The way they structure their argument essays, use their English, and different sources to construct their texts are presented in the sub-sections below.

4.3.1. Students' Knowledge of Argumentation

Through the analysis of students' essays, it seems that they have already acquired knowledge about the aim and features of the argumentative essay and become to some extent familiar with the writing conventions of this particular type of essay. Most of the time, students apply and follow those conventions or rules like presenting their opinion clearly in the thesis statement, acknowledging the opposing view and its arguments and refuting them.

These are essential elements of argumentation that most students followed in their texts. Thus, at this stage, students seem to adopt the writing conventions of English . However, whenever there is a conflict between students' preferences or abilities and those conventions, students seem to break the rules and stick to their preferences. For example, when students face difficulties with vocabulary, they prefer to change their opinion and take a position that is easier to elaborate in terms of vocabulary just to get the task done.

The same goes with outlining: some students do not start the essay with an outline but prefer to free write and organize their thoughts gradually while drafting and revising at the same time. Here, students do not completely reject the writing conventions but adapt them to their preferences and the task difficulties. According to students, this may be considered as a problem solving strategy not a breaking of the rules.

Finally, students find difficulties or do not know how to cite external resources like quotations, references of studies or statistics because they are not used to do so in essays on common topics. Usually, teachers ask them to acknowledge the source of authority and expertise but this is more important in writing research papers as not acknowledging the source and references leads directly to plagiarism.

4.3.2. Students' Development of their Arguments

Students seem to have general knowledge of what is an argument and what makes a strong and valid argument which they define as a statement or claim supported by evidence. An argument is used by the student writer to convince the reader that the writer's idea is valid. It makes them rethink about their opinion or change their behavior at most. Thus, students seem to be able to distinguish between strong and weak arguments and select the arguments relevant to specific topics. In addition, the participants can use a range of evidence sources like personal experience, statistics, experts' quotations, studies, examples, facts, logical consequences, imagination, and religion.

Yet, the question that imposes itself is whether students are able to effectively use these sources of evidence and transform them into strong arguments to defend their position and convince the reader about its validity. In other words, can they distinguish between good and bad arguments, using arguments selectively and strategically to have the effect they want on the reader?

Can they identify some types of evidence as misused or overused and how they can affect the general quality of the essay? The majority of the participants seem to survive navigating their way through the writing process and are able to a certain extent to use different sources of evidence to write more or less convincing arguments. However, these students also struggle generating ideas and arguments especially if the topic is not familiar to them.

In this case, they tend often to heavily rely on their personal experience and opinions that are usually not enough to convince the reader or develop a strong argument. It is known that expressing students' opinion and relating the essay to their daily life experiences is effective in making the essay more personal and the content more authentic.

Yet, if this is not backed up with other sources of evidence, the text or essay ends up being a kind of personal account which looks more narrative or descriptive than argumentative. Thus, when reading the participants' essays, I have noticed the shift from one genre or type of writing to another even when at the beginning the student writer announces that the aim of the text is argumentative. Often it ends up being another type of text and this is a major problem of academic writing which may partly be explained by students' lack of rich vocabulary related to the topic which limits the number of arguments they can generate to fully discuss the topic at hand.

4.3.3. Ways Students Structure their Argument Essays

Being able to structure an essay and present the arguments in a logical way to defend one's position is a vital skill in argument writing. The way the essay is structured makes the reading easier and contributes to the understanding of the essay as a whole and thus the intended impact on the reader can be achieved. Students who participated in this study organized their essays in two main ways; "block" and "chain" organization widely used in argument writing and academic writing in general as we can find them in writing books, models of essays and are often used by teachers of writing as part of the writing instruction. This goes hand in hand with the text coherence and cohesion, two important aspects that determine the quality of the text. For example, Meryam organized her essay using block organization by discussing the two opposing positions on the topic (whether teachers should have a close relationship with their learners or not) separately in different blocks.

Topic: Should teachers be close to their students?

Introduction:

Thesis statement: I strongly believe that they (teachers) ought to be more careful and prudent in their attitude towards learners for many reasons.

Body1(block): Opponents base their opinion on 2 arguments:

- It allows teachers to help resolve student's problems.
- It provides an attractive lesson.

Body 2 : Rebuttal of the opponents arguments

- It distracts the teacher and disables him to notice all changes on students.
- It might lead to lack of respect in the class.

Conclusion : All in all I still believe that being close to students is no more than a hole in classroom management.

Second example : Amel's outline :Topic: Should women work or stay at home?

Introduction:

Thesis statement: Despite the fact that a lot of people see that women should stay at home instead of working, but I still believe that they have the right to work.

Body1(block):

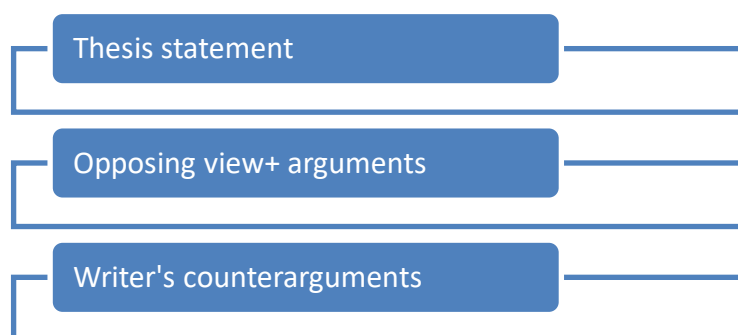
- Argument 1: people see that women are weak.
- Argument 2: women don't have the mental power as man have.
- Argument3: women cannot make balance between her responsibilities.

Body 2 :

- Argument 1: women can share responsibility with man.
- Argument 2: It is unfair than women spend all their life studying, ending up by staying at home.
- Argument3: life conditions are getting difficult and harder.
- Statistics have shown that women achieve a lot of things in difficult domains.

Summary: Even though, a lot of people disagree about women's work, I still believe that it is their right.

It is clear that the arguments should be relevant to the thesis statement and selected carefully to defend the writer's position or opinion. In addition, those selected arguments should be presented logically creating a flow and development via the use of good conjunctions that link ideas together. I have noticed through the analysis of participants essays that some of them tend to overuse some specific conjunctions like (and, also, as, and since) or misuse other conjunctions like using "in addition" to introduce the last argument of the essay instead of using finally. As a result, this has reduced the essay quality by negatively influencing coherence and cohesion.



1. Block organization

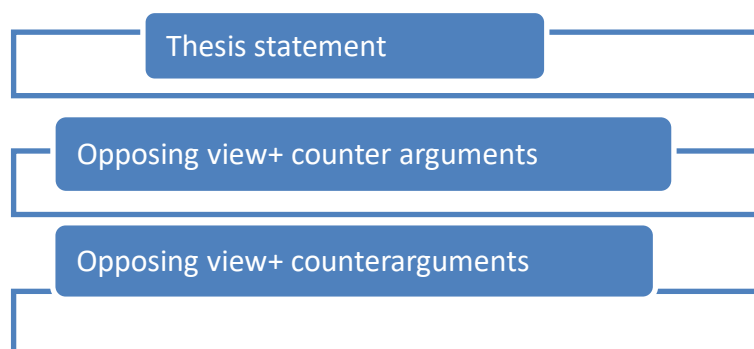


Figure 4.1.: *Chain and Point by Point Organization*

4.3.4. Students' Mastery of English

Students differ in terms of linguistic competence; some are good and some are less competent. The good students make less mistakes, use conjunctions correctly and are able to produce different types of sentences using relevant and varied vocabulary. However, less competent students make many mistakes may be because they cannot spot and correct them while revising or they do not revise at all. They also find difficulties with vocabulary and thus they directly translate word by word from Arabic and French mainly and this results in ambiguity and unclear sentences.

Example 1. I believe strongly that primary schools should devote much time for sportive activities. This student could have said 'sports' instead or "physical activities", but it is clear that he is influenced by French.

Example 2. Sport may fight some illnesses like, obesity and diabettes.

Here, the students used an adjective from French to try to express the idea of physical activities and used the French word for diabetes. This is common in students' essays maybe because most students are familiar with French and have richer vocabulary in it compared to English.

Unlike grammar mistakes that disturb smooth reading especially for teachers who feel the need to correct all students' mistakes, these mistakes do not hinder the text understanding and the reader can carry on reading and understanding the text. Unfortunately, this is not the case with wrong word choice or misspelled words or those words directly translated from Arabic and French because the reader has to stop reading to think about these words and try to decode their meaning and thus this has a negative impact on the essay clarity and quality.

As a teacher of academic writing, I also used to struggle understanding these words but become familiar with this problem with time and because I share with the students the same social and cultural background which is not always the case

with other readers. It is clear that vocabulary plays a more important role in writing compared to grammar but most of the time, teachers of writing do not feel the need to teach vocabulary assuming that it is not their task or that this is done at the session of reading techniques. So, investing time and effort helping students enrich their vocabulary is more important than just asking students to avoid making mistakes and instructing them to write a mistake free text which is hard to produce and even counterproductive as it puts more pressure on students and makes writing even harder.

Writing a mistake-free essay is hard to achieve unless students develop good self- correction skills and improve their revision strategies. Vocabulary teaching and learning is probably as important as grammar or accuracy as many students said they cannot express their ideas and thoughts if they do not have the right words. Thus, they often feel compelled to change their position to avoid or escape the linguistic demand of a given position and mainly the challenges related to vocabulary in order not to get stuck on not knowing how to express specific ideas as a result of their lack of vocabulary.

4.3.5. Types of Evidence Students Use in their Argument Essays

Participants in this study used different types of evidence to convince the reader of the validity of their positions and opinions. The latter differ based on the nature of the topic. The more technical is the topic, the more objective evidence students used such as facts, statistics, research results, and reference to authority such as scientific institutions or experts. Personal experience was mainly used with common topics that relate to students daily life or social issues.

- **Participants' Use of Personal Experience and Opinion**

Fatima: While I was recently surfing the internet, I came across an application called scruff, which is made for homosexuals to meet each other.(sharing personal experience with the reader to set the context and introduce

the topic) I truly crushed my mind how far these sexual deviations are going. And the worst is that there are people supporting it. But, for I myself I'm completely against these deviations.

- **Participants' Use of Statistics**

Ahlem: According to a study made by the University of Minnesota Medical Center about if the doctor should tell the patient that disease is cancer. 87% were with telling the truth, and 13% were against because they believe that this will not help him in his recovery.

- **Participants' Use of Authority Sources Like Studies and Research**

Hafida: It is said: "No man is an island", however, many psychologists confirm that man can't live alone since he is created in social milieu, he is not self-sufficient he needs doctor, baker, farmer to satisfy all the needs of his life. Moreover, he needs to rely on others which means , he helps and need to be helped in return, he is always in need to discuss to feel internal relax, as well as the absence of the other lead to loneliness and this loneliness impact negatively either mentally or physically. Mentally by living in a isolated, and physically he always feels tired and in bad mood, Furthermore his happiness depends on the others this mean he shares his success with his family also he can't feel happy until he is surrounded by closest and friendly people.

Malika: An American study shows that 70% of people like shopping. Some people prefer to buy original products and others prefer to buy counterfeit ones. Personally I think that the original products are better than the counterfeit ones for some reasons.

- **Participants' Use of Examples**

Ilham: For instance, shutting down communication and making the person with cancer feel hopeless and this may affect on his health.

- **Participants' Use of Religion**

Hafida: Although , many people say that the loneliness of human is beneficial for them, I strongly believe that no one can live alone because everyone is responsible for hi act and his own as the prophet(PBUH) said, in addition, when go back to the first creation we find that God creates male and femelle to live together.

Meriem : Marriage is considered as a half of our Religion. It is a core from which society is formed. It is an entrance To such a New phase full of rights, duties and responsibilities for both man and woman. Unfortunately, the relation between them may be either successful or ill-formed. Although our ancestors saw that contact between couples before marriage should be banned.

As the examples above indicate, students used a number of evidence sources in their essays . The most frequently used sources of evidence are personal opinion and experience, facts, examples and authority and studies. This shows that students heavily relied on their knowledge of the world using personal experience and vision of reality whether it is social, cultural, economic or political. This helps students claim property or ownership of their texts by positioning themselves as writers dealing with potential readers, exercising an authority as a source of knowledge for the reader which is validated by their personal experiences. If students rely on their reality to develop content i.e. arguments, this means that they feel confident as writers using and thus validating and sharing their knowledge of the world with the reader.

This confidence may be justified by students' assumptions that the reader shares the same knowledge as they belong to the same social, cultural, economic and political background. At the same time, students are less confident using external sources like statistics and studies as they have no authority on them since they are produced by people who are experts and have more knowledge and power than students themselves. Consequently, even if they do not consider themselves

as writers because of their unrealistic perceptions of being a writer (like being very famous, extremely skillful and highly influential), these participants actually express and exercise a certain identity as writers even unconsciously through the way they write, the sources of evidence they use, and how they deal with the reader.

Students seem to have an acceptable ability to write argumentation on average except five students . Two students said openly in the questionnaire that they do not know how to write argument essays and three students said they know, but expressed difficulties writing arguments. The students who cannot develop their arguments and thus just list them and do not know how to develop them. However, those students still struggle with generating arguments for unfamiliar topics, face difficulties expressing themselves because of the lack of vocabulary that is specific to certain topics. Participants also mentioned the lack of reading as a problem that has a negative impact on their vocabulary acquisition and the development of their writing skill in general.

In addition, students seem to be weak in using external sources of evidence and citing them as this is not a priority in academic writing essays in this context except for research papers where failure to acknowledge these sources of information leads directly to plagiarism so students tend to be more careful citing external resources writing papers than essays.

As a result, students seem to present sources of evidence very vaguely and are not specific when presenting statistics and studies or expert authority, for example, as they tend to use loose expressions like (the majority, many people, or percentages without fully citing the reference and the same with experts quotations or studies results that are mentioned globally and this may limit the validity of the argument and make it less convincing for the reader. Finally, students ability to critically evaluate, select, and develop arguments is still to be developed. This is vital for argument writing as it is at the heart of argumentation if not argumentation

itself as many scholars use critical thinking and argumentation interchangeably. Unlike others who think that argument is just part of critical thinking.

4.3.6. Students' Strategies to Deal with Readers in their Texts (Voice)

Most students seem to take the reader into account starting from the pre-writing stage by choosing the topics that interest them and teach readers something new about a specific topic. This attention for readers is even more important in argument essays as students' primary aim, according to their answers (see Students' questionnaire) is to convince the reader and thus their writing is reader-oriented.

Some students seem to have a limited awareness of readers' and their needs and expectations and therefore their writing looks like a process of self-talk or a monologue as they don't feel the need to clarify ideas that seem clear to them (this is called the curse of knowledge in fiction writing as the writer supposes that what is clear to him or her is automatically clear to the reader so there is no need to explain). In addition, students seem to write for a limited range of readers only, mainly the real and familiar readers (teachers, peers, and friends) not to an "imaginary reader" who is anyone who can read in English like ESL students and native speakers of English.

This is obvious through their use of the local culture, religion, traditions, and social codes and practices without thinking of other countries where things may be different. Few students only seem to be aware of some cultural differences that exist among different countries and contexts. Also, as we noted earlier, students try to create a direct relationship with the reader by addressing them using "you and we" and this is a good way to engage the reader and a sign of awareness on the part of student writers for the existence of a possible reader be it real or imaginary.

4.3.7. Students' Strategies Meeting Readers' Needs and Expectations

Just as good writing has a good influence on the reader through good style and catchy and clear vocabulary, being a writer seems also to be related to the writer's influence on the reader. The latter has often the position and ability to judge the quality of the text through how the writer makes them feel, the experiences they share with them and the knowledge presented in the text.

As **Meryam** claimed: "To be a writer is to know how to lead the readers to think about what you wrote and to reach the audience's heart and mind with logic and good presentation of ideas."

It seems that the writer's impact on the reader is the result of logic and good structure and presentation of ideas. Structure and logic seems to complete each other and contribute to the quality of the text and thus the main aim of writing in argument essay that is to convince the reader of the validity of the writer's opinion or position.

However, this impact is not possible if the text is not shared with the reader. This is why some participant's claim that they do not consider themselves as writers because they do not like sharing their texts with the reader. The reason behind this behaviour might be that these student writers are afraid of being judged by the reader as incompetent especially that many of them do consider that their language is not good enough to allow them to express themselves clearly and effectively and thus they believe is risky to expose themselves and their thoughts to the reader who might not appreciate their writing for some reasons related to language, structure, content like having opposite opinions to the writer.

In addition, some participants do not like to share their writing simply because they do not like doing so. Thus, they prefer to keep them private. Because,

they are aware that being a writer requires sharing the text, they do not consider themselves as writers because of their preference not to share their texts.

This is what **Fatima** explained: “A writer is someone who has something beneficial to deliver/transmit to the world sharing his ideas, beliefs and way of thinking. He has an impact on society. A writer is someone who can influence me and touch something in me and push me to become a better person. Background knowledge is less important than the impact. No, I write and I want to have a positive impact on people but I rarely share with people. Some friends like what I write but I feel afraid of sharing so I am not a writer yet. “To be a writer is to share one’s personal writings with others which is something I hate”.

There is another reason why some participants do not like sharing their texts with the reader. They consider the writing they do as “personal” which also means “intimate” or “private”. If what participants write is private, according to them, sharing is a violation of this privacy since it implies exposure to the reader. However, those participants do write and share their texts at least with the reader and some peers. Does this mean that what they write in class does not revolve around their private and personal lives and experiences and thus it is safe to share it with the readers, in this case the teacher and peers?

A possible answer to this question might be what **Ilham** claims saying that “educational writing is not writing but personal writing is writing”.

This could be explained by participants’ perceptions of academic or “educational” writing as a classroom task or duty that they do for academic success rather than for a genuine sharing of their thoughts and experiences with the reader. This also might explain why freedom is an important condition for being a writer according to some participants. Since participants do not choose when and what to write about and feel obliged to write as part of class practice, they prefer to write about general topics that do not relate to any private aspect of their lives. This is

apparently their way to find ways to get around the rules and write without harming their privacy.

Some participants therefore feel obliged to write in order to practice this skill and succeed academically but still try to exercise some freedom over the topics and content they want to write about. This is an example of participants' negotiation of academic writing conventions without completely being out of the game and decide not to write because this may result in some kind of punishment or sanction and one of them is to get a poor mark that can influence their academic success.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed at presenting and analyzing the data collected on participants' journey of their writer identity construction and expression. This includes the way they interact with their writing community, their access to this community, the different roles they play within it and how they negotiate them. Negotiation aims at confirming and ensuring their active role as writers rather than passive consumers of academic writing discourse and ideology. Ideology seems to be reflected in the imposed conventions or criteria of good writing at university and teacher education institutions, as described in this chapter. This chapter also discussed how participants perceive the community of writing and use it as a source for writing and adapting to its expectations by focusing on their writing experiences, perceptions of academic writing and discourse, and readers and writers in order to understand the context in which participants write and how the context contributes to the construction of their writer's identities.

The next chapter is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the results of the present study. It also makes some pedagogical suggestions regarding argument essay writing instruction.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Interpretation and Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

This study is a longitudinal exploratory case study that investigates how a group of forty- two third year Algerian EFL students, who are also pre-service teachers or trainees in the English department at ENSB, perceive themselves as student writers, their academic writing experiences (learning and practice) and their journeys to becoming writers. These aspects represent their process of writer identity construction and expression. It also examines how subjects interact with their writing community or environment, which is the academic context of higher education, from a social-constructivist perspective. The participants are preparing an English language degree over five years to become secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). Therefore, this study aims at discovering, describing, and understanding the participants' journeys to becoming writers by focusing on their perceptions, beliefs and understandings of academic writing teaching and learning, which I refer to in this study as students' "pedagogy of writing", which covers their knowledge of the academic writing discourse, experiences of writing, struggle and challenges they face when writing and how they negotiate access and position into their writing community which includes both in class and outside classroom practice. This final chapter is therefore devoted to discussion and interpretation of the findings. It will weave together previous literature on the topic, the theoretical underpinnings and the study findings. To recall, the present investigation attempts to answer four sub-research questions stated in the general introduction. The data collected will be used to answer the main research question and the four-sub-questions stated below:

This four research questions were formulated based on the research problem that was discussed in the methodology chapter. The latter was the result of the researcher's experience as a former student and current teacher of writing and my

observation of students' difficulties in writing mainly in argument writing that is a crucial genre students are required to master. Unfortunately, many teachers of writing complain about the students' writing performance even after a long period of instruction and provision of feedback that require huge efforts on the part of teachers who often end up disappointed and unsatisfied. Therefore, students' struggle to meet teachers' expectations as readers and assessors especially in exams would directly harm their academic success as most exams at ENSB rely on writing and more specifically argument writing both in language and content-based modules. Students' struggle with writing, according to Smith (2008), is due to the fact that there are several key aspects that students need to master in writing, such as cohesion or flow of ideas, language accuracy, grammatical devices, vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structure.

To answer these research questions, data were collected using three research tools: students' semi-structured questionnaire that aimed at collecting data on participants' perceptions of their academic writing experience in general as well as their argument writing practice. The second research tool was a writing task or written account that required participants to reflect on their perceptions of writer identity by expressing the ways they see themselves as writers and justify these perceptions. Finally, the third research tool was another writing task that required students to write an argument essay on a topic of their choice in order to find out about their writing performance of this particular genre, how they approach this writing task, the linguistic background and knowledge they have about argument writing, the challenges they face and how they deal with them. For the sake of clarity and efficiency, the main research question was narrowed down into four sub-questions that will be answered in this discussion chapter.

Research question 1: What do students think about their academic English writing experience at ENSB?

Research question 2: What do students think about themselves as writers?

Research question 3: What are the factors that influence their writer identity construction?

Research question 4: How do they express their writer identity (ies) in argument writing?

Based on the sub-questions mentioned above, this chapter is divided into four sections. Section 5.1. deals with the participants' perceptions of their academic writing experience at ENSB. Section 5.2. tackles participants' perceptions of themselves as student writers. Section 5.3. discusses the factors that shape or determine the students' process of writer identity construction. Finally, section 5.4. is concerned with the ways students express their writer identity in argument writing.

5.1. Answer of Research question 1: What do students think about their academic English writing experience at ENSB?

Students' perceptions refer to the ways they process, interpret, and react to information from their environment (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2003). Writing experience, on the other hand, is an "umbrella term" which refers, in this study, to participants' engagement, participation, and investment in writing and the knowledge and skills or "expertise" they gain in return. The latter is the foundation to their development as writers including their writer identity and voice. This implies the way they perceive and interact with their academic writing community represented in ENSB as an educational institution, the academic writing instruction they received in this setting and how they act on it to construct their writer identity. This corroborates with Hyland (2005) view of academic writing process as "an act of identity".

As such, understanding students' perceptions of their academic writing experience at ENSB is a vital step to unravel the process of their writer identity construction by understanding the context in which they develop as writers. This

seems to determine the other aspects of their journey of writer identity construction such as their knowledge of writing, understanding of good writing, perceptions of readers and their expectations and the strategies they can use to meet these expectations in an argument essay. This institution also represents their writing community with its members. These members are other teachers and students who are interested in the teaching and learning of academic writing. In this sense, they share “common goals” (Cooper, 1989). In this academic writing setting, student writers are constantly compared to other writers and evaluated by other readers and thus feel the pressure to meet their expectations that are based on formal criteria of “good writing” that are promoted by institutional norms that determine the meaning of “success” (Casanave, 2003). This community is also the environment in which participants develop as writers and construct their “knowledge” and “expertise” in writing.

According to the findings of this study, participants’ perceptions of their academic writing experiences at ENSB were positive on the whole. Most of them value writing as a vital skill that, if mastered, would help them write better texts and therefore ensure their academic success. This clearly supports the “instrumental function” of writing as a basic and vital skill that can increase students’ chances to succeed academically by “generating content expertise and the regulated exchange of this information” (Swales, 1990). Because writing is often a “lonely” and “solo” process where students struggle generate relevant content to meet the needs and expectations of a “physically absent reader”, belonging to a writing community can be an important source of “solidarity” and “support” that all students need regardless of the quality of their writing performance.

As student writers, the participants think that writing is an important skill that influences them at both academic and personal levels. They reported that they write for three main reasons: Firstly, participants write to express themselves "freely". This makes them feel at an advantage as they can have a voice, can say what they think, explore their thoughts and feelings and critically think about their

experiences. These expressive purposes of writing expressed by participants correspond to the Expressivist approach to writing discussed in chapter one. The latter assumes that thinking comes before writing and that the free expression of ideas can stimulate self-discovery and cognitive development (Hyland, 2009).

Therefore, students feel strong, confident and motivated and thus empowered when they are able to communicate freely through writing. Thus, writing is not an activity of manipulating language and structuring ideas, but it is using language to discover and understand oneself. This makes students feel in control of their language and boosts their confidence and feeling of security as writers who are in charge of the writing process not subjected to it by the teacher. This positionality as a writer not as a student of writing gives power to students and puts them in a more confident position.

Secondly, the importance students attribute to self-expression in writing is the result of their psychological needs since they use writing as a tool for self-regulation and an outlet for their negative feelings such as sadness, stress and fear. Therefore, writing has a “therapeutic” purpose and function in students’ lives both in class and beyond especially that many participants stated that they feel better after writing and getting their ideas and feelings out of their minds onto a piece of paper. Academic writing does not always satisfy those psychological needs as it aims at mastery of language, grammar accuracy, and application of writing conventions. Therefore, some participants do not limit their writing practice to the classroom but write outside the class, as a hobby, which implies that they have developed writing habits away from the class and thus writing has become more meaningful and empowering as a habit in their daily life. Students’ engagement and investment in writing are necessary as a foundation for their writer identity construction and expression. However, the conflict between academic writing taught in class that is guided by formal conventions and rules and students’

persistent needs to explore and practice “creative” writing sometimes result in a feeling of tension, resistance, and at times rejection on the part of students.

This is especially the case of those who value their freedom, creativity and imagination as assets for their “personal identity” or who they are as individuals. Similar to students’ resistance to teacher’s written feedback (TWF) showed by the findings of my Magistère (master) dissertation, some students, in this study, seem to strongly reject the “limiting” writing conventions and ,therefore, feel obliged to complete writing tasks in class as it is a necessary step for their academic success. This “imposed” writing is considered as “oppressive” to these students as Yacine stated: “ Writing is something personal. Educational writing is not writing because it’s nor personal or resulted from a deep experience”.

Because students cannot completely withdraw from academic writing practice as a result of their frustration, disappointment and lack of motivation caused by wearing the uncomfortable and “tight jacket” of imposed writing conventions and rules, they try to look for new forms of freedom in academic writing. Fatima explained this issue with a “strong statement” saying that: “Writing is much amusing when you like the topic... but repulsive when compelled to write about specific topics. It’s brain jailing”. This implies that she feels as if her brain is “imprisoned” by the imposed rules of writing. One possible way to get more freedom is negotiating the conventions with the teacher or choose the writing strategies that suit their needs and priorities as writers whenever possible. This was clear in participants’ descriptions of their argument writing process. This freedom seems more present in the pre-stage of writing where students can choose from different options like brain-storming, free-writing, list and outlining. The freedom seems to allow students to have a kind of “agency” or the “power” to act on their writing which, in turn, seems to help them “survive” in an “oppressive” writing pedagogy as they implicitly described it.

Another form of “agency” in students’ writing is the use of personal experience as a “valid” source for writing. For example, when some female students wrote about the role of women in society, they tried to critically think about this topic in relation to their own experience as women and tried to take a position, which matches who they are as individuals trying to have more freedom in a society guided by traditions. In their essays, some female student writers were questioning and negotiating these traditions and arguing for their right to live by their own values even if the latter may contradict the mainstream values of society, which considers that the main role of women is housewives.

Finally, for the participants, writing is a vital skill and process that they should develop and master if they are to succeed academically. Writing is a skill which has an instrumental function and value as the educational system heavily relies on writing for both teaching and evaluating students understanding, knowledge and academic achievement. The participants seem to be aware of the advantages of mastering academic writing and one way to do so is by improving their English and expanding their vocabulary and practicing grammar so they can write better sentences and well-structured paragraphs and therefore better essays that match the criteria of argument writing as a genre. Participants’ awareness of the value of writing as a skill sustains Sadiq ‘s (2011, p. 77) findings that “students had high perceptions about the importance of ESL writing skill for their academic study and their future career. This particular result asserted that ESP students were aware of their needs to improve their writing proficiency in English”.

Because the participants write in an academic context, the latter seems to influence how they approach the writing tasks especially that those participants are in the process of struggle to enter and be accepted and / or recognized as a member of their academic writing community. This is composed of the teacher as a key reader, peers as supportive and familiar readers and readers in general often considered as imaginary readers. Students’ experience is shaped by their perceptions of academic writing, writing conventions and teacher’s and readers’

expectations which in their turn influence how these student writers write. The importance of context is important in the way students manipulate language or discourse in writing.

Yet, according to van Dijk (2008 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 45), this context is not important in itself but in the way it is seen by the users of this discourse. He clarifies, saying that the way the participants describe a situation like this defines discourse, not the social situation itself, which either influences or is influenced by it. Therefore, contexts are inter-subjective constructs created and continuously updated in interaction by participants as members of groups and communities rather than any sort of "objective" condition or direct cause.

This supports the study claim that participants' perceptions of their writing environment or context determines the way they understand and approach the writing process. This in turn shapes students' understanding of readers' expectations and perspectives on good writing that they have to reproduce in order to meet readers' needs and eventually convince them of the validity of their arguments.

The findings of this study confirm the importance of the dimensions of context (field, tenor and mode) as presented by Halliday (1985), which imply that the use of language or discourse depends on participants' interpretation of context that in turn refers to students as writers, real and potential readers and the interaction taking place between them via the text, in this case, the argument essay. In addition, this interaction is influenced by the power relationships between writers and readers especially when these readers are teachers of writing who often represent and dictate the features of good writing, its structure and register.

The findings of this study revolve around four major themes all of which are directly related to the context in which participant practice writing that is ENSB as an institution for EFL teachers' training that is specific but not different from university as an institution of higher education. These themes are (1) the students

as writers and what they bring to the writing task in terms of knowledge and experience as well as how they see themselves as writers. Their perceptions and understanding of writing as a skill, craft and process and their mastery of English that represents their linguistic background. The latter cannot be dissociated from the participants' cultural backgrounds as Algerian users of English as a foreign language (EFL) who live in a rich multi-lingual and multi-cultural society who can write in Arabic, Tamazight, French, and other foreign languages. (2) The readers who often are familiar and share the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the student writers such as teachers and peers or potential readers who belong to different cultures and speak different languages, but are able to connect with the students writers because they can read in English.

This duality between participants' local culture and the international culture of the English speaking community makes students' journey of writer identity construction rich, divergent and unique. (3) The text or argument essay is another theme through which student writers interact with their readers in order to create meaning that is at the heart of writing as a communicative process. The argument essay reflects the academic writing discourse, the standards of good English and the values and ideology of the academic writing community and its members. Finally, (4) the context in which the three elements; writers, readers, and text interact with each other. The context of writing starts from the space of the classroom to the students' family, their society and the world as a whole thanks to the global impact of English as an international language.

Therefore, through writing, students do not only interact with readers such as teachers and peers in the classroom, but also interact with the other members of the academic writing community. This interaction is the basis their process of writer identity construction as without interacting and exchanging with readers through their essays and texts, they would never be recognized and acknowledged as writers. This finding is similar to Bartholomae's (1986,p.4) perspective on academic literacy: "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the

university for the occasion ... or a branch of it, like History or Anthropology or Economics or English. He has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that defines the discourse of our community”.

In addition, being a formal academic setting, ENSB represents the source of writing instruction that is a major source of participants’ knowledge of writing. The latter is the backbone of students’ writing skills. At this teacher training college, students consolidate their previous knowledge of writing they bring from middle and secondary school and engage in more complex and demanding writing tasks mainly essay writing. The findings clearly showed that all participants’ perceptions of writing, good writer and writer identity are influenced by the context in which they learn and practice writing. Therefore, the formal instruction they received at ENSB as well as the one they received before joining this college shape their writer identity construction and expression in essay writing and argument writing in particular. This is in line with Flower’s (1989) claim that: “context cues cognition”.

Therefore, most of participants in this study considered their writing knowledge as sufficient, satisfactory, good, relevant and necessary as it is the foundation to their writing skills and strategies and therefore their writing performance. This knowledge was mainly acquired in class from the teacher who plays different important roles such as reader, examiner, writer and an expert in writing or to put it differently "a professional writer". Yet, the teachers at ENSB are not the sole resource for writing knowledge. This writing knowledge provides them with opportunities to write, practice, and develop their writing skills and strategies. This practice has allowed them to receive positive oral and written feedback by the teachers of writing and peers that has increased their reader awareness and thus they learned ways and options to meet readers’ needs and expectations including the teacher as a reader, examiner and “an expert writer”.

According to the study findings, teacher's written feedback (TWF) is a valuable source of input for participants as it allows them to discover their "potential" as writers as well as understand their weaknesses. Writing, in this regard, is seen as a transformational and developmental process where students struggle to move from "novice" to more "experienced" or "competent" writers. This is inter-related to the notion of "expertise" discussed in chapter one. Prior (1998, p. xi) further explains this connection between context and knowledge stating that writing actually occurs in times that are populated with others (past, present, and future) and abundantly equipped with tools (material and semiotic). Writing, when viewed as a situated activity, is not only the discrete act of a writer; rather, it is the result of the convergence of numerous streams of activity, including reading, talking, acting, watching, creating, thinking, and feeling in addition to putting words on paper.

Consequently, participants' readers, according to the findings of this study, are real, who exist in the students' environment or academic writing community like teachers, peers, other students and friends and sometimes family members like a sister or brother who can read in English. They are also "imaginary readers" or "virtual" and exist in students' minds and imagination. This is a way for students to cope with the absence of real readers especially that they do not always have time to read students texts. Here it would be interesting to investigate students' use of technology to find out new audiences online and how this digital audience can help students develop as writers especially that most of students are connected to internet all the time for academic and personal uses.

Furthermore, when writing, participants try to acquire and apply the disciplinary knowledge of English and the skills and strategies of writing as literacy to have access to university or higher education as an institution and understand and unravel its norms, codes, values, jargon, and standards and conventions that "constitute a separate culture" (Bartholomae, 1986). Thus, participants' knowledge of writing as a skill, process and craft, the bolts and nuts of the academic writing

discourse and the standards of good formal English. These are fundamental pre-requisites of what they bring to the writing process as they inform and guide their linguistic, cognitive, social and psychological manoeuvres that are an integral part of their writing skills and strategies.

Writing ,in this sense, is viewed as a form of social literacy as it is “ a means of connecting people with each other in ways that carry particular social meanings, so writing varies with context and cannot be distilled down to a set of cognitive or technical abilities” (Hyland, 2009, p.48). Therefore, literacy and writing have both a functional and critical aspects that cannot be dissociated from each other. According to the findings of this study, these functions help participants construct and express who they are as individuals and writers and thus constitute an integral part of their writer identity. This is similar to what some scholars’ claims: “This approach (critical literacy) sees literacy as a relative term, so there is no single literacy but a wide variety of different ‘practices’ relevant to and appropriate for particular times, places, participants and purposes. Moreover, these practices are not something that we simply pick up and put down, but are integral to our individual identities, social relationships and community memberships” (Barton *et al.*, 2007; Street, 1995; Street and Lefstein, 2008).

In this sense, writing in addition to its instrumental function determining students’ academic success, has a gate-keeping function as it determines participants’ access and integration at university as community, discourse, and culture.

Culture, power and ideology are directly related to the above aspects of writing context that represent the students’ writing community and its academic discourse that is, in turn, built upon power relationships. This is in line with Fairclough (1992 cited in Hyland, 2009, p.47) view of discourse as "the link between the local context of situation and the overarching institutional context of culture". This is justified by the "orders of discourse," or sanctioned institutional

activities like essays, seminars, and university assignments, function in discourse to uphold the status quo in power and authority relationships.

The idea that writers' experiences of the literacy practices of different communities will influence their linguistic choices suggests that teachers should consider the part that culture plays in student writing. Culture is generally understood as an historically transmitted and systematic network of meanings which allow us to understand, develop and communicate our knowledge and beliefs about the world (Lantolf, 1999). As a result, language and learning are inextricably bound up with culture (Kramsch, 1993). This is partly because our cultural values are reflected in and carried through language, but also because cultures make available to us certain taken-for-granted ways of organising our perceptions and expectations, including those we use to learn and communicate in writing. In writing research and teaching, this is the territory of contrastive rhetoric.

This context also influences how participants see themselves as writers. Those aspects of writing will be further discussed along the factors that determine participants' writer identity construction in section three.

Based on their writing experience and their perceptions of themselves as student writers, students are classified into three categories; good, novice and writers in denial. The three categories are discussed as follows:

5.2. Answer of Research question2: How Do Students Think of Themselves as Writers?

Students' understandings and perceptions of writer identity or being a writer reflect their writing experiences on the whole and writing knowledge. The latter are related to the writing process like writing skills and strategies, writing goals and purposes or functions, opportunities to write in the academic context for real readers, their perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses as writers, the freedom they have while writing, how often they read, their mastery of English as well as the feedback

they got from the teacher as a reader, examiner, and writer. These aspects seem to shape students' writing experiences, the process of writer identity construction and perceptions of participants of themselves as writers at the same time.

Firstly, student writer identity is not fixed and stable, but dynamic and changing on the basis of a social interaction within the academic writing community (Hyland, 2015). It refers, as discussed earlier, to the "different selves writers express when they write" (Hyland, 2001). This supports Cherry's (1988) view that writers may create different identities and change real or imagined identities imposed by their discourse situations using language as a source. Therefore, students are constantly changing identities as a result of the ways they approach academic writing on the whole and argument writing specifically. Each writing task is unique and students tackle it with more experience, confidence and better knowledge as a result of their engagement and investment in writing. As Hyland (2001) put it, this depends on the different selves they use when they write.

Secondly, students' positive, fairly positive or negative perceptions of themselves as student writers have enabled us to classify them into three categories; good writers, novice or beginner writers, and writers in denial. Most students have positive perceptions about their writer identity and can be described as good student writers; those who are fairly positive about their writer identity can be defined as novice or beginner student writers. Lastly, the students who have negative perceptions about themselves as writers can be described as writers in denial. Those three categories are based on the data obtained from the students' writer identity written accounts that reflected their own evaluation of their academic writing experiences, perceptions and beliefs of writing as a process, skill and product and their potential as writers in the light of Self-appraisal and Self-efficacy theories. These three categories are discussed as follows:

5.2.1. Good Student Writers

This category of students have the most positive perceptions about themselves as writers. They believe that they have what is required to be recognized and acknowledged as writers not only by other writers and readers in their environment but by themselves. Therefore, they have a kind of self-recognition and self-acknowledgment. In addition, their beliefs and understanding of writing as a skill, ability and process seem to match with their actual writing practice both in class and beyond. Furthermore, they are satisfied about their ability to fulfil their purposes and functions of writing like expressing themselves, sharing knowledge with the readers, convincing them about the validity of their opinions, positions and arguments. These positive perceptions of the self as writer confirms the validity and relevance of Self-appraisal theory which claims that “individuals’ evaluation of their past experiences and decisions influence their emotional state and therefore future behaviour (Haddock, 2004). As a result, participants’ evaluation of their merit and legitimacy as writers is clearly based on their past writing experiences, knowledge, practice and feedback they received on their texts.

First of all, writers are acknowledged for the writing they do and the texts they produce. Thus, some students claimed themselves as writers because they do engage in writing either formally in class or informally at home. Whether students write in class or beyond, this practice reflects their investment and participation in writing do have a positive impact on their development as writers as the more they write the more chances they get to work on their writing skills and strategies and improve them gradually. Students’ formal writing practice seems to be useful as they are more likely to receive teacher’s positive feedback which is not the case with informal writing practice where feedback is not as focused and efficient since students can get some remarks from their friends or family members who are not as proficient writers as the teacher of writing. Teacher’s written feedback (TWF) appears to be an important factor in students’ writer identity construction. This is what Leila explains: “Yes, as a student at university, I’ve passed through many

exams in the module of writing and during my studies especially in writing module, I've learnt some techniques to improve my writings".

In the same vein, Sofia who claims: "Yes, I didn't consider myself as a writer since my writing was somehow not good but I've changed my mind. Now, I think I'm a writer especially when two of my best teachers told me that my writing is good. My studies require writing especially next year (research paper) that's why I'm doing my best to improve my writing skill trying to be as simple as possible".

Having a positive impact on the reader makes them satisfied, proud, and confident writers as they think that they can safely rely on their writing skills and strategies to produce good essays and achieve their writing objectives. These qualities make them feel legitimate writers regardless of their struggle with writing. Good writers though believe to have a good mastery of English to some extent, are more confident as users of English and have some kind of ease using the right vocabulary to express themselves, do face difficulties with different aspects of the writing process just like novice writers do. This confirms the connection between the way students manipulate language to produce a given text or genre and their self-confidence as writers. The more students engage in writing a particular type of text, the more this confidence increases. This is in line with Casanave's (2004) perspective on genre as written products produced for social purposes, understandings, and ways of using language.

However, they are positive about their ability to improve with each writing task and opportunity. They believe that as long as they can get their message across whether their English is simple or more professional and sophisticated, there is always room for improvement because there is no "perfect" writer or text. This confirms White's (1986, p.10) perspective of writing as the process of expressing the ideas, information, knowledge, or experience. Therefore, writing is mainly a process of communication between writers and readers that is based on exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience via a text. For example, some of these students

admitted to face difficulties finding the right words to express their ideas clearly and effectively, but this does not make of them “inferior” or “second class’ writers just because English is not their native language or because they “commit” many grammar mistakes.

In addition, some participants acknowledged the utility of the writing practice they had as well as the positive teacher’s feedback they received that increased their self-confidence as writers. For example, Youcef believes that he is a student writer and justified his claim by the writing practice he did as an EFL student and pre-service teacher at ENSB. He explains: “Yes, I do consider myself as a writer because studying English for four years in high school of teachers especially in writing module provided me with the knowledge and support that helped me a lot in this domain. Now, I don’t write for the sake of writing. When I write, I have an aim and a guide to follow in my writing. My teachers’ evaluation during my study inspired me a lot (second and third year). So, I learned a lot from my teachers’ remarks”.

Struggling with writing means that they are doing what it takes to become better writers since they are in an ongoing process of development and transformation as writers. This is in tandem with Tardy’s (2005, p.325) view point as he defines academic writing as “transformation of knowledge”, which involves persuading readers of the work’s value, significance and credibility. Consequently, being a writer is not a fixed state or a status they obtained once they start writing, but a continuous process of becoming that is cumulative in nature. It is the result of little successes and achievements with each text or essay and this means that they are always changing as writers. Because writers should have a minimum degree of freedom in writing as many participants stated, good writers have a balance attitude as they are able to negotiate and cope with writing conventions instead of being passive and completely embrace them nor rejecting them altogether.

Thus, good writers try to survive and find ways to adapt to their readers' expectations. Therefore, their perceptions of writer identity are realistic, flexible, positive and developmental. This attitude goes in line with the developmental view of writer voice presented by. This finding substantiate Ivanič's (1998, p.9) description of "mature writers" (1998: 9) feeling "alienated" and "devalued" within higher education as "an institution". Therefore, their identities "are threatened". In response, these writers try to "accommodate to the established values and practices of the context they are entering, or - more radically - by questioning and challenging the dominant values and practices".

Because academic ability is frequently evaluated in terms of competence in a specialist written register, students often find their own vernacular writing practices regarded as failed attempts to approximate these standard forms. But institutional views of literacy disguise variability and misrepresent academic literacy as a self-evident way of participating in academic communities (Candlin and Plum, 1998). This in turn encourages the idea that there is one general 'academic English' and one set of strategies for approaching reading and writing tasks that can be applied across disciplines and courses.

All this means, of course, that writing instruction often becomes an exercise in 'fixing up' language problems. English for Academic Purposes is largely a response to the issue of finding ways to undermine a 'single literacy' view and to replace 'remedial' views of teaching with approaches that address students' own writing practices. This view of literacy, then, has implications for notions of expertise and writing competence. We can no longer regard a 'good writer' as someone who has control over the mechanics of grammar, syntax and punctuation, as in the autonomous view of writing. Nor is it someone who is able to mimic expert composing and 'knowledge-transforming' practices by reworking their ideas during writing, as in process models. Instead, modern conceptions of literacy define an expert writer as 'one who has attained the local knowledge that enables her to write

as a member of a discourse community' (Carter, 1990: 226 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 53-54).

The second category is novice or beginner writers. This is discussed in the next section.

5.2.2. Novice or Beginner Student Writers

Unlike the good student writers, the novice or beginner student writers are less optimistic and positive about their writer identity but they are not completely negative like the student writers in denial. Therefore, they stand in the middle of the spectrum between students with extremely positive perceptions to students with extremely negative perceptions of writer identity. Novice student writers do consider themselves as writers just like the good writers, but they also recognize and admit the fact that they struggle to write. This struggle takes place at different levels and with different aspects of writing. Many participants confessed their struggle is due to the lack of vocabulary to express their ideas efficiently to the readers.

As a result, they find it difficult to convince the readers who cannot clearly understand what they, novice writers, are trying to say through their essay. The lack of clarity in the text is often due to the fact that they do not master the related vocabulary or use common words that could be less expressive or vague. For example, Anissa claims being an amateur writer who enjoys writing as a hobby. She explains: "Yes, a slightly amateur writer because I really enjoy this activity especially when I was at high school. I used to look for good topics and issues (social and cultural) inspiring topics, the best writing strategies so to be systematic and methodological. Writing is a pleasure that makes our thinking deeper and more reasonable if it is methodological and rich of good ideas".

In addition, Assia also considers herself as a beginner writer justifying her opinion by the lack of practice resulting from her preference to express herself using

other skills than writing as she comments: “Yes, I consider myself as a writer but not a competent one. Sometimes, I write small paragraphs (exams and writing session) but writing is not my favourite hobby and I don’t write very often”.

Furthermore, Siham claims writing as a means to understand and deal with her feeling. This reflects the psychological aspects of writing or the therapeutic functions of writing as expressed by participants. She comments: “Yes, personally, I write when I feel alone just as a means to forget about things that hurt me. I am a beginner in writing and I wish I will improve my writing and be a good writer why not”.

Finally, because of their awareness and positive perceptions of their struggles despite their weaknesses in writing, those students could most probably shift towards stronger and more legitimate writer identity via regular practice and encouraging teacher written feedback as was the case of Sofia.

The third and last category of student writers based on this study findings is writers in denial. This is the focus of the next section.

5.2.3. Student Writers in Denial

Although these students engage in the writing process as EFL learners and pre-service teachers of English through regular classroom practice and homework, they do not consider themselves as writers and therefore are described as student writers in denial, because their writing practice, writing skills and strategies and the texts they produce do not match with their “ideal” image of what it means to be a student writer. They justified their negative perceptions of their writer identity by providing different reasons that reflect the gap between where they actually stand and where they would like to be as writers. However, it is worth mentioning that those students are the minority compared to other students who do believe that they are writers and who are either confident or less confident writers, that is , good writers or novice writers as it was already discussed above. Student writers in denial have a

number of misconceptions and beliefs about writing that prevent them from openly and confidently recognize themselves as writers.

As explained earlier, these misconceptions are related to students' understandings of writer identity, writing as a process and its functions and purposes as well as what makes good writing or a good argument essay. One of these misconceptions is the belief that good writers are good readers too, and since they do not read enough, they cannot consider themselves as writers. They further justify their claims by their poor vocabulary that is not as rich as that of good writers who are avid readers and thus have a stronger vocabulary that allows them to easily find the right words to express their ideas and thoughts in writing.

Those students also seem to see themselves as future writers rather than actual writers because they think they are not writers yet; they will become writers the day they get closer to their "ideal" image of the writer or idealized writer identity. The conditions students put to be or become writers relate to their perceptions of writer identity and writing in general. These perceptions are made of fears or obstacles that students believe they should overcome before claiming themselves as student writers. Then, they would be able to share their writing or texts, influencing the readers, having rich vocabulary, having good reading skills, imagination and inspiration to write, being able to write about different topics, feeling free to write, and personal qualities like being shy or personal preferences like preferring speaking and listening to writing as a means of communication.

For example, Fatima does write and her friends seem to like her writing, but she finds it difficult to share her writing with others as she claims: "I write and I want to have a positive impact on people but I rarely share with people. Some friends like what I write but I feel afraid of sharing so I am not a writer yet".

This fear of sharing one's writing might stem from the fear of being judged as a result of holding specific views on specific topics, or being judged as an

incompetent writers because of language problems such as lack of vocabulary or grammar mistakes. These psychological limitations like fear prove the strong relationship between writing and identity as readers can judge writers based on the way they write and the topics they discuss as well as the positions they take and the arguments they use to defend them. Consequently, the way students write reveal a lot about who they are and therefore students prefer to avoid being judged by avoiding writing unless they are obliged to do it as part of their learning process.

Another reason some students gave about why they do not consider themselves as writers is related to their personal preferences. Writing is a means of communication, yet not all students prefer to express themselves through writing. Yacine is one of those students. He justified his position as follows: “I am fond of reading others writing and enjoy the weird and unusual vocabulary and complex grammar structures they use. When I will get enough of this (vocabulary and grammar) I will turn into a writer”.

Yacine not only prefers reading to writing, but believes that he should acquire rich vocabulary just as the writers who write texts he enjoys reading and this means that using sophisticated vocabulary is a priority for him rather than just expressing himself through writing. This also reflects his perception of writing as a manifestation of good English through rich vocabulary.

Meriem also prefers another skill, which is speaking and watching, but her position was more negative as she said that she dislikes writing. She claims that: “I do not have a rich vocabulary and a good style to convince readers. I dislike writing and I prefer to speak directly. I am not patient or have large imagination to write. Good writing means more reading and I prefer watching and listening than reading. So, writing becomes less important according to me”.

Another reason was presented by Ilham who believes that the obstacle between her and being a writer is freedom. She claims that: “I can write and hold the pen but

I am not a writer because when I write, I feel obliged to write. So, writing is not just a skill but an art”.

It is clear that the ways participants described themselves as writers reflect their perceptions of writing as a skill and literacy, their knowledge of the academic writing discourse and its values and standards that determine how the features of good writing are taught in the classroom, understood and reproduced by students in their argument essays. The participants’ justifications of the ways they see themselves as writers are in tandem with Ivanič (1998) claims that essay writing goes beyond the mastery of language and academic register to the ways students position themselves and the roles they play in relation to different discourse communities. This clearly explain the interplay between writing and writer identity and the text as a materialization and reflection of the writer as as individual and text generator.

After answering the second sub-research question, we will answer the third one as follows:

5.3. Answer of Research question3: *What Factors Influence Students’ Writer Identity Construction?*

The participants seem to have divergent perceptions of the meaning of their writer identity construction journey. These perceptions seem to reflect their knowledge of writing as a skill, art, craft and a process. This knowledge is the result of their writing environment, their context and the standards of good writing and how they perceive writing and readers and why they write. Therefore, becoming a writer is not easy to most of them, as they seem to struggle to write even when their English is quite good.

By this, I mean a good command of grammar, sentence structure, syntax and a large vocabulary based on my own criteria for good writing as they are reflected in the correction grid I use to evaluate the students writing for both daily writing

practice and exams. I need to describe my criteria and discuss how they relate to the dominant standards of good academic writing and how I agreed with my colleagues to adopt it. How these criteria are common in teaching materials and international English language exams like IELTS. In addition, these criteria are discussed in the book “Assessing Writing” written by Weigle (1996). According to participants, not everyone can be a writer since writing is a complex process and it is more than jotting down some words on a piece of paper. Becoming a writer depends on a number of qualities and skills the writer should have, knowledge and even some ethics. The participants either see themselves as writers or not based on a number of criteria.

Most of the participants seem to be aware that writer identity construction (or becoming a writer) is not a linear process as the academic instruction or practice often deals with it, including me as a teacher of writing, but a complex process of self-discovery, personal growth via learning, social experiences, interactions within the writing community and environment, readers and coping with their needs and expectations. This reflects the complexity of writing itself as a social act, cognitive process of meaning making, and a psychological process of interacting with the self and others and understanding oneself and others in an uncertain world both locally and globally as a consequence of the position of English both in Algeria and at the international level. Lee (2010, p.71) emphasizes this idea saying: “ writing an argument is, at the very least, a negotiation between the writer and the reader”. This means that each writing experience is unique because student writers are never the same; they keep growing and changing with each writing task. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to use the term “ identities” in the plural rather than “identity” in the singular to highlight this complexity.

The same writer can feel empowered by academic writing and writing experiences and environment sometimes and oppressed other times, free and able to make choices and limited by the standards sometimes, confident in their

knowledge and writing skills and performance and timid, unsure and doubtful at times. Sometimes, they have a clear idea about the readers and write to imaginary readers other times. They are able to tackle some topics and not others. They consider formal English standards as guidelines for good writing and other students see them as rules to be followed and therefore limit their freedom and creativity as writers.

The connection between students' attitude and writing has gained little attention. The attitude towards writing, as a whole, has a significant impact on achievement; it either enhances it or hinders it. Graham et al. (2005, p.518) stated that writing attitude is "an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feels, ranging from happy to unhappy". Yet, not all students have positive attitudes towards writing; they may show negative ones. As noted earlier, some students are apprehensive or refrain from writing and show unwillingness towards learning and practicing this skill. Daly and Miller (1975) defined writing apprehension as "a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individual to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing." Such apprehension results mainly from a writer having low self-esteem.

The ways that the participants describe the process of becoming a writer or the profile of the good writer also reflect their own understandings or philosophies of academic writing which sometimes march their learning experiences and sometimes are different from the official syllabus and agendas of academic writing and seem to put the whole writing pedagogy into question since just like writing seems to be an empowering process for some participants, it is also perceived as an oppressive experience to others as it limits their possibilities to write, freedom to express themselves and puts more pressure on them by expecting them to reproduce the standards of good writing and thus makes writing more challenging as they are expected to write well not just write to express themselves.

To answer this research question in more specific terms, based on the students' responses to both questionnaires data and written accounts on writer identity, seven factors have emerged from the analysis of their responses: who are the student writers ? how do they perceive their reading skills? what do they write ?to whom? how? why and in which context? These factors are discussed below under the following headings:

5.3.1.participants as authors

5.3.2. participants' perceptions of their reading skills.

5.3.3.participants' investment in writing skills and habits

5.3.4. participants' perceptions of argument essay as a genre

5.3.5 participants' perceptions of reader as audience

5.3.6.context as writing community

5.3.7.reasons for writing

5.3.1. Participants' as Authors: What Do the Writers Bring to the Writing Process?

This factor relates to students' potential as writers that allows them to construct their writer identity. The latter refers to who are students as individuals, students and writing community members because they share the status of writer with other members who are both writers and readers at the same time. This also related to what students bring to the writing task which is the foundation of the auto-biographical-self that we will discuss in detail in the coming sections.

a) Students as Multilingual Individuals

The linguistic richness that many students possess, with proficiency in multiple languages (Arabic, Tamazight, French, etc.) is indeed a valuable asset

that can positively affect their journey as writers. While some students may prefer speaking in these languages rather than writing in them, it is important to recognize the potential benefits that their multilingualism can bring to their writing experience.

Firstly, being multilingual allows students to draw from a wider range of linguistic resources. Different languages have unique vocabularies, expressions, and nuances that can enhance students' writings in EFL. They can incorporate concepts, images and metaphors from different languages to add depth and variety to their writing, making it more engaging and captivating for readers.

Furthermore, being able to think and express ideas in multiple languages can enhance students' overall creativity and flexibility in writing. They have the ability to navigate between different language systems and cultural perspectives, allowing them to approach topics from various angles. This linguistic agility can enable them to approach writing with a fresh and unique perspective, potentially leading to innovative and thought-provoking pieces of work.

In addition, writing in multiple languages can also contribute to students' personal and cultural identity. It allows them to stay connected with their heritage, cultural practices, and traditions. By incorporating elements of their native language or other languages they are proficient in, they can infuse their writing with their personal experiences and cultural background. This can make their writing more authentic, relatable, and impactful for readers who share similar cultural backgrounds or have an interest in diverse perspectives.

It is important to acknowledge and value the linguistic diversity that students bring to the writing experience. Educators and society, in general, should promote and celebrate this linguistic richness, providing support and resources for students to develop their writing skills in multiple languages. By doing so, students can fully harness the potential of their multilingual abilities, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse literary landscape.

Research on multilingualism and its impact on writing is a well-studied area. Scholars have explored how being multilingual can positively influence the writing abilities of individuals. and lead to several benefits as follows:

1.Linguistic Resources: A study by Cummins (2000) suggests that multilingual individuals have access to a wider range of linguistic resources, which can contribute to their creativity in writing. They can rely on different languages to express ideas, use unique vocabulary, and communicate nuances that may be absent in a single language.

2.Cultural Identity: Researchers such as Lo Bianco (2000) emphasize that writing in multiple languages allows individuals to maintain a connection with their cultural identity. It enables them to bring their personal experiences, cultural practices, and heritage into their writing, making it more authentic and representative of their background.

3.Cognitive Flexibility: According to Bialystok (2001), multilingual individuals develop cognitive flexibility as they continuously switch between different languages. This cognitive flexibility can transfer to their writing, enabling them to approach topics from different perspectives, think more creatively, and produce innovative pieces of work.

4.Language Awareness: Studies like those conducted by Byrnes (2009) highlight the importance of language awareness that multilingual individuals possess. They are sensitive to linguistic variations, grammatical structures, and styles of expression. This awareness can make their writing more refined and demonstrate a deeper understanding of language use.

It is worth noting that the benefits and advantages of multilingualism in writing can vary depending on individual experiences, linguistic proficiency, and cultural contexts. Different scholars may have different perspectives and findings related to this topic. This linguistic richness is a favourable environment for

students to develop their reading skills as well since the latter are an important source of input for writing. These context-related findings are consistent with Hyland's (2009, p.72) claim: "Socio-cultural factors such as gender, social class, age, religion, ethnicity, regional background, and so on are key aspects of our experiences and can help shape our projection of an authorial identity."

In addition to what participants bring to the writing process in terms of social and cultural backgrounds, their perceptions of their own reading skills as many of them believe that good writers are good readers too. This aspect is dealt with in the next section.

b) Students' Perceptions of their Reading Skills

Since many students highlighted the relationship between reading and writing and described good writers as avid and eager readers who read a lot of books on different topics which allows them to have a good knowledge and input for writing. Thus, students' perceptions of their writer identity also seems to depend on their perceptions of their reading skills that are considered as a key asset for any writer. In addition, of being a source of ideas for writing, reading seems to be used as an activity to enlarge students' vocabulary, which enables them to be more comfortable expressing themselves in writing. Reading is important as an activity that increases students' "readership awareness" that is necessary for "good" writing. This is in line with the reader-oriented approach to writing discussed in chapter one. The latter assumes that writers' goal is to engage with readers through the text (Hyland, 2009, p.30-31). This implies the text as language ; words, sentences, and paragraphs and text as discourse; how language is used in specific situations.

Most of students admitted being poor readers or irregular readers. Some of them did not consider themselves as writers because they do not read enough and others do consider themselves as writers who need to read more. This connection between reading and writing as complementary skills has been proven by a myriad of studies in L1, L2, EFL contexts in the related literature.

c) Students' Perceptions of Readers' Feedback (Oral and Written)

Yet, writers also need reactions at least from a closed group of other writers in order to get objective and constructive feedback because they share their texts with the larger audience. When we apply this principle to the academic writing classroom, we observe that participants are often afraid of criticism and tend to take their peers or teacher's feedback personally; this can be embarrassing, risky and harmful to their self-esteem as writers and therefore reduce their self-confidence.

Therefore, some participants think peer's feedback is more friendly than the teacher's one as unlike the latter, peer feedback doesn't imply any power relationships since peers are all struggling to improve as writers even if their writing skills differ. Yet, many participants believe that the teacher's feedback is more useful and valid as they think the teacher is more experienced and knowledgeable in writing than their peers and sometimes the teacher is considered as an "expert writer and reader" who has more power and authority on participants as after all they are the ones who evaluate their texts in exams and decide whether participants are good or less good writers depending on the exam marks they give them.

This tendency of participants giving more value to teacher's feedback even when they believe that it is unfair, judgemental and oppressive as it labels them and put them into boxes and categories of good and poor writers. Some students question this classification and others take it as a fact. They believe that teacher's feedback is more important because writing is an instrumental skill. This determines their academic success and therefore since writing exams and evaluation is done by the teacher, they feel obliged to surrender and follow the rules which might ensure good writing performance and thus academic success rather than resisting these rules and being sanctioned by getting bad marks or simply failing academically.

Constructive feedback is the result of participants' interaction with readers both real and imaginary. This shows participants' awareness of the role readers play in their process of writer identity construction and expression. In addition, the findings of this study in regards to participants' perceptions of themselves as readers and their own readers reflect the reader-oriented approach to writing developed by Nystrand (1989) who argues that "the success of any text is the writer's ability to satisfy the rhetorical demands of readers: we have to embed our writing in a non-local discourse world".

Again, this statement supports this study results that showed that participants write for both "real" and "imaginary", "familiar" and "unfamiliar", and "local" and "global" readers due to the position of English as an international language. In this sense, writing is also seen as communication, dialog, exchange, and interaction between writers and readers. This is in tandem with Hoey's (2001) view of writing as a harmonious dance between writers and readers who carefully anticipate and follow each other's steps. Hyland (2009,p.31) ,in his turn, comments on this perspective shedding light on the social aspects of writing as "a joint endeavour between writers and readers, co-constructed through the active understanding of rhetorical situations and the likely responses of readers". Finally, most participants in this study seem to value teacher's written feedback (TWF) as a source of input for better writing performance. This finding supports Sadiq's (2011, p.75) claim that: "Both teachers and students believe that feedback is indispensable throughout the writing process". This positive attitude towards TWF is justified by participants' perceptions of the teacher as "an expert writer and reader". This in turn confirms Montgomery and Baker's (2007) view that "teachers are aware throughout the writing process of their students' perceptions of feedback and they try effectively to provide them with constructive and encouraging feedback".

Another factor that determines participants' perceptions of themselves as writers is their engagement and investment in writing both in class and beyond. This is what the next section tackles.

5.3.2. Participants' Investment in Writing:

This factor is about how students approach the writing process and their writing practice that covers both their past and present writing experiences. Because writers are known by their writing and the texts they produce as a result of this activity, student writer identity is based on students' ability to write and the writing skills and strategies they develop and this is an on-going process. Writer identity thus is about student writers being and doing.

5.3.3. Participants' Perceptions of their Writing Skills and Habits

Through daily practice or at least regular writing practice, students can develop sustainable and durable writing habits that are essential for being and becoming writers because writing should not be an activity they just do when the teacher asks them. If so, writing becomes superficial and meaningless, as it is not the result of students willingness and motivation to write. Therefore, students cannot feel and see themselves as writers.

According to Bandura (1986) self-efficacy is learners' beliefs in their capability to succeed and acquire new information or complete a task or activity to an appointed level of performance. Bandura (1992) believed that there is a difference between students with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy. The learners with high self-efficacy feel confident about finding the solution to a problem because the learners have created an idea to problem solving that has accomplished in the past.

Overall, students who evaluate themselves as poor writers tend to be reluctant to engage in writing tasks and produce brief or incomplete pieces of writing while students with higher writing self-efficacy have been found to complete writing tasks at a higher standard (Bandura, 1994). In both areas of composition and self-efficacy, researchers have discovered enormous interest in writing self-efficacy, and they have observed a strong relationship between writing

self-belief and writings final results in universities (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Johnson, 1996). Pajares and Valiante (2001) examined 218 fifth grade students about the influence of writing self-efficacy, writing ability, perceived usefulness of writing, and writing apprehension on the essay-writing performance. They discovered that despite the anticipated strong effect of writing ability, self-efficacy beliefs made an important part of the prediction of performance. In the same vein, Pajares (2003,p. 139), self-efficacy beliefs may explain students' writing-related perceptions because students should be perceived "as proactive and self-regulating rather than reactive and controlled by biological or environmental forces".

This practice also helps them decode and understand the language of the academic writing community and thus they start asking and negotiating more freedom with the teacher. Some students though develop some agency This happens mainly at the planning and revision stages where students have more options and feel freer to choose and take decisions though most of them end up writing in the five-paragraph structure widely used at university as the norm for essays. Some students though develop some agency via this freedom to write. This also leads to a feeling of empowerment via writing as it helps students improve not only as writers but also as individuals via the different needs writing satisfies like therapeutic, communicative, psychological, social, cognitive and cultural and linguistic.

Although there was a feeling of inferiority expressed by some students who think their English is poor as EFL students who tend to write less good text compared to native speakers ,yet, other students did not feel this way at all since they estimate having a good mastery of English. This, according to them, made them feel equal to native speakers.

Most students see themselves as future teachers of English and say they write to develop specific writing skills that are important to any teacher of English for

personal and professional purposes. But some students in addition to being future teachers of English, also see themselves as writers and say they write purposefully to a real audience and are able to produce satisfying texts that meet reader's needs as well as their own needs as individuals, citizens, members of the academic writing community and as global citizens connected to the world via internet.

Therefore, it is clear that students have different identities that coexist together and shape who they are as individuals. Some have managed to build daily or stable or regular writing habits and reliable writing skills and thus see themselves as writers in addition to being students and future teachers of English. Yet, all students feel that they have one of these identities but each student has different ways to see himself. Most students seem to have developed all of these identities.

(a) Past and Present Writing Experiences

The participants' perceptions of writing in general, and argument essay writing in particular seem to be the result of their writing experiences both past and present, their opportunities to write in class and beyond, the standards of good writing as they understand them and have been taught, how they evaluate their linguistic abilities and competence in English as a language, their positions as students of English as a foreign language in a specific context which is characterized by a rich linguistic scenery as most or all participants are multilingual since they master Arabic, French and English in addition to other languages like Spanish, German, Turkish to name but a few.

An important part of participants' knowledge of writing and their writing experiences are related to the classroom, teachers of writing and university or in this case, teachers' training college but also to past writing experiences both in middle and secondary schools. This means that participants construct their writer's identities based on their past knowledge of languages.

Therefore, the teachers of writing, academic writing instruction and pedagogy seem vital in participants' journeys to becoming writers as they equip them with the knowledge, skills and strategies of writing and give them as authentic opportunities to write as possible which seems to increase their awareness of the reader, the process of writing, the text, and the context in which writing takes place.

Those authentic past and present opportunities to write in class and beyond, and the positive oral or written teacher's feedback they receive construct participants' positive writing experiences which seem to increase their self-confidence as student writers who trust both their knowledge of writing as a process, knowledge of topics for writing and personal real life experiences which are relevant and can be used as a source of ideas to develop their argument essays, logically and critically present their arguments and eventually convince the reader of the validity of their opinions and positions.

(b) Students' Writing Difficulties or Struggle

The analysis of the collected data revealed that the participants struggled to becoming writers by negotiating their access and position into the academic writing community which represents their writing environment. The concept of struggle is used purposefully as it best describes the different challenges those students faced through their writing tasks trying to become writers whether at the cognitive, linguistic, social and psychological levels. Knowing that students experience university as a new culture, environment and context, the participants in this study also experienced power struggle in a new academic context, but tried to accommodate the possibilities of reshaping a new, positive writer identity by learning and understanding the academic writing discourse and meeting readers' expectations including the teachers of writing. These findings corroborate the studies conducted by Burke, 2010; Ivanič, 1998; Norton & Gao, 2000.

In the present study, writing is viewed as a complex process which serves as a social action and a bridge between students' internal and external worlds as well

as a tool to express themselves and their ever changing identities as individuals and members of the academic writing community. This is made more complex by the discourse, practice, expectations and standards it imposes on students before they are accepted as recognized members of the writing community.

The participants' struggle is at the core of their journeys to becoming writers even though they can perceive it as limiting or sometimes empowering depending on their own philosophies of academic writing, beliefs and attitudes towards the pedagogy of writing that is represented in teachers' behaviors. This struggle and the different challenges those students face imply that students go through a transformational process of becoming writers. Each writing experience is unique and thus students keep changing, developing and transforming with each writing experience and therefore becoming is another vital concept, which is as meaningful and important as the concept of struggle.

As noted earlier, academic discourse and writing conventions might in some cases limit students' freedom to grow as writers by allowing them a safe space and freedom to discover who they are, the abilities they have and how they can use them to have a voice in writing. Thus, through participants' witnesses and shared experiences of writing, there is a feeling of frustration and sometimes oppression that these conventions cause to students. This feeling of oppression seems also to harm the way participants see themselves as writers and thus their writer identities. For example, writing conventions probably take away participants' freedom and space to develop as writers as they oblige them to fit in a mold that dictates who the good writers are and how they should write. This labelling might be unfair and exclusive of the students who are struggling to find their path in the messy labyrinth of the writing process and try to build their own writing habits based on their personal differences and specific experiences of writing past and present.

In this study, participants claimed to struggle to have access to the academic discourse by making efforts to understand how academic writing functions and

what makes good argument essays. This knowledge once acquired apparently remains theoretical and does not find its way to the writing process or at least students often did not have the tools to transform it into a text. Therefore, knowledge of writing is both a source of confidence and a source of doubt. This dilemma of having a theoretical knowledge of writing seems useless and probably increases their writing anxiety. They know how to proceed, but are stuck with that knowledge which does not allow them to dig deep into the writing process. Put differently, all participants were familiar with the aim of the argument essay, which is to convince the reader about their opinion or position, but they did not know how to convince the reader and what is the role of knowledge in this task. This impasse is the result, I believe, of the way writing is taught.

Students' struggle with writing seemed to match teachers' struggle with how to teach writing. The dominant discourse of academic writing is based on specific standards like caution and impersonality, which seems to turn writing into a superficial activity or a task that students perform almost mechanically.

There is no doubt that struggle is the dominant feature of participants' experience of academic writing. Students seemed to struggle not only because of language difficulties like lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, awareness of the conventions that guide the academic writing style or genre or the features of the academic writing discourse, but with how they see themselves as writers who try to have access to the academic discourse community and to negotiate the rules and conventions of writing, follow them when they can master them, ignore or avoid them when they can't handle them or completely reject them or resist them, which made writing even more painful and harder. As Yazid stated: "Writing is the individual production after a hard thinking and organization of ideas."

A deeper analysis of the participants' struggles may lead us to draw the following conclusions:

1. Self-doubt about one's ability to write due to language difficulties. A few students only seem to be confident when writing, trust their language and skills and believe they are reliable. This feeling of self-doubt leads students to develop a sense of inferiority and stigma as EFL writers believing that native speakers of English are at an advantage. This point was rejected by which has been proven to be far from being true by Holliday (2000) who claimed that the notion of Nativespeakerism is rather racist and discriminating in nature and argued that native speakers of English do struggle with academic writing just like their EFL counterparts do. This also applies to the struggle of Algerian students writing in Arabic though it is the mother tongue to most of them.

2. The students' limited opportunities to write outside the classroom. Less practice means less confidence and less mastery or competence.

3. Students are often obliged to imitate an imposed model of good writing that can be oppressing and unfair as it expects them to write like native speakers (who also struggle in writing but they are presented as the ideal model in the EFL context) or at least to produce mistake-free texts which is out of reach to most students. Thus, they feel unable and this discourages them to write.

4. Students are constantly judged, evaluated, and labelled as good or bad writers which is stressful and depressing to them.

5. The amount of anxiety associated to writing as a tough skill or task that is complex and demanding in terms of language, thinking, experience, logic, attitude, especially that students may not have the support they need if most of the writing is done as a homework or they cannot ask for this support in class for reasons like shyness, self-esteem, peers' pressure, teacher's authority, large classes and the difficulty to give individualized written and oral feedback to all students in a writing session of one hour and a half or even three hours.

6. In argument writing, participants find difficulties to develop arguments and convince the reader who, according to them, may be more knowledgeable about the topic or an expert sometimes. It is hard to take a position and defend one's opinions using evidence. Students also find themselves facing many problems that they cannot solve or struggle to solve like unfamiliar topics, limited vocabulary, limited sentence structures that limit students' ability to be flexible and express themselves freely.

Some students confessed they are not good at writing complex sentences and overuse simple sentences. They find difficulties to express causes and consequences even if some experts believe that good writing is not about writing long and complex sentences but getting the message across as clearly and simply as possible. Yet, not all students think in this way, as some do believe that sophisticated language and complex sentence structures are at the heart of good writing. It is not easy to convince them of the opposite as those beliefs and conceptions are deeply rooted in them and very dear to them.

7. Allowing part of students' private lives to be openly exposed to the reader especially if the text includes intimate or personal details about the writer like their feelings, beliefs, knowledge, lives and experiences that seem scary and risky to share. Sharing one's vulnerability with the reader means being completely real and authentic through what they write about and how they express themselves in writing. This exposure not only requires willingness but also courage in a conservative environment which favors privacy over sharing especially in the academic context since too much sharing might sound disrespectful to the reader and mainly to the teacher. For example, if a female student describes a friend in writing, it can be accepted, but if she says that this person is her boyfriend, this would sound rude and disrespectful to the teacher.

However, some participants see the writing they do outside the classroom as purely personal, creative and therapeutic as it is almost their only chance to be in

control of their writing process as they believe they have more freedom to take deliberate decisions on what to write ; the topics of interest for them, how to write; following up an outline or start free writing directly, and when to write which seems to result from their own motivation, inspiration or need to write. This can be for the sake of improving their English, practicing writing, self-expressing their feelings and ideas, managing their feelings and understanding and negotiate their relationship with themselves and the world through self-discovery and inner dialogue which are used for therapeutic purposes. The latter are rarely possible in class where the teacher seems to guide, direct and control the entire writing process or an important part of it, according to some of them.

Yet, other participants believe that they are not writers because of the way they perceive their relationship with their teacher of writing, which they describe as limiting, controlling and power based and not collaborative. This leads to more control and less freedom to write creatively , which is at the core of being and becoming a writer.

Some participants' criticism of the current academic writing pedagogy that seems to prevent them from becoming writers in their own sense that is based on creativity and freedom. Yet, why other students seem satisfied with this pedagogy and believe it helps them develop as writers. Why there is a conflict or difference in the way academic writing practice is perceived by participants? These divergent perspectives seem to result from the participants different beliefs, understandings, and experiences of academic writing where some felt more empowered by writing than others, freer to express themselves and be creative than others and more appreciated by past and current teachers of writing via positive oral and written feedback which is also the result of power relationship dynamics which are not always in favor of the participants.

Firstly, academic writing standards play a major role in participants' feeling of empowerment or limitation and oppression. Being told how to write by the

teacher and feeling obliged to follow some rules and standards to sound academic, relevant and objective or critical is perceived by some participants as a real threat to their freedom, creativity and criticality. These are at the core of becoming a writer. At this point of the discussion, it is worth elaborating on the idea of the politics of writing and academic writing at university as an institution with specific needs, expectations and practices or politics and how participants struggle to survive these standards. These standards seem to take their freedom and control of writing away. By asking them to reproduce specific models of essays that are accepted as being good, academic and relevant in higher education. This is a call for things to change, by asking teachers to incorporate more freedom in their courses and more flexibility regarding the standards of good writing.

Secondly, the participants develop multiple identities as students, readers and future teachers of EFL in the diverse writing community they belong to while adapting themselves to the new academic environment after joining university. They constantly try to have more active roles as members of the academic writing community through looking for real writing opportunities, deal with readers' expectations, develop better writing skills and strategies, which makes of them gradually more away from the margin of this community towards the center. Although some of the participants felt inferior as EFL students and writers compared to native speakers, which has a negative impact on their self-confidence as writers and thus their attitudes and perceptions of their writer identity. Participants' application of academic writing conventions in the hope to be accepted and recognized by other readers and members of the writing community as "competent writers" relates to Bloemnaert's (2005) view of the value of receiving recognition from others stating that: "We can only succeed in our identities if others recognize them, which requires us to use, appropriate, and change the discourses that we come across" (Bakhtin, 1986).

However, the more they engage in their community via interaction with the other members like teachers, peers and friends, the more they become confident as

writers. This enables them to continually develop as writers and see each writing task as a unique experience. These identities are influenced with the different roles they play as EFL students of English, individuals and Algerians who feel curious about the English culture and proud of their national identity, good users of English, good communicators, students who have to write for academic success, readers of other texts usually novels, marginalized student writers who struggle to be recognized by the members of the academic community and who still do not have an active role in this community. Therefore, novice writers feel intimidated by professional writers and often doubt their writing skills. On the other hand, confident student writers believe that English is just a means of communication and that their ideas, knowledge and experiences are more valuable in constructing their writer's identities. This represents what they bring to the writing process.

Therefore, challenge and struggle are constantly present in the participants' writing experiences and journey of writer identity construction in the academic context. The struggle also is the result of thinking locally and writing using a global language or an international one. Striking a balance between the local culture and the global cultural aspects of English is another challenge to participants who seem to be aware of the global reader who is often an imaginary person who reads in English.

In addition, their personality traits such as self-confidence, shyness, courage, risk-taking, curiosity, willingness to share or being introvert and reserved are another important factor related to participants' background that seems to shape their writer's identities. A writer is a person who masters English and is able to express themselves clearly and effectively, yet, if a student is shy and thus unwilling to share their texts as a result to this shyness, there are little chances that they can develop writer's identities. This is because the latter are based on the writer's interaction with the reader via the text that become a bridge between the two as it allows exchange, communication, mutual respect, recognition and learning which are important conditions for constructing writer's identities.

5.3.4. Participants' Perceptions of Argument Essay and Good Writing

"At an advanced level, writing in academic writing shifts from basic communicative and task-completion purposes to higher order thinking skills such as analysing, synthesizing, and critically interpreting information for the sake of presenting and promoting research," according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 341). Argument writing ensures these new writing goals by requiring students to adopt a stance and support it with reasoned arguments and evidence drawn from critical thinking.

At university, students' perceptions of argument essay seem to be closely related to their perceptions and understandings of writing that is seen as a skill, ability, talent, passion and an art. In addition, the purposes and functions of writing differ greatly among students though most of them seem to prioritize self-expression and communication as primary functions of writing. For example, if writing aims at producing "good texts" that are clear, relevant, coherent, interesting, well-structured and written with a good mastery of English, the writer according to this product-oriented perspective of writing, is the student who is able or has a necessary skills to produce those texts. If writing is about influencing the reader, the writer would be the person who is able to use language so that they can have an impact on the reader whether this impact is about convincing, gaining empathy, solidarity, attracting attention or simply creating a connection with the reader.

Participants have different or conflicting perceptions of writing compared to me, the teacher and this has often led to a kind of resistance to my writing instruction when it was not too risky to participants' academic success; giving more freedom (like at the pre-writing stage such as planning, outlining and brainstorming) is a better option, especially that most of this stage is abstract and happens in students' heads ; to the exception of outlining which has a written and physical form) , and can then be seen and examined by the teacher.

This also helps them expanding their vocabulary, which seems more important to express themselves than grammar that comes as a second priority after

vocabulary. Grammar is important to build meaning and make the text clear and readable and thus effectively communicate participants' ideas and feelings to the reader and create a connection between the writer and reader which is vital for having the position impact on them. This impact often determines the quality of the text and thus whether the writer is good or not as it was discussed earlier.

The way participants defined argument writing and the criteria they presented for a good argument and the good argument essay reflect the dominant standards of good academic writing promoted by the academic discourse through both teaching and evaluation of writing. This also often reflected in teacher's practice as readers and examiners.

One important advantage of writing is that it allows students to take clear positions and defend them using solid argument. This helps students foster their critical thinking skills and develop their writer identity as the essay they end up writing reflects who they are and how they think and their personality. The writer is the generator and therefore the text somehow reflects the writer's personality. This shows the vital role of the writer being the text generator and therefore the text somehow reflects the writer's personality.

In the same vein, writing reflects the writer's thoughts and beliefs too as Salima explains: "Writing is a means of expressing ourselves, your ideas and position too". Ideas and positions represent an important aspect of the writer's personality or identity. Again, Saida emphasises that: "Writing is to express your ideas. It has to do with the structure too". Writer's personality is reflected in writing through their knowledge about the topics they write about which in turn is based on their personal experiences in a given social contexts since writers are also individuals and citizens that interact and are effected by their environment. This is what Imene explains: "Writing is a reflection of our knowledge, it shows my style and how I used to express my ideas, experiences, feelings by using a written form".

Therefore, through writing, students have an opportunity to emphasize that they are not a copy of the reader and they still have different ideas, opinions, experiences and perspectives as their philosophy, the way they perceive reality and the world around them is different even if they share the same physical, linguistic, cultural, social and political environment with the reader.

As noted earlier, the criteria for good argument essay underscore most participants' good knowledge of academic writing, which is an important aspect of what they bring to the writing process besides personal experiences and knowledge of the world and their reality. Writing is the result of their interaction with their social, linguistic, cultural and even the political environment, that is, the space where they write.

Participants seem to all agree that taking a clear position is necessary for writing a good argument essay. This is obviously the result of instruction and their perceptions of argument essay as a genre, its functions and features. This is part of their knowledge of writing on the whole which comes from many sources such as learning/instruction, interaction with teachers, peers and friends, reading as well as personal experience.

Instruction plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions and knowledge of writing genres. It is clear from the participants' responses that their teachers have provided guidance and instruction on the characteristics and expectations of argument essays, including the need for a clear position. Through explicit instruction and modelling, teachers have helped students understand the purpose of argument essays and how a clear position contributes to effective communication.

Reading materials, both academic and non-academic, have exposed students to different examples of argument essays. By analyzing the structure, content, and overall presentation of these texts, students have gained insights into the conventions and expectations of the genre. Exposure to well-written argument

essays can highlight the significance of a clear position and its role in convincing readers.

Personal experiences have also influenced students' understanding of writing genres, including argument essays. Experiences in real-life debates, discussions, or persuasive situations have shaped their perception of the impact a clear position has in influencing opinions and generating convictions. Their personal experiences have enhanced their understanding of the importance of taking a strong stance in argument essays.

Overall, these various sources have contributed to their knowledge of writing genres and shaped their perceptions of effective writing practices. There is no doubt that teachers can leverage these sources to provide comprehensive and engaging instruction that supports students' growth as writers.

The acknowledgment of argumentation difficulty, even for proficient writers, suggests that writing skills are not solely based on ease or difficulty, but on the ability to engage with and meet the demands of different writing tasks. Argument essay writing is not challenging for weak students only who struggle with English, but even for some students whose English proficiency is higher, because argument writing appears to be demanding not at the linguistic level only (mastery of English) but at the cognitive (thinking) and meta-cognitive levels too (critical thinking) in addition to knowledge resulting from the students' interaction with their environment and its people like community, society and the world.

Writing an argument essay requires cognitive and metacognitive skills, such as critical thinking, logical reasoning, and knowledge acquisition. It involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, as well as the capacity to construct persuasive arguments and counterarguments. These cognitive skills are not exclusively language-dependent but are also influenced by the individual's ability to engage with and make sense of their surrounding environment, society, and broader world, as we have mentioned earlier.

Recognizing and addressing these cognitive and metacognitive demands of argument writing is necessary to support students in developing their overall writing proficiency. The role of teachers is to provide opportunities for students to practice critical thinking and engage with a variety of texts and ideas, and contribute to their development as more skilled and confident argumentative writers.

The analysis of the data has revealed that participants' interaction with readers, teachers and peers as members of the writing community is vital for their journeys to becoming writers since writing is a social act and writers cannot grow as writers in isolation from their environment. Furthermore, the standards of academic writing are perceived differently by participants; some believe they are guidelines for good argument writing, which still remains very personal and different but revolves around good communication based on a good mastery of English but limiting to the student writer's freedom according to others. What are these standards and how do they reflect the features of "good writing" in the academic context?

There are some common features of good writing between me as a teacher and participants, yet, we perceive good writing differently and this can lead to misunderstanding and sometimes resistance to teaching as subconsciously I focus on my own features of good writing when teaching writing and evaluating students' writing performance; this may threaten students' freedom of writing which is a key step towards becoming a student writers. This notion of freedom just like writing, writer's identities and voice are perceived differently by participants.

The pressure put on students by the standards of academic writing and how they negotiate them for more freedom or sometimes resist them when they feel disempowered by them is worth mentioning. As a teacher of writing, I also feel the pressure of those standards which dictate what is "good writing" and I feel obliged to follow specific models of writing and rules. But students constantly negotiate writing conventions for more freedom, more options and choices while they write,

which increases their sense of control over their writing process, gives them more freedom to express themselves, allows them to think creatively, critically, and autonomously from the teachers and other people rather than blindly following what the majority of people think.

This seems to be safe for some students in a society and culture which prioritize the group and community over the individual out of solidarity. This is not a weakness but a difference to be taken into account when writing in English. Some scholars claimed that students in those collective cultures are less critical than in Western cultures (Kappla, 1966 ; Casanave, 2004) . This sounds quite racist and discriminatory towards the students who write in English as a second or foreign language as it is the case of the participants of this study.

Therefore, the qualities of the good writer revolve around writing as a skill, process ,craft, art, knowledge, experience, tool for communication and a social act of self-discovery, realization and recognition. Writing therefore is characterized by a constant struggle trying to face the multiple challenges posed by the writing community or environment, readers, process, functions, purposes, standards, expectations, power relationships, content, language, culture and even the politics of writing.

Similarly, in academic contexts, newcomers learn and practice academic discourses, defined by Duff (2010, p. 175) as “forms of oral and written language and communication, genres, registers, graphics, linguistic structures, interactional patterns” , and they then participate in academic communities through interactions with their professors, peers, and other experienced members.

5.3.6. Participants’ Perceptions of the Reader

The participants’ perceptions of the reader whether real, familiar or imaginary seems to play an important role in shaping their perceptions of their writer identity. In the case of argument essay, the more the readers are familiar to the writer, the

more students find it easier to convince them. This finding corroborates Hyland's (2002, p. 352) claims that , "the words students choose must present their ideas in ways that make most sense to their readers and part of this involves adopting an appropriate identity".

An academic writer should consider his/her audience during the writing process if s/he wants her/his work to be considered a good one (Stapleton, 2002). The expert writers are the ones who know their audience, their purpose of writing, and the discourse type (Berkenkotter, 1981). A writer must understand the expectations of his/her audience and write his/her works accordingly (Hayes & Bajzek, 2008). Knowing the audience will have an effect on the writers' works in terms of what information should be included and the arrangement of the presented information.

One of the important skills a graduate student has to acquire is audience awareness (Kakh & Mansor, 2014). Ede and Lunsford (1984, p.82) claim that there are two types of audience. The first one is audience addressed which is "the actual or intended readers of a discourse". The second one is audience invoked which is "a construction of the writer, a created fiction".

Thinking of the audience while writing made the Iranian participants in a study add more details to their writing to express their ideas (Kuhi, Asadollahfamb, & Amin, 2014). Carvalho (2002) claims that the number of qualifiers increased when his subjects started to take the audience into consideration during the writing process. In addition, thinking of the audience made the students use more sentences to describe their ideas and they also spent more time on planning in comparison with those who did not think of the audience while writing (Sato & Matsushima, 2006). Yoo (2010) points out that thinking of the audience made the students put much emphasis on the following strategies: keep in mind a purpose, adhere to the prompt, remember grammar and punctuation, and stick to rules and formats.

However, if readers are experts on the topic of writing, students tend to feel inferior as they believe the reader is an expert who knows better than them and can easily have counter-arguments. Thus he may contradict the writer/students and therefore make the task of convincing them very difficult.

Some participants in the present study clearly made the relationship between writing and reading not only as two complementary language skills , but also as complementary experiences. Some participants stated that good writers should be good readers because reading is an important source of knowledge and input for writing especially that good writers should be able to write about different topics, and they cannot do so if they do not write. Reading also is said to increase the writer's confidence and put them in a better position. It makes them sure of their knowledge about the topic as they have read and done research about it. The latter becomes critical and the participants referred to topic familiarity as a factor in their writing performance.

Journals, news, media, VT programs, and social media especially internet are also used as resources where students study and analyze models of essays and try to reproduce their language, structure or content. Some participants have even adopted writing as a hobby and made it a constant habit in their daily life. This has made a major impact on their development as writers since it has increased their confidence as writers. Meryam has even started writing her own novel about her personal experiences and anecdotes. Fatima Zahra also writes texts that are appreciated by her close friends. Yet, she does not consider herself as a writer because she is not willing to share her texts with a large audience but rather believes her writing should remain personal and private. According to her, sharing with the reader would lead to her losing control over her writing process and thus her freedom. She then would need to take the reader into account. However, she showed a great deal of freedom choosing to write about a "taboo topic" like homosexuality and openly expressed her opinion and position about it.

Good writing is presented by teachers of writing and Academic Writing Discourse (AWD) as objective and should not involve feelings. As noted earlier, this perspective tends to limit the personal aspects of students' lives and take a huge part of students' experience away because it is considered as subjective and biased. Students' experience is as valuable and needed as knowledge of writing along their journey to become writers at university.

5.3.7. Context of Students' Writing

This context is composed of many elements which I have narrow down to five main elements : (1) the language of the writing community which refers to the standards of good writing as promoted by teachers of writing, writing materials and criteria for formal writing evaluation in exams, (2) the readers including teachers, classmates, friends and people as the large audience in general often outside the classroom,(3) the participants' writing experiences in class and beyond, (4) the type of texts participants write both in class and outside the classroom and (5) the purposes of this writing practice.

The participants have therefore constructed their writer identities, negotiating their past and present practices of writing in class, applying their knowledge of academic writing as a tool to access their writing community and adapt to its expectations. They have constantly positioned and repositioned themselves from outsiders to insiders and active members of the writing community, and finally reflected their struggle and achievements in writing by mirroring the academic writing discourse and speaking the language of their community. This is in line with Grabe and Kaplan's (1996, p. 317) claim that "the ability to form a coherent and well-supported set of arguments from multiple, and sometimes conflicting resources is a skill that is valued in a number of disciplines". This clearly relates to EFL learning and academic writing.

These continuous participants' attempts to access their academic writing community, negotiate a more active role and gaining more mastery of the writing

conventions is a key feature of “good writers”. In line with the autonomous perspective of writing, Carter (1990, p. 226) affirms this conclusion: "We can no longer regard a 'good writer' as someone who has control over the mechanics of grammar, syntax, and punctuation." Additionally, it is not someone who can replicate the "knowledge-transforming" and expert composition techniques of process models by refining their thoughts while writing. Rather, "one who has attained the local knowledge that enables her to write as a member of a discourse community" is the definition of an expert writer according to contemporary concepts of literacy.

However, findings illustrated that moving from an outsider to an insider is far from being linear, but is an ongoing struggle for participants who are required to prove their merit as members of the writing community with each writing task. Therefore, this shows that writer identity is not a given but a process of transformation, growth, negotiation, recognition, and integration of participants as they enter university which is considered as a mini-society with its own culture, values, ideology and politics. This related again to Hyland's (2009, p. 70) view of identity as “something we do” rather than something “we have”. He assumes that we build ourselves as trustworthy members of a specific social group in order to undertake identity work. In fact, almost everything we write or say conveys something about who we are and the type of relationships we hope to build with others.

As noted earlier, academic writing is thus given a more instrumental nature as it is often seen as having a gatekeeping function; participants feel they should follow the conventions to succeed academically. This can justify the contradiction between their perceptions of writing conventions as limiting to some of them and applying these conventions in writing to get good marks especially for exams that are heavily based on the written form of language. Based on the data, one may conclude that their perceptions ranged from concerns about failing a course to seeking recognition by using ‘acceptable’ styles. This finding supports Hyland's

(2009, p. 70) argument that: identity is "constructed by both the texts we engage in and the linguistic choices we make, thus moving identity from the private to the public sphere, and from hidden processes of cognition to its social and dynamic construction in discourse".

As a matter of fact, academic discourse and writing conventions limit students' freedom to grow as writers. They do not allow them a safe space and freedom to discover who they are, the abilities they have and how they can use them to have a voice in writing. Thus, through participants' witnesses and shared experiences of writing, there is a feeling of frustration and sometimes oppression that these conventions cause to students. This feeling of oppression seems also to harm the way participants see themselves as writers and thus their writer identities.

The context in which participants write seems to determine their journey of identity construction and expression in argument writing. As noted earlier, the context in this study refers to the participants' academic writing community and its members who are both teachers of writing and other modules and peers. Interacting with these members contributes in students' awareness and perceptions of themselves as writers who are trying to move from passive to more active members by understanding, using and negotiating the standards of academic writing imposed by university as an institution and the power relationships it is based on.

The findings showed that some students tend to resist these standards and conventions because they violate the core of being a writer that is the freedom to express oneself. This is in line with Hyland's (2002, cited in Hyland, 2009,p.72) perspective: " In fact, students often find that academic conventions do not allow them to represent themselves in their texts, suppressing the extent they can articulate personal stance".

This notion of resistance revealed by the study findings of this study is also supported by Ivanič (1998, p. 9) who stated that "mature students" frequently: "feel devalued and alienated within the higher education institution." When their

identities are in danger, they either try to fit in with the norms and values of the new environment they are in or, in a more radical move, they challenge and oppose the established norms and practices.

The findings also showed that by joining university, participants start their journey of writer identity construction understanding the language of academia or academic writing community including its members who can be readers, writers and teachers. They also start using and practising the features of good writing especially argument essays and the standards and conventions of academic English and academic writing at university.

This is similar to the findings of some studies that took a cross-cultural perspective to investigate the construction of L2 learners' identities when they engaged in culturally, politically, and socially situated language socialization (Duff, 2002; Ho, 2011; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015; Morita, 2004; Séror, 2011). These studies revealed that identity construction is culturally related and is a fluid and dynamic process in various socialization contexts. For example, in their study, Lee and Bucholtz (2015) reported that the youth, who were racially, linguistically, and/or economically marginalized, could be both experts and novices depending on what expertise they had when socializing within different local contexts, the school, the peer group, the home, and the local community.

Academic writing seems different from personal and creative writing that students are familiar with, in that the latter do not follow strict standards. Knowledge of academic writing involves knowledge of how texts are written, to whom, in which structure and for what purpose. Formal instruction at university by the teacher seems to be a key source of knowledge of writing but it is not the only resource as students also learn using self-study, personal reading, internet and learning from friends and family members sometimes if they are teachers of English for example. This knowledge is also the result of both past and present learning experience of writing as students mentioned what they have learned at middle and

secondary schools. This knowledge was useful and relevant and thus was integrated in learning writing at university.

5.3.8. Students' Reasons for Writing

Participants write for different purposes in spite of having a quite homogenous background and share the same writing environment. Some of them write to complete the daily classroom tasks required by the teacher and prepare themselves for writing exams and hope to get good marks that enable them to succeed academically. However, others write because writing is their hobby and habit that meet their psychological needs for self-expression and discovery. As a result, self-expression is also a kind of communication between the writer and readers based on sharing who the writer is with the reader by referring to thoughts and emotions. This result relates to Murray's (1985) writing philosophy, which encourages writers to discover their unique voices in order to create original, spontaneous work. The ability to freely communicate one's thoughts can promote intellectual growth and self-discovery. To the extent that "good therapy and composition aim at clear thinking, effective relating, and satisfying self-expression," writing growth and personal development are considered as mutually reinforcing (Moffett, 1982 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 19). Indeed, the participants feelings and emotions are an important asset which they bring to the writing process just like thoughts and ideas. Indeed, the participants' affect (their feelings and emotions) seems to be an important asset which they brought to the writing process just like cognition (their thoughts and ideas).

This shows that the participants feel the need to use their feelings both as a source for writing and a content which they can reflect on through writing which is also an opportunity to them to reflect and understand those feelings and handle them better. This point will be discussed in detail in the third point of this section which is about writing as therapy or the therapeutic function of writing. This function should come just after self-expression because they are linked. Consequently,

participants who are satisfied with their writing practice and are able to fulfil their writing objectives and thus feel empowered by writing tend to be more positive about themselves as writers.

Becoming a writer depends, to some extent, on participants' feeling of being empowered by writing. Empowerment in this context means being able to enjoy the benefits of writing both as an individual and writer in the academic context. According to the advantages of writing described by participants, we note self-expression, self-discovery, developing writing skills and strategies, increase of their critical thinking, a sense of belonging to the writing community, environment and society by being the voice to those who can't express themselves for a given reason like not being able to write, not having enough knowledge, experience or opportunities to write and also being able to enhance the ethics of writing by being credible, respectful and responsible towards the reader as a partner in the journey to becoming writers instead of passive consumers of students' texts.

Most students believe that writing is an important skill that influences students at both the academic and personal levels. These perceptions of writing as a key skill seem to influence students' perceptions of themselves as writers and thus their writer identity. Therefore, unlike the students who feel obliged to write and therefore "oppressed" by writing, those who feel "empowered" by writing tend to have more positive perceptions and attitudes towards their writer identity. By empowerment, we mean to the different purposes and advantages students can gain from writing. These are summarized as follows:

1. Being able to express themselves "freely" make students feel at an advantage as they can have a voice, say what they think, explore their thoughts and feelings and critically think about their experiences. Therefore, students feel strong, confident and motivated and thus empowered being able to communicate through writing. Thus, writing is not an activity of manipulating language and structure ideas, but it is using language to discover and understand oneself. This makes

students feel in control of their language and boosts their confidence and feelings of security as writers who are in charge of the writing process not subjected to it by the teacher. This positionality as a writer not a student of writing gives power to students and puts them in a better position.

2. The psychological benefits of writing as an outlet, a way to manage one's feelings and even a therapy especially to those students who write to feel better. Therefore, they do not satisfy themselves by the writing they do in class, but they write as a hobby which means that they have developed writing habits away from the class and thus writing has become more meaningful and empowering.

3. Writing as a tool for agency by reflecting on one's reality and trying to improve it through awareness and then action. For example, when some students wrote about the role of women in society, they tried to critically think about this topic in relation to their own experience as women and to take a position which matches who they are as individuals who try to have more freedom in a society guided by traditions. Therefore, some female writers were questioning and negotiating these traditions and arguing for their right to live by their own values even if they may contradict the mainstream of society, which believes that the best role of woman is a housewife.

5.4. Answer to Research question 4: How Do Students' Express Their Writer Identity in Argument Writing ?

To answer this question, I will refer to Ivanič's (1998) model of writer identity. Participants have used the following approaches to express their writer identity. These are discussed in the sections below:

5.4.1. autobiographical self: writer's self-representation by sharing personal knowledge, background, beliefs and experience with the reader;

5.4.2. discoursal-self : writer's self-representation in the text through linguistic choices/devices stressing writer identity

5.4.3.inter-personal :voice in text

5.4.4.subject positions: socially available possibilities for selfhood

5.4.5.self as author: writer's sense of authority and authorial presence in text

5.4.1. Autobiographical Self : Self-Representation

Burgess & Ivanič, (2010, p.24) define autobiographical self as “the identity that people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discursal history”. In spite of the unfavourable socio-cultural environment, the majority of students used their personal lives and experiences as a major source of evidence to present their opinions and defend them by developing their arguments. Many students were willing to share their experiences with the reader and they seemed more comfortable doing so than using other sources like studies and statistics. Writing for them, is viewed, as an empowering tool that gives them voice to speak up and express different issues that other people did not have the chance to discuss in writing for some reasons.

Although some students did not feel confident as writers, the way they write reflects who they are as writers and persons. This means that students were present in their texts using different tools. First, by expressing their opinions, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, fears and hopes. This allowed them to present themselves as writers who have something interesting to say, a valid experience, or a relevant point of view. In this case, those participants presented themselves as a source of knowledge to the reader who according to them can benefit and learn from their own experiences and wisdom.

Second, participants' willingness to share their texts and thus their thoughts, feelings and experiences with the reader and taking the risks of being exposed to them, believe that they deserve to be appreciated by them. These students also believe that they deserve to have ownership over their texts for the risks they take sharing their texts and making efforts writing in the first place. Sharing seems to be

interpreted by some participants as an act of intellectual generosity and the basis for building connection with readers in order to encourage them to read their text and have the expected positive feedback on them by influencing their thinking and hopefully their behaviour.

This demonstrates that participants' perceptions of writing in general do influence their perceptions of writer's identities including the notion of voice, readership and authorship. This shows consistency of the data and makes sense of writing as a process. This cannot be separated from the process of becoming a student writer in the academic context.

Participants seem aware of the purpose of sharing as they do not share their texts with the reader for the sake of sharing only, but have some clear purposes that revolve around one major theme, which is having a positive impact on the reader, as one student claimed: "readers can learn something from my writing". The latter could be possible through a number of sub-objectives such as teaching something useful to the reader (here participants play the role of the teacher to the reader and a reliable and valid source of knowledge), showing solidarity and compassion to the reader by sharing common experiences.

Third, by doing so, participants try to create a connection with the readers by telling them through writing both explicitly or implicitly: "we have been through your exact same experiences and we know how it feels" and building trust with the reader by playing the role of almost an "expert" in the topic they write about and sending a message to the reader saying: "trust me, I know what I am talking about because I have already read on the topic, did research, or experienced it before". Trust goes hand in hand with the ethics of writing and writers as described in chapter one.

Fourth, participants' efforts and willingness to be honest as writers by clearly saying what they think, feel, and position themselves and see life, reality and the world around them. They avoid being biased or manipulating the reader which often

harms any trust, respect and connection between them and the readers as co-authors, intellectual friends and critics, source of feedback, insights, improvement and growth.

This trust seems to impact their authorship, the way they address the reader and therefore how they experience writing and build their writer's identities as they gradually build confidence in their knowledge and writing skills by becoming engaged with the topics they write about, exploring different topics and experiences and being able to effectively share them with the reader in a clear, relevant and well thought out and structured text.

Finally, as a matter-of-fact, this effort to read and do research to write makes the student writers feel more credible and trustworthy as writers who can teach readers something new about the topic, share new experiences and therefore impact the reader positively at least by helping them to have a "nice" and "enjoyable" reading experience, attracting their attention to the topics which matter to them and engaging them or ideally make them take action on the issue they write about and ultimately change their current behaviour from passive observers to potential activists.

This situation is similar to the metaphor of a passenger at a busy airport who can be distinguished from other passengers by the passport held, a writer also can be distinguished from other writers by their writing style and voice they develop and express throughout their texts and which also contribute to their authorship and authority as writers because these elements represent their signature and the persons who they are both as individuals and writers. Participants claimed that a key feature of good writing and strong writer identity is to "develop their own personal writing style". This is consistent with Elbow (1994 cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 71) perspective on voice as "...a complex idea with various meanings and connotations, but essentially refers to the writer's distinctive signature, the individual stamp that he or she leaves on a text".

An important element of participants' auto-biographical self is the fact that they are multilinguals writing in English as EFL. This linguistic and cultural background is a vital asset and an integral part of what they bring to the writing process. In addition, this in part explains how they approach argument writing, position themselves as writers, express authorship and interact with the readers. Some participants seem proud of this rich background and believe that it is part of who they are as individuals and writers. Yet, others look at it as a weakness or a source of inferiority. These findings confirm some studies on contrastive rhetoric (CR). For example, Casanave (2004, p. 41) stated that: "Theoretically, critics point out that because contrastive rhetoric starts from an assumption of difference, it has 'tended to look at L2 writing . . . mainly as a problem of negative transfer of L1 rhetorical patterns to L2 writing'".

Horner and Trimbur (2002 cited in Hyland, 2009, p.55-56) further criticized this assumption of difference in contrastive rhetoric saying: "This not only sees L2 writing as a deficit, but runs the risk of ignoring the rich and complex histories of such students' literacies and what they bring to the L2 classroom".

Atkinson (1999a; 2004) also shared this view and put into question the limited understanding of culture in contrastive rhetoric studies. He commented that CR has also come under fire for adopting a fairly simplistic and unrefined understanding of culture as a largely consistent, uniform, and all-encompassing system of norms that governs individual behaviour.

The phenomenon of language transfer in multilingual writing has been widely discussed in scholarly literature. For example, Flege and Liu (2001) confirm these findings as they suggest that when individuals learn a second or third language, they often transfer linguistic features from their first language or languages. This can include grammar structures, vocabulary choices, and sentence patterns. These language transfer tendencies can be influenced by factors such as language dominance and frequency of language use.

In the context of multilingual students writing in English, studies by Cummins (2000) and Cook (2001) highlight the potential influence of their native languages on their English writing. They note that students may utilize grammatical structures or rhetorical patterns from their first languages, sometimes resulting in language interferences or challenges in achieving target language norms.

The findings of this study showed that in spite of participants' difficulties in academic and argument writing, they should not be labelled as "deficient writers" because struggle is a necessary stage of their journey of writer identity construction. Therefore, I made sure to avoid judgmental language when describing participants' writing performance and instead of putting them into categories and label them as good, average and weak writers, I gave them the opportunity to evaluate themselves as writers in order to collect valid and authentic data instead of relying on my observation, experience, and assumptions.

It is important to understand and analyze the impact of language transfer in multilingual students' writing to provide appropriate support and instruction. Recognizing their linguistic backgrounds and the potential difficulties they may face can lead to more effective teaching strategies and interventions.

5.4.2. Discoursal-self: Self-presentation in the Text via Linguistic Choices Related to Writer Identity

Discoursal self is defined by Ivanič (1998, p. 25) as "the impression- often multiple, sometimes contradictory- which [writers] consciously or unconsciously convey of themselves in a particular text". Because language is a basic tool for writer identity expression, participants manipulate English not only to construct their writer identity, but to express it too. Although students strive to be unique and different as writers as a result of their personal histories and background, they all use their linguistic competence and resources to express their writer identity. Therefore, they have a number of linguistic choices to make like the use of personal pronouns "I" vs "We", modals such as "Should" and "Must", reflexive adverbs and expressions

like “Personally” , “As far as I am concerned”, and directly addressing the reader through the personal pronoun “You”.

It seems that, consciously or unconsciously, students behave as writers since through the text, it is clear that they show themselves as a source of knowledge to the readers and they try to share their knowledge about a particular topic with them as we noted earlier. They also choose topics that reflect their reality and write about real things from their own perspective. Consequently, student writers play different roles like thinkers, teachers, researchers, readers, and sometimes experts based on their familiarity with the topic. The latter seems to determine the degree of their authority as writers and the ownership of their texts via the confidence they express in writing.

Therefore, the notion of “the self” represents the writer and this notion is clear in the argument essays when students address the reader directly using pronouns like “you” and “we”. In addition, interacting with the readers by calling them to take action in relation to the topic, giving a piece of advice, or a solution, are other examples of students’ awareness of “self as writer” even if some students do it unconsciously as they do not consider themselves as writers for a number of reasons, among them their language problems mainly lack of vocabulary, grammar mistakes, and struggles in generating relevant ideas and fulfilling the aim of the text i.e., convincing the reader of the validity of their opinion.

At the linguistic level, the self is apparent through the use of the personal pronoun “I” which may indicate that the students have developed a sense of confidence as writers to some extent by being able to share personal experiences with the readers, having something interesting to discuss and believing that it is possible to influence the readers at least by making them think about the topic not necessarily changing their behaviours.

5.4.3. Inter-personal Aspects of Writer Identity: Voice in the Text

Student writers are able to develop their voice as writers and this shows in the text. One participant clearly explains this idea saying: "my texts reflect me and my personality". Just like people are recognized by their voice, tone and the way they talk, writers also are recognized by their voice in writing which refers to their special writing style and language choices. This voice is an integral part of their identity, which makes them different and independent from others.

Voice also reflects the writer's thinking, personality and personal experience. Voice can be developed by linguistic choices like the use of personal pronouns like "I" and "we", and by using personal experience as a source of content for writing. This is especially the case because participants prefer to write about the topics they are familiar with and avoid the unfamiliar topics that tend to be more challenging in terms of writing.

Using the passport metaphor again, the details on our passports might change through time like our age, address, job, marital status and the way we look on the identity photo. This is true to the writer's voice too as it starts unheard, shaky and sometimes unfamiliar because students often start writing by imitating available models of essays and texts. Then, their voice becomes more noticeable the more they practice writing and try to build their own writing style.

This process of building up the writer's voice seems to be organically linked to the process of discovering who we are as individuals through writing. This also shows that writing is more than jotting down sentences on a piece of paper but it is a deep psychological and emotional journey of who the writer really is. To put it in a nutshell, writer's voice is an important tool for writer's identities which are the result of writers getting lost in a psychological labyrinth, moving in circles, struggling and gradually putting the scattered pieces together to get a clearer picture of their voice, authority and style which are different from the other writers in the community.

The participants' strategies to express their voice, which represents the interpersonal aspects of writer identity through dialogue and interaction with the readers, relate to Hyland's (Hyland, 2005, p.49) taxonomy of meta-discourse devices as discussed in chapter one and illustrated in table 2. Hyland (1999) states that interpersonal meta-discourse "allows writers to express a perspective toward their propositional information and their readers". In his turn, Amiryousefi (2010, p 159-60) emphasizes this notion saying : "It (inter-personal meta-discourse) is essentially an evaluative form of discourse and expresses the writer's individually defined, but disciplinary circumscribed, persona" (Amiryousefi: 2010, p 159-60)

However, participants used 9/12 strategies based on the nature and requirements of argument essay as a genre. For example, endophoric markers devices like " as mentioned above, see figure, see section) were not used because an argument essay is often written in one page or two and does not require these devices which are used in extended texts mainly research papers and dissertations.

1. Interactives: resources to guide the reader through the text through the thesis statement which represent the road map of the text, states the writer's position and opinion and how he/ she would develop the essay by creating the topic context and nature as a controversial topic mentioning the opposing view. For example, Meryam in the thesis statement stated: "I myself believe that they (teachers) ought to be more careful and prudent in their attitude towards students and that's for several reasons".

2. Transitions: words that express relationship between ideas such as "first, second, in addition and therefore". These transition words also create coherence and cohesion which increases the text quality.

3. Frame markers: refers to discourse acts, sequences and stages such as "finally and to conclude". Hyland (2005) also mentioned the expression "my purpose is". Such an expression is not encouraged in writing at ENSB as teachers encourage students to show, do, and act instead of say.

4. Evidentials: refer to the use of authority resources such as studies and experts' statements such as "according to X... X stated that". These devices back up and support students' arguments, increase the validity of their claims and reinforces trust with the readers as they can safely consider the writer as a reliable source of knowledge.

5. Interactional devices: devices to interact with readers and engage them in the text by directly address them using personal and possessive pronouns like "you and yours " or indirectly like "we and us"

6. Boosters: emphasize certainty and close dialogue with the readers such as "confirm , show, emphasize, illustrate, prove, determine, certainly, clearly, there is no doubt that, and in fact". These words also express the writer's confidence as he/she are certain about their ideas, claims, statements , and arguments. This confidence results from the writer's personal experience, readings, research and familiarity with the topic. This is a strong tool that can increase the writer's chances to convince the reader and this is the principal purpose of the argument essay.

7. Attitude markers: reflect the writer's attitude towards the topic and readers such as "unfortunately, I agree, I believe, I disagree, I am against, and surprisingly". These devices makes the text vivid and alive as the writer is taking actions, interacting with readers and engaging them via the text. Therefore, the writer and readers are not passive parts abut active through discourse acts.

8. Self-mentions: words that refer to the writer or reference to author such as "I , we, my, me, and our". This also show the writer's presence in the text as ideas generator, researcher, reader, citizen, and individual.

9. Engagement markers: refer to explicitly building relationships with the reader and directly address them in the text through words such as " consider, note, and you can see that". This is similar to call to action usually used in the conclusion where the writer engage the reader in finding a solution to a given problem and take

action. For example, Youcef stated in the conclusion of his essay: "...it is clearly evident that TV programs which are directed to children have a huge negative impact on their behaviour, their education and time. In my opinion, I still strongly believe that fathers should make an end for such threat".

The participants' linguistic choices and discourse devices used in their argument essays support Ivanič and Camps's (2001) forms of positioning building on Halliday's (1985) classification of the three roles of language. They identified three forms of positioning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Interpersonal positioning describes how authors engage with their readers, whereas ideational positioning is concerned with how writers place themselves in relation to the subject they write about (this is comparable to what is referred to as "stance" in certain other studies). According to Ivanič and Camps (2001, p. 28), textual placement is associated with "the mode of communication itself."

Although participants were not explicitly taught how to express their writer identity and voice in writing, they seem to do it spontaneously as a result of reader awareness and the nature of writing as a process of communication.

5.4.4. Subject Positions : Socially Available Possibilities for Self-hood

If one considers the students' socio-cultural environment for learning EFL, we may say that the opportunities to practice writing are very few and limited to the classroom except for the few students who write outside the classroom for pleasure and consider writing as a hobby that allows them to de-stress and express their daily fears and challenges as well as their dreams, hopes, and aspirations for the future. Writing is not socially accessible and being a writer requires many criteria that are often out of students' reach. This cultural context is the reason why some students do not consider themselves as writers even if they write for different purposes such as academic writing in class and studies ,in general, and creative writing for entertainment mainly. This result is consistent with the concept of "essayist literacy," which is defined as "the specific literacy practices which are privileged in

education," as proposed by Scollon and Scollon (1981, cited in Hyland, 2009, p. 72). Generally speaking, university students are expected to write in a style that involves disguising their identity as an apathetic, logical, and disinterested truth-seeker while maintaining their anonymity.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the limited opportunities to practice writing outside the classroom may lead students to believe that they cannot be writers if they rarely write or if what they write can only be read by the teacher, peers, and some friends only. Thus, having a small-scale audience can hinder students' sense of identity as writers in addition to the problems they face applying writing conventions and the struggles they experience when expressing themselves in English. This is especially due to the fact that most of them admit having a small vocabulary that limits their word choices and thus their freedom and capacity to clearly and effectively speak up their minds and put their ideas on paper.

However, some students seem to be more positive even if they expressed the same concerns. Those students think that being able to write is a huge achievement in itself whether the potential audience is large or small. They see writing as an essential part of their lives and a tool of self-regulation and psychological balance which helps them get rid of their negative feelings and comfort their pain especially when it is hard to them to share their deep and intimate feelings with others through face-to face communication.

5.4.5. Self as Author: Writer's Sense of Authority, and Authorial Presence in the Text

Some participants were timid writers and presented their ideas vaguely as they did not back up their claims with evidence at times. They seemed to be narrating or describing mainly, instead of convincing the reader of the validity of their position. These students heavily relied on their personal opinions and experience rather than presenting solid arguments to convince the reader. Some of their arguments were simply presented as statements without any development or

explanation. However, other students were very assertive and they presented their ideas, opinions, and arguments quite strongly. As rightly noted by Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999a cited in Hyland, 2009,p.71) in relation to writing and voice in academic settings, writing teachers value this assertion of personal authority and often exhort student writers to “discover their own unique voice’ and achieve self-expression in their writing. In other words, this view sees identity as the manifestation of a private self, a highly individualistic concept deeply rooted in mainstream western culture and often antithetical to the communicative norms of ESL students from more collectivist cultures”.

Relating voice to western cultures exclusively puts ESL and EFL students at a disadvantage and often results in linguistic and cultural discrimination. Participants in this study do belong to a collectivist Arabic and Muslim culture where the group is more valued than the individual. Yet, many students prioritize their “ individualistic voice” as a way to express their intellectual autonomy from their community by thinking and writing differently. This voice is also a manifestation of their unique self and personality as well as critical thinking skills that are at the core of their writer identity especially when they described the good writer as someone who does not “blindly” follow what others think.

Writing instructors appreciate this emphasis of personal authority, and they frequently encourage their students to "find their own unique voice" and express themselves through their writing. To put it differently, this perspective sees identity as the expression of a private self, a very individualistic idea that is ingrained in western mainstream society and frequently at odds with the communicative norms of ESL students from cultures that value collectivism more.

Nevertheless, all the participants in this study tried to meet their teacher’s expectations as a key reader , an assessor and an authority figure, and also to apply some of the conventions of argument writing taught in class. At the linguistic level, they used strong modals (must and have to), adverbs (strongly, completely, totally,

and firmly), verbs or attitude markers (believe, think, agree, disagree, I am for/against) and the personal pronoun “I” or often by directly addressing and engaging the reader using the pronouns “you” and “we” when the student writers consider the reader as a member of their own writing or social community.

The strategies participants used to evoke their presence or self-representation in the text and express their writer identity and authorship in argument writing are summarized in the following points:

1. Taking a clear position in the thesis statement for or against: this is the starting point for writer identity expression and text ownership based on students’ personal experience with the topic. They relied on their conviction to take positions, expressed their opinions and defended them is another way to express their writer identity. However, when they got stuck writing about an unfamiliar topic, they preferred to complete the writing task and defend a given position without conviction. They used this strategy on exceptional occasions, though, because they would rather write something than submit a blank sheet or exam paper, which is a kind of failure for them. This is in line with the famous saying: “getting the writing done is better than getting it perfect”.
2. Expressing final thoughts, comments and re-state their opinion in the conclusion to emphasize their authorial presence in the text.
3. Expressing personal values in writing. For example, Meryam said: “My writing reflects my personality, it is about me , I express what I like and hate (personal values) , think out of the box, my writing reflects my personality, who I am”. Therefore, the text becomes a mirror to students’ identity both as individuals and writers.
4. Using personal pronouns. Many students believe the pronoun “I” is stronger than “we” , but “we” also reflects the belonging to the collective Arab culture

where the group is more important than the individual. Although English is based on an individualistic culture, students are clearly influenced by their collectivist culture when writing and this is one aspect of what they bring to the writing process (a cultural asset or capital). A student illustrated this saying: “I feel supported by others when I use we and I feel confident when I use I , “ I don’t have the courage to use “I” because I can be wrong”. This finding is in line with Fløttum (2010, p. 271) who through identifying first person pronouns in combination with verbs, explains how the author appears as writer, researcher, arguer, and evaluator. For example, “I summarize” or “I describe” position the author as writer, while “I argue” or “I claim” position the author as arguer.

5. Considering the nature of the topic as it determines students’ presence in the text. If the topic is common , they rely on their experience and thus use more personal knowledge and experience and this is how they express their identity. But, if it is a scientific topic, they try to be more objective by using “we”, passive voice (because “I” sounds subjective in this case) using facts and in this case they use their critical thinking and logic to express their identity. Yet, some students prefer the pronoun “I” because the pronoun “we” does not reflect them as individuals and their unique thinking and experience.
6. Creating a dialog or conversation with the readers by directly addressing them in the text using the pronoun “you” or indirectly communicating with them as members of the same social, cultural, and educational community or society using the pronoun “we”. This reflects the participants’ influence by their “collective” society where the group is more important than the individual. This represents the inter-personal aspect of their writer identity or their voice as writers.

7. Exercising ownership of their texts by assuming different roles related to the self as author where student writers represent themselves as a valid and reliable source of information to the reader. In this sense, they write because they believe they have “valuable” , “useful” and credible knowledge and experience to share with readers. This supports Bondi’s (2012) analysis of the different roles of writers in academician with reference to Coffin (1997) work and classifies writers’ roles into : the Recounter, the Interpreter, and the Academic Arguer, which signal different authorial voices. The Recounter mostly gives a “narrative account of events”, and the Interpreter explains these events, while the Academic Arguer evaluates statements, or draws in current discussions in the field.
8. Participant’s willingness to share their knowledge and experience with the reader is a sinequanon condition to connect to readers, start a process of intellectual exchange and therefore create a trust relationship between students and both their real and potential (imaginary) readers who can be anyone who can read in English and has access to students’ writing especially if they share in online. This online sharing of academic essays seems to be rare, but some students do share other kinds of personal and creative writing with friends via social media. This, obviously, is helpful in reinforcing their reader awareness and identity and voice as writers because it is a productive and rewarding writing experience as it is the case with academic essays they write in class.
9. Personality is probably an important asset that participants use as a source for writing. Based on their personality type , they can write about what they like and hate, what interests and motivates them and share it with the reader. However, some introvert student writers cannot easily share their private experiences in writing and seem to make efforts to act differently from their personality in writing for the sake of getting writing done. For example, some participants clearly state that they hate sharing their thoughts with the reader

like Fatima, but they do share them for the sake of completing some writing tasks or for writing exams. This might look contradictory , but it can be a strategy some participants use to survive academic writing and meet the teacher's expectations which is vital for their academic success knowing that many participants consider writing as an instrumental skill.

10. Being objective eliminates the possibility of confusing the reader ; so dealing with the reader (other) is another way to express writer identity (self). The way students address, deal, and interact with the reader is another option to express their writer identity and authorial presence.
11. Demonstrating critical thinking skills is another way to express writer identity as it shows that the writer thinks differently from the reader and other people and they are trying to defend the validity of their thinking in writing via logic, arguments and evidence (students use higher order skills like analyzing, evaluating, selecting, and comparing arguments, etc.).
12. Trying to make their writing authentic and personal based on the possibilities allowed by the nature of the topic. Thinking differently leads students to write differently by distinguishing themselves from other people, students, and readers and this different writing style is another expression of identity. Although most students follow the same essay structure (the five- paragraph model), they try to be different by the way they express themselves and types of details they use, and how they present them to convince the reader.

The following sections are devoted to a discussion of practical implications of the study. Section 5.5 discusses the limitations of the study. Some pedagogical implications of the research are put forward in section 5.6, as well as some suggestions for further research in section 5.7.

5.5. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation relates to the adopted research methodology. This is a case study that has resulted in useful insights on students' perceptions of their academic writing experience at ENSB as well as their personal writing practice beyond the classroom. In addition, it has tried to unravel the participants' intricate journey of writer identity construction and expression shedding light on the factors that shape the ways students see themselves as writers, their linguistic abilities as students and users of English as a foreign language (EFL), their attempts to access and integrate their writing community and negotiating more "agency" and "empowerment" and "freedom" by accepting the writing conventions as guidelines for "good writing" at times, going around these conventions for the sake of self-expression at times, and resisting these rules sometimes to the extent that does not harm their academic success. However, one major limitation for case studies as a research method is the fact that results obtained cannot be generalized to other similar academic writing situations and settings. This study is no exception.

The second limitation is related to the process of data collection. Data collection has been difficult to achieve successfully for this study. The sample of the study has been reduced from 55 to 42 students for objective reasons as some students were not regular in terms of writing assignments, their essays were not legible or the participants chose irrelevant topics that could not be discussed in the argument essay assigned to them. Some of them were absent during the questionnaire administration or did not fully answer all the questions.

However, limiting the number of the subjects was rather beneficial as it was more practical to conduct a deep analysis of students' texts, and focus on the transformation process of genre knowledge and the way participants transform their knowledge of argument writing into an essay. Also, due to the reduced number of participants, it has been possible to identify the obstacles that may have prevented some students from going through this transformation process.

I tried to collect a variety of data by using different research tools and methods, as I was eager to gather the maximum data possible. However, during the analysis I felt overwhelmed by the amount of data especially content analysing students' argument essays that took a long time. I also found difficulties choosing the right model to analyse and thus evaluate students' ability to develop arguments. Tracking students critical thinking skills in their texts was also challenging since I could not decide on which basis to evaluate these skills and analyze them. The issue was how to track critical thinking (CT) in an argument essay. After many readings, I opted for Toulmin's model (1998) of argument writing which I adopted in analysing students' ways to develop and write arguments, the types of evidence they use and whether they are effective or not.

Changing the focus of my data collection has led me to disregard some of the writing tasks and research tools I planned before starting data collection. Focusing on the participants' writing performance initially, I planned to classify students into three categories; good, average and weak. Therefore, I used a placement test . I also asked students to take a position regarding their right to have access to further studies at university (Master's degree) and their opinion about ENSB students' strike at that time because the graduate students were not allowed to participate in Master's contests at universities as their degree allows them to teach at middle or secondary schools only. However, this placement text was discarded because I adopted Self-Appraisal Theory as another element of the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, I asked students to evaluate their own writing performance and classify themselves as writers in the semi-structured students' questionnaire rather than classifying them myself in the light of the placement test's results.

This is how the purpose of my research shifted from evaluating students' writing knowledge and skills after three years of formal instruction and whether they are capable of transmitting this knowledge into reliable writing skills to a study of their writing experience and journey of writer identity construction where students are treated as a fairly homogeneous group of writers rather than writers

belonging to three categories (good, average and weak writers) based on the results of the placement test . The latter were very divergent as the two colleagues who accepted to correct students essays gave different marks for the same essay. Those marks were also different from the ones I used to give students when marking their first semester exam of writing.

The third issue related to the amount of data collected, reaching data saturation and having to take important decisions about where to stop in terms of data. Thus, I had to disregard the data I collected from the students' interview because the number of students was limited . The conditions in which the interview took place were not favourable, too, and from those few students I managed to interview, I obtained similar answers as in the students' questionnaire. I also disregarded the teachers' questionnaire, which was meant to gather teachers' opinions about students' writing knowledge and skills as well as their writing difficulties and critical thinking skills, from fear of obtaining too much qualitative data and be overwhelmed by its analysis . but it is true that their perspectives would have been an added-value to this study.

Although I had an easy access to the research setting and participants, to some extent, being their teacher of writing for two years (first and third years, which were the years of data collection), it was somehow difficult to make students write argument essays on different occasions both for the daily class practice and for the purpose of my study. As a result, students preferred to complete the tasks as homework rather than writing in class except for the planning stage, which includes brainstorming usually as classroom discussion and outlining.

Finally, being the teacher and researcher in this study has put me in a difficult situation where I felt directly responsible for students' difficulties and problems of writing and the difficulties they face along their journey of writer identity construction. I often times felt intimidated by the data and uncomfortable during the first stages of data analysis.

As a result, I decided to keep a distance from the data while working on other chapters of the thesis. This distance has allowed me to develop a critical perspective on the data and resume data analysis with a fresh mind-set without taking students' answers too personal and keeping an acceptable degree of objectivity thanks to reflexivity and criticality, two key aspects of research I discovered and practiced during the period of my scholarship in the U.K. that allowed me to immerse myself in a new research setting where academic research is very developed and highly appreciated.

Despite the number of difficulties encountered and the limitations aforementioned, the results obtained from this case study, have enabled me to draw some pedagogical conclusions and implications for teaching and further research.

5.6. Pedagogical Implications

The participants' perceptions and attitudes of writing in general and academic writing in particular seem to play an important role in their academic writing experiences including learning, knowledge and practice. The latter are at the core of being and becoming a student writer at university. Therefore, it is vital for teachers of writing to raise students' awareness of the nature of writing via classroom discussions, observations and questionnaires in order to detect students' misconceptions of writing as both a skill, process, product, thinking, process, communication and manipulation of English in a given social context, that is the academic community.

The more students are positive about academic writing and its nature and functions in the teaching and learning of English at university, the more they are likely to engage in their journey of writer identity construction via daily practice maintained thanks to their motivation to write and their writing agendas. When those agendas are limited to writing to get good marks and pass exams, writing is, then, seen as an instrumental skill rather than an anchored daily habit that can help students develop sustainable writing skills and strategies along their careers as EFL

teachers. Many studies have demonstrated the strong link between students' perceptions and attitudes and their actual performance. This does apply to academic writing too.

The results of the present study would imply that the students' misconceptions lead them to get demotivated, hopeless or resilient and resist teachers' writing practice because they think good writing is mistake-free and impossible to reach. Because they believe good writing cannot be taught, they tend to be passive in class and feel reluctant to write or claim that writing is only "for the chosen ones" so not accessible to EFL students. The latter tend to feel "inferior" because they are not native speakers of English.

First, the students' agendas for writing have a major impact on their writer's identities. If they write mainly to get good grades in writing and other modules, this means that they are aware of the fact that mastering writing is key for their academic success. As a result, writing is mainly considered as an instrumental skill that, to some extent, guarantees academic success or, at least, increases their chances to succeed academically.

In the study, most participants tend to see themselves exclusively as students who try to master writing not as student writers as becoming a writer is not part of their agendas and ambitions as they do not see worth of struggling to become a writer if they will end up as teachers of English not professional writers like novelists, experts, researchers and journalists who depend entirely or mainly on their writing skills to be professionally recognized and who make a living out of writing whatever its nature and purposes.

This implies that writing is just a piece of their professional identities as EFL teachers and not at the core of these identities. But the context in which students write seems to impact their writer's identities either by making them in a weak position or increases their confidence and empowers them, and thus boosts their writer's identities as they trust their knowledge of writing, writing skills, their

mastery of English, their positive relationships with their teachers of writing which is based on collaboration and mutual learning rather than a traditional vertical student-teacher power relationship.

The importance of power relationships within the writing community and how students perceive, understand and negotiate them is a key step towards becoming a writer in the academic context. Just like researchers are required to publish in acknowledged and professional journals related to their discipline to be recognized as an expert and thus an authority in the field and a reliable reference, students are required to perform well, express themselves clearly and effectively in the different writing opportunities.

The teacher being an authoritative figure in the web of power relationships, students have to try and position themselves in the academic writing community, moving from passive students of writing to active writers who master the writing conventions and negotiate more freedom and larger margins of manoeuvre by taking the best decisions and options during the different stages of the writing process, mainly the pre-writing stage. This seemed more doable as most students felt at ease at this stage and had more options to be in control of their writing process. This increased their self-confidence as writers, and was reflected in the ways they expressed their voice and writer identity in their argument essays.

Students' perceptions of the readers and the reader's expectations can be developed through online writing too. Thus, they can have access to larger audiences by having e-readers of online writing blogs, websites and writing communities. This can allow them to write to different readers, exchange and develop a strong sense of readership as compared to the limited number of readers students have in the traditional writing classroom that includes the teacher and peers.

Teacher-student dialogue can help students develop as writers by providing them with constructive and regular feedback. The latter should be encouraging and

favour content and students' ideas and thinking rather than the good use of language or focussing on mistakes. Although language is vital in writing as students should be encouraged to write in good and correct English, the communicative aspect of writing should not be ignored. Many students believe they are not writers because they make many mistakes and therefore are bad communicators. This misperception of good writing being mistake-free seems to be an obstacle to students' development as writers and their journey of writer identity construction.

It is well-known that even "good writers" make mistakes and this should not be a source of shame or frustration on the part of students who should perceive and practice writing as a recursive process that improves with practice, revision and multiple drafting with relevant teacher and peers' feedback. Consequently, the pressure of writing mistake-free argument essays should be reduced to a minimum in order to enable students to focus on expressing themselves firstly, and interacting with readers rather than impressing them with sophisticated vocabulary or complex syntactic structures, which is not and should not be a primary objective in academic writing at university.

The more students write, the more they master the writing process and develop reliable writing strategies and skills. Therefore, teachers of both language and content-based modules should provide students with opportunities to write different types of essays on different topics. This practice is likely to increase students' perceptions of their writing skills efficacy. Research has shown that the more students believe they can rely on their writing skills, the more confidently they write. This confidence is believed to boost their self-esteem, and both are important factors in the construction of their writer identity.

Good writers are confident writers regardless of their struggle with English. Mastery of English is the outcome of writing practice and not a pre-requisite for writing. This wrong belief is common among students and seems to impede their development as writers. Reading is also in tandem with the nature of writing as a

complex process that requires extensive reading, writing and practice. Many studies have emphasized the fact that writing is one of the most difficult skill to master even by L1 students, let alone EFL students who have less exposure to English in their social environment. However, this situation is changing today thanks to digital technology and the social media that favour the use of English as a medium of communication and research.

As we have noted earlier, the results of this study have shown that students seek more freedom in the way they approach the writing process. Freedom seems to boost their self-confidence and creativity. Therefore, we suggest to add a module called “Creative Writing and Critical Thinking”, to the present English degree course at ENSB. This module would combine both creativity and thinking, and help students write and express themselves more freely. Thus, they can develop their academic writing skills and practice writing in a more flexible environment away from the strict academic writing conventions that are seen as constraints by many students.

Many students also mentioned that good writers are also good readers. Thus, participants need to develop effective reading skills mainly related to extensive reading that could be done outside the classroom in a form of free or reading for leisure . Students should be encouraged to create their own reading clubs at ENSB so that they can have discussions about the books they read, organize reading competitions, and learn from each other in a friendly atmosphere.

The participants in the study have stressed that reading helps them analyse different types of topics and understand how they are structured and developed as well as extend their vocabulary repertoire that is vital for writing since many of them claimed that they struggle to express themselves in writing because their vocabulary is not rich enough to deepen their reflection and express their ideas on different topics. In addition, through reading, they discover new issues and reflect on them and on their reality (ies) ; this will no doubt inspire them to write on topics

that they did not necessarily experience themselves, but that they had the opportunity to contemplate thanks to their readings.

Therefore, extensive reading could develop their sense of readership, which is necessary to practice writing as communication between writers and readers. Students should develop durable reading habits that can feed and support their writing habits since the two skills are complementary, as research has shown. This can also reinforce students' sense of belonging to their writing community that is composed of other students who are both writers and readers and this feeling can increase students' self-confidence as writers since some of them claim that real writers have a larger audience than the teachers or classmates. As we have mentioned earlier, classroom writing is limiting and makes writing somehow artificial because it is done for practice or routine rather than real communication.

5.7. Suggestions for Further Research

There are a number of issues that raised up in this study , but are beyond its scope and I believe deserve further research. These issues are presented as follows:

Firstly, there seems to be an obvious link between students' misconceptions of academic writing and their negative attitudes of writer identity (such as good writing should be mistake- free). It would be interesting to research the source of these misconceptions about writing as a process or act , and how and when students develop them, and how they influence their writing behaviour.

In addition, it is not clear whether those students who have positive attitudes about writer identity do write good essays or whether this depends on their writing skills and practice. This issue is worth investigating too.

This study aimed at exploring how students construct and express writer identity and voice in argument writing by describing their linguistic choices and the ways they deal with the reader behaving as authors of their own texts. However, the focus was not on whether these linguistic choices resulted in texts of better quality or not. Some studies claimed that effective ways of developing and expressing

writer identity including voice, authority, and positioning do help writers improve the quality of their texts as they help them have a positive impact on the reader like convincing them about the validity of their arguments in the case of argument essays or research-based writing like discussion sections of articles or books.

Therefore, more research is required to study the impact of writer identity and voice on text quality so that more insights could be gained on the most effective strategies to develop in order to express writer identity and voice in the academic context. These strategies can help students become better writers who are more autonomous, creative and effective.

Because most of the writing tasks participants completed took place outside the classroom as homework due to time constraints and students' decreased motivation, and boredom or fatigue after a writing session of three hours, it was not possible for me as a researcher to check in what conditions the participants completed those writing tasks, whether they did any kind of research before writing on the topic they chose and what difficulties they faced.

There is no doubt that research is a vital step in any kind of academic writing, yet little is known on how students experience this part of writing, the strategies they use to collect information about the different topics of writing and how they integrate these details into their final essays. Thus, more research is needed in this area of academic writing especially that few students only seem to do some kind of research and most students rely on their personal experience and common sense in writing and this was apparent in the types of topics they choose.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed at discussing the results of the present study which aimed at exploring the participants' experiences of academic writing and their journey of writer identity construction at ENSB. Participants' experiences of writing include their learning processes and the knowledge they acquired during the three years of academic writing instruction producing different types of essays mainly the argument essay that was chosen for its important role in the academic context;

participants' writing experiences include the different writing opportunities they had, the readers they write to and the functions and purposes of academic writing that seem to have an instrumental nature as they allow students to succeed academically as EFL pre-service teachers. Specifically, this chapter attempted to answer the main research question and the four sub-questions, focusing on how the participants experience their journey of becoming writers and how they construct their writer identity and express it in the argument essay. The context in which participants write seemed to affect why they write, their perceptions of readers and the text both as a product, process, and genre. Finally, the strategies participants use to express their writer identity and position themselves in the text were also discussed.

General Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the academic writing experiences and writer identity construction and expression processes in argument essays by a group of forty-two Algerian third year pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in the Teacher Training College of Bouzaréah, known as ENSB -Algiers. The objective was to understand how they get access to their academic writing community, understand and adapt to its demands, standards and expectations, develop writing skills and strategies, negotiate roles, positions and practice as active members of this community at times and marginalised writers who seek more freedom, agency and empowerment at other times.

This study aimed also to find out the factors that shape students' writer identity and how they interplay in their perceptions of their academic writing experiences that include knowledge of writing and argument writing, readership or audience awareness, perceptions of academic writing learning and teaching and practice, critical perspectives on the current academic writing pedagogy and the alternatives they suggest concerning the argument essay writing processes, strategies and skills.

The research has allowed us to uncover the strategies they use to express and manifest their writer identity in argument essays; these include positioning themselves via sharing opinions in the thesis statement, developing relevant arguments to convince the reader, adapting to readers' backgrounds, knowledge of the topic and expectations, using elements of writer voice and authority as a source of knowledge and meaning construction by interacting with the reader via the text, their linguistic choices and decisions and how they present themselves to the reader, knowledge of writing conventions, their experiences and personality.

This study was carried out with participants of diverse backgrounds as some students came from the scientific streams, others from foreign languages streams, or literary streams at secondary school. This has certainly had an impact on their

past writing instruction and practice, and their background knowledge of writing before joining university. Yet, they all had a homogenous background study as all studied in the same group for three years at ENSB.

A longitudinal exploratory case study was chosen to investigate this research topic and qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire on students' writing experiences and written accounts on students' perceptions of writer identity. In addition, students' argument essays were collected and analysed using textual or content analysis on controversial topics of their choice given as homework to eliminate the external factors related to exams such as time constraints, anxiety and lack of choice and freedom.

The analysis of the data produced four major outcomes. The first one relates to the participants' perceptions, knowledge and understanding of academic writing (as a product, process, communication, text production, freedom, art and talent).

The second outcome relates to the participants' practice of academic writing as members of the Academic Writing Community (AWC) or writers in class and beyond focusing on the reasons why students write, real and potential readers, types of texts participants read, criteria for good writing and good argument essay, how they approach the writing process, difficulties they face and how they cope with and solve them.

The third result relates to the participants' understanding of writer identity and their perceptions and practice of academic writing as members of the AWC and how the writing environment influences their beliefs and behaviour as writers. The fourth result relates to how they manifest their writer identity in argument essay writing using Ivanič's (1998) model as framework for the analysis of the data. All the outcomes were presented following different steps in the participants' journey to become writers and how this journey shaped the process of their writer identity construction. Their journey is far from being linear where students smoothly move from point A to point B; it is more like a complex process of transformation and

development that I would describe like a labyrinth or a spiral of small achievements and struggles with each writing task that is a unique experience based on specific conditions and factors; these include topic familiarity, task difficulty, knowledge of the topic, mastery of writing strategies (self-efficacy) , intended readers, time constraints even if most of the practice was done at home.

As explained in the preceding chapter, I intentionally asked students to complete the writing task at home to eliminate the pressure of the exam conditions. Yet, some students mentioned time pressure as one of the difficulties they faced as according to them, the practice they do in class and even at home implicitly aims to prepare them for the exams to which they give a great deal of importance as they determine their academic success.

We can summarize the participants' journey under four major themes:

- (1) students' access to the Academic Writing Community (AWC),
- (2) their negotiation of roles and positions towards more active roles,
- (3) looking for more options and freedom in writing and

(4) practicing agency and empowerment rather than being passive consumers of the argument writing conventions that some considered as limitations for their freedom of writing.

In terms of perceptions of teaching and learning of academic writing or experience, the study showed five qualitatively varying ways of understanding the phenomenon, which can be ordered from simplest to most complex as follows:

- (i) getting access to the academic writing community by understanding its language or conventions, culture and values both via theoretical knowledge and practice in class and beyond; this represents students' environment of writing or the context in which they develop as writers,

(ii) students' perceptions of this writing environment and making sense of their perceptions, knowledge and behaviours of writing through real practice that helps develop basic writing skills and strategies as a basis for their writer identity since writers are often known by what they do,

(iii) this practice allows students to play different roles and take different positions that vary from readers, students, teachers, guides, experts and eventually writers as they engage in real and authentic writing experiences that allow them to both master and negotiate the conventions and standards of academic writing and its discourse (text, practice and context),

(iv) developing a sense of self as author via engaging personality, personal opinions, knowledge, experiences and history as sources for writing in terms of language and content as well as inter-personal connection with the reader. This was referred to as auto-biographical self of the writer and voice,

(v) and finally expressing the above elements in writing. Therefore, the text becomes a mirror for writer identity and a bridge between the students as writers and readers be them the teacher , peers, friends or imaginary and potential readers.

Students' access to academic writing community involves:

a.Acquiring knowledge about academic writing and argument writing (purposes, functions, features of academic and argument writing) and this includes what is writing, the writing skills and strategies, what is an argument and a counter-argument, details and evidence, structure of argument essay, difference

between strong and weak arguments, critical thinking skills, ethics of writing like academic honesty and plagiarism.

b.Acquiring awareness of readers' expectations and needs in the context of academic writing including the teachers and peers.

c.Acquiring knowledge of the academic writing discourse especially features and standards of good academic writing and of formal English.

d.Common knowledge about different topics related to students' society issues that students often write about like technology, education, gender, reading, role of women, driving, etc. This knowledge also stems from students' personal experiences as individuals and citizens of the Algerian society and culture.

The participants journey of writer identity construction is more about their process of transformation, growth and development towards building their writer's identities, the challenges they face, how they deal with them and how they move from passive consumers of the academic writing discourse to active members of the writing community. Therefore they are able to negotiate this discourse and sometimes challenge it and change it by finding out more room for freedom of self-expression and creativity ; the latter seem to be restricted by the writing conventions and reader's expectations mainly the teacher as an authority reader who is in the position of judging students writing performance and often labelling them as good or less good writers depending on their exams marks. This participants' need for freedom in writing is consistent with Hyland's (2002) statement: "In fact, students often find that academic conventions do not allow them to represent themselves in their texts, suppressing the extent they can articulate personal stance".

In describing their perceptions of writer's identities, participants refer to a number of aspects related to language and writing skills. The first aspect, writers are meant to write and master this skill, is at the core of becoming a writer. The second aspect results from the first one, which is students' sense of authorship. The student writer's abilities to express themselves in writing and discuss the topics they want to write about or are asked to write about allow them to consider themselves as a source of knowledge and experience which the reader can learn from.

In the study, the participants presented themselves as an authority since they often knew more about the topic either because they had experienced it before, did research on it, read related references on it and therefore were in a better position to write about it. These factors seem to give them legitimacy of appropriating and owning their own texts and take the position of the author ,from which comes the concept of authorship, that can be rightly applied to this situation.

Authorship implies a sense of self-confidence on the part of student writers in their critical thinking skills, abilities to master English and use it effectively to express their thoughts, building a mutual respect relationship or connection with the readers so as to have a positive impact on them by influencing their thoughts, changing their positions and at best changing their behaviours in regard to a specific topic. Yet, some participants were aware of the fact that sometimes the reader can be an expert in the subject matter and knows way better than they do; this often made the task of convincing this “expert reader” very demanding and challenging both at the level of language and content.

Some students claimed having knowledge to share with the reader and therefore considered themselves as writers. Others claimed having experience in specific aspects of life like being a teacher or a parent, experiencing problems that they successfully solved and could share this experience to help the reader solving similar problems. Others believed that they could influence the readers by making them feel what they feel, experience what they experienced and celebrate their

happiness and bear their pain, embarrassment and vulnerability as an individual. This impact was possible because students had really experienced real life situations and could genuinely write about them and make the reader relate to them as human experiences ,which did not acknowledge any linguistic, cultural or social barriers simply because they unite people as human.

It is often said that writers never write alone, but spend a lot of time alone. Writing is both a solo process as writers are on their own when they write and this applies to students especially that they have to think and take many decisions on their own. This is felt as painful and isolating and sometimes part of the struggle of writing mainly when the student writer is an extrovert who likes to exchange ideas and opinions with others students or friends and cannot do this for a given reason.

This was clear in the way participants used their argument essays and the way they applied the writing conventions of good writing following the five-paragraph essay structure. However, some of them did try to negotiate these rules and conventions but preferred to do so in a safe way with the aspects of the writing process which are more flexible such as planning and revising.

Having a different style of writing is another reason for participants to claim ownership over their texts ; and thus having a feeling of ownership and control about how they write and use language to express themselves differently from others was empowering. This also seemed to help them develop a sense of authorship.

For participants to develop as writers they should practice writing not as a chore or a task , which they are obliged to do for the sake of class practice and to avoid teacher's punishment, but writing should be part of who they are as individuals. As we noted earlier, writing , for these participants, became a tool for self-discovery, self-awareness and self- realisation. This seemed apparent in participants' description of the virtues of writing as individuals and writers. Some of these virtues are related to one of the reasons why participants write which is

self-expression. This is not only a psychological need but a tool for therapy or serves a therapeutic function. Through self-expression participants discovered who they are, what matters for them and how they are different from others. As one participant said " writing reinforces my existence". Writing was therefore found to be a process of self-discovery since participants said they write about the topics which interest them, their feelings, dreams, hopes, achievements, pain and struggle and these aspects are at the core of their identities as individuals and writers. Therefore, it is hard to separate the person from the writer just as it is hard to separate the text from the writer and their environment and context.

Many participants who had positive attitudes towards academic writing and conventions believed that writing in English for the writing class is an empowering skill. They expressed the idea of empowerment differently, but it seems that most of them are aware of the impact of writing on them. By empowerment, I mean the advantages that writing offers to participants as writers both at the personal and academic levels. Empowerment has five main forms which are:

- a) expressing one's thoughts
- b) sharing experiences with the reader
- c) having an impact on the reader,
- d) building self-confidence as a writer, and
- e) feeling satisfaction and achievement as a result of this.

The present study has revealed that there is a need to create opportunities for writing in EFL, especially argument writing through which the student- writers can construct their identity as writers and as individuals.

Perhaps one could summarize this study in one sentence: "I write therefore I exist". The participants in this study do not seem to consider themselves as writers, as they are learning to write, but they regard writing as more than a "technical skill".

It is an experience of self-discovery that all of them have appreciated, and are ready to continue for its personal, cognitive, and emotional benefits. Writing is therefore an empowering skill for life that can shape students' identities beyond the classroom.

As far as the methodology utilized to conduct this study is concerned, and as described in chapter three, it is the Third Position Paradigm which was adopted as it offered an alternative perspective within the realm of research methodologies. I have found that this paradigm was both interesting and useful in that it included both the positivist approach and the interpretive one. This multiple research method, which promotes quantitative and qualitative approaches, has enabled me to involve my subjectivity as researcher while valuing the empirical evidence that I was trying to understand and investigate. The reality I was confronted to was complex, socially constructed, filled with nuances that I could not always perceive and /or describe.

As concerns my positionality as researcher, it was fairly flexible since I was an outsider and an insider at the same time. As a teacher who has authority in class, I was an outsider as many students did not feel at ease, open and talking personally about their writing. To them, I was not the understanding friend who could accept and support them unconditionally. Thus, they avoided being judged by me with regard to their reading behaviours, writing habits, etc. Being too frank and honest with me, about my teaching methods, for example, would have created conflicts, and awkward situations where telling the truth would sound disrespectful to the teacher. The authority relationship that characterizes the relationship between teacher and students is often felt like an obstacle to change things in Algeria.

I was also an insider as I did my training at ENSB too, with some of the same teachers, and I was familiar with how the system works at this college. As for the participants, they had been my students of writing for two years and oral communication for one year. This long period of interaction with them has helped

me build a relationship of respect and trust even if my authority as a teacher had never disappeared. This trust has created a comfortable feeling of ease between me and them, and has helped me collect authentic data for the present research at ENSB.

To conclude, the qualitative approach that I have adopted to collect my data and interpret it has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of this human “adventure” made of students’ experiences as social phenomena in the specific context of an Algeria institution of higher education wherein undergraduate students were trying to acquire the skills of academic English writing and argument writing.

But it is also understood that, by embracing the stance of subjectivity, I was engaging in deep reflexivity on my own biases and assumptions, which sometimes, were quite overwhelming. More often than not, and for ethical reasons, I could not scratch under the surface of some phenomena. However, through using this ethnographic approach, I could hear the voices of individual people who are not always heard. I hope that the outcomes of this research will , not only help to gain a deeper understanding of the complex phenomena of argument writing and writer identity, but also contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the particular field of writing in EFL, and also somehow contribute to social change.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Participants' Pseudo-names in the Three Research Tools: Students' Questionnaire, Written Accounts on Writer Identity and Argument Essays Respectively

Student 1: Marya (Female)
Student 2: Fatima(Female)
Student 3: Halima(Female)
Student 4: Yacine (Male)
Student 5: Ilham (Female)
Student 6: Soraya (Female)
Student 7: Meriem (Female)
Student8: Insaf (Female)
Student 9: Soumia (Female)
Student10: Radia (Female)
Student 11: Fouzia (Female)
Student 12: Malika (Female)
Student 13: Chiraz (Female)
Student 14: Sarah (Female)
Student 15: Salima (Female)
Student 16:Saida (Female)
Student 17: Imene (Female)
Student 18: Chahrazed (Female)
Student19: Miral (Female)
Student20: Hadjer (Female)
Student 21: Habiba (Female)
Student 22: Lyna (Female)
Student 23: Celia (Female)
Student 24: Leila (Female)
Student 25: Rania (Female)
Student 26: Sofia (Female)
Student 27: Nabila (Female)
Student 28 : Anissa (Female)
Student 29: Wahiba (Female)
Student 30: Nayla (Female)
Student 31: Assia (Female)
Student 32: Lyna (Female)
Student 33: Fella (Female)
Student 34: Salah (Male)
Student 35: Akila (Female)
Student 36: Hafida (Female)
Student 37: Youcef (Male)
Student 38:Siham(Female)
Student 39: Youssra(Female)
Student 40: Ikram (Female)
Student 41: Sonia (Female)
Student 42: Yazid (Male)

Appendix 2

Students' Semi-Structured Questionnaire

This questionnaire is meant to gather data necessary for the present study on students' writer identity in English argument writing. Please answer the following questions as clearly and truthfully as possible.

1. How would you define writing in English?

.....
.....
.....

2. How would you define good writing?

3. How would you rank yourself as a writer in English?

Very good Good Average Bad Very bad

4. How often do you write in English? Put a cross in the appropriate box.

Always Often Sometimes Never

5. Do you write in languages other than English?

Yes No

6. If yes, say in which language:

.....
.....

7. What is the type of writing that you find the most difficult?

Narration Description Exposition Argumentation

8. Here are some criteria of good argumentation in random. Re-order them according to their importance for you. (Put a number in front of each criterion)

- Taking a clear position
- Using/ Selecting solid arguments
- Being consistent (logical development of ideas)
- Organizing the essay in an effective way

9. How would you define an argumentative essay?

.....

.....

10. How often do you write argumentation?

Always Often Sometimes Never

11. Do you think it is difficult to write an argumentative essay/text?

Yes No

12. If yes, why? Give reasons.

.....

.....

13. What do you find most difficult in writing an argumentative essay? Circle the right answer (s). (You can circle more than one answer)

- generating ideas
- convincing the reader
- developing arguments
- organizing arguments
- analyzing information

14. According to you, what makes a good argumentative essay? Cite some features.

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

15. What is the structure you use in writing the argumentative genre(essay)? Circle A, B or C.

A: First Structure

- I. Introduction (thesis)
- II. Weakest argument that supports your opinion
- III. Stronger argument that supports your opinion
- IV. Strongest argument that supports your opinion
- V. Counterarguments and refutation
- VI. Conclusion

B: Second Structure

- I. Introduction (thesis)
- II. Counterarguments and refutation
- III./ IV. Arguments that support your opinion, arranged from least important to most
- V. important point or vice versa
- VI. Conclusion

C: Third structure

- I. Introduction (theses)
- II. Counterargument 1 and argument to refute it
- III. Counterargument 2 and argument to refute it
- IV. Counterargument 3 and argument to refute it
- V. Strongest argument that supports your opinion

VI. Conclusion (Reid. J. M., 1982: 102)

16. .Can you apply /use all that you know about argumentation in writing an argumentative essay ?

Yes No

Knowledge about organization/structure

Knowledge about content (ideas)

Knowledge about genre conventions

Knowledge about register (formal/informal)

Knowledge about critical thinking

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 3: Thematic Analysis of Responses to the Open-ended Questions of Students' Semi-structured Questionnaire

*Underlined utterances and sentences refer to relevant ideas and examples to codes

Students answers	Codes	Themes
Q1. How would you define writing in English? S1.Marya: * <u>Writing is a piece of work that requires good organization and several criteria to well transmit the message or ideas.</u> S2.Fatima: <u>For me writing in English is much amusing when writing about a topic you like,</u> because you use your vocabulary, test your grammar. <u>But repulsive when compelled to write about specific topics. Its like brain jailing for me.</u> S3. Halima: <u>Writing is an important skill that helps us express our thoughts, ideas and emotions.</u>² S4.Yacine: <u>Writing is something personal. Educational writing is not writing because it's not personal or resulted from a deep experience.</u> S5. Ilham: <u>Writing is a way to express yourself by words.</u> ³ S6. Soraya: <u>Writing for me is self-expression because when writing we show off potential what we</u>	1.Good organization of text/essay 2.To transmit a message or idea; the text must and should communicate a clear message to the reader; 3.Purposeful, meaningful writing via effective communication with the reader 4.Good writing and writing should follow specific rules and strategies (writing process/these students have positive perceptions of writing conventions as guidelines for good writing unlike the others who think they are limits to their freedom of writing). 5.Good writing requires hard/ strong thinking and organization of ideas (structure/ 5 paragraph essay). 1. Good writing should have coherence; all ideas are about the same topic. 2. The essay should be organized in	Empowerment: Conventions: Freedom: Self in writing: Instrumental skill for academic success : Sub-themes: Self-expression 24 out of 42. This is more than half of the participants which means that this is a vital reason why the participants write. “writing is self-expression because when writing we show off potential what we have inside”. Here s6 believes that self-expression is telling the reader who we are as writers, how we think and our potential which can be intellectual, artist and creative. Here through

<u>have inside.</u> I prefer free writing to feel free. 1 S7. Meriem: <u>Writing is copying down ideas, expressing feelings, emotions all what comes in our mind.</u> It can be talking and discussing some events <u>using my own style.</u> 4 S8. Insaf: Writing in English is a process of jotting down ideas, opinions, and thoughts. <u>It can help us improve our English. It allows us to express ourselves, to defend our opinions and build our writing skills.</u> S9. Soumia: Writing is an important process that can help in expressing our ideas, feelings <u>according to a special rules and strategies.</u> 6 S10. Radia: Writing in English is to express our ideas, our knowledge by using the written form of the target language. <u>The passage written always reflects the way which the writer thinks in.</u> S11. Fouzya: <u>Writing is an essential module in English, it teaches us to be aware grammatically when we write, we take in consideration all the mistakes and neglect (avoid) them.</u> S12. Malika: Writing is a little bit difficult for me. <u>It is expressing your ideas freely.</u> S13. Chiraz: Writing is the individual production <u>after a hard</u>	paragraph or essay form 3. Use of English to transmit your ideas (communicating in the English language: vocabulary). 4. Clarity and simplicity of sentences (sentences, paragraphs and essays/ good structure). 5. Writing is producing a set of sentences about a subject using methods; strategies, organization/structure. S40. Writing enables me to express my ideas, feelings and opinions.23 S41. Writing is the act of organizing our ideas and opinions, experiences into a set of paragraphs. S42. Writing is the act of transmitting an idea using letters, text, to address to an absent. It has many forms (prose and poetry) and it is organized in many types (argumentation, description, narration).24 6. The nature of writing is perceived differently by students; art, craft, skill, ability, process. Khaled for example, believes writing is a	writing, this student aims at self-discovery by thinking about one's potential then share it with the reader in writing. This seems a way to construct one's identities as a writer by discovering who we are as individuals, reflect on our potential and then use it as a source for writing. This again shows that the self is at the heart of the writing process. Another participant(s3) claims that" writing is an important skill that helps us express our thoughts, ideas and emotions." Here again, writing is presented as a tool or a way to express the students thoughts and feelings which are two major blocks of their personalities and identities. It seems that language is used just as a tool to express participants' thoughts and feelings rather than an end in itself. Therefore, the participants seem not to write solely to improve their English and writing skills and strategies, but they are also motivated by the strong need to present who they are to the reader, how they feel and their visions of the world.

thinking and organization of ideas (critical thinking) S14. Sarah: Writing is a means of expressing ourselves, your ideas and position too. S15. Salima: Writing is to express your ideas. It has to do with the structure too. S16. Saida: Writing is a reflection of our knowledge, it shows my style and how I used to express my ideas, experiences, feelings by using a written form. Writing is to express your ideas. It has to do with the structure too. S17. Imene: Writing in English is the same as writing in other languages, it is a method to express what we want to say, to feel free. It is easier than writing in other languages. S18. Chahrazed: Writing is one of the English skills. It helps the students to express themselves freely. S19 Miral: Writing is a process in which the human can write letters, words, sentences, and even essays about a kind of topic which is unique for humans. S20. Hadjer: Writing is a process in which spoken form is expressed into the written form which is full of rules and organization.	talent and thus does not require teaching and therefore he described writing instruction as “pushing a dead body”. This means it is useless to teach writing because it is a talent that we either born with or and cannot be learnt. This means students’ perceptions of the nature of writing determine their motivation to write, involvement, commitment and responsibility of learning and how they perceive and deal with the teacher of writing and the learning experience altogether. 7. This skill requires many other skills and knowledge; 8. Related skills are: intensive reading, rich vocabulary, logic, strong arguments and evidence, critical thinking, selecting the best arguments, presenting them logically, convincing the reader, attracting their attention, changing their ideas, beliefs and probably behaviours,	This self-expression is also a kind of communication as it’s based on sharing who the writer is with the reader by referring to thoughts and emotions. Here again, it seems that the participants feelings and emotions are an important asset which they bring to the writing process just like thoughts and ideas. This shows that the participants feel the need to use their feelings both as a source for writing and a content which they can reflect on through writing which is also an opportunity to them to reflect and understand those feelings and handle them better. This point will be discussed in detail in the third point of this section which is about writing as therapy or the therapeutic function of writing. This function should come just after self-expression cus they are linked. In addition to self-expression and therapy, the participants also seem to write in order to improve their English and practicing their writing strategies and

S21.Mounira: Writing is to express thoughts and ideas about a special issue.¹⁴ S22.Celia: Writing is a skill which should follow some steps and specific organization according to each type(of essay). S23. Samira: Writing in English is like writing in Arabic but in English is simple and has types, narrative, descriptive, argumentative etc. S24. Leila: Writing is a very important skill for English learners. Through it we can see how good we are in using English words, ideas, and all what we have learnt before. S25. Rania: Writing is one of most important skills in English in which you represent the spoken language with letters. S26: Hana: Writing is a way in which we use what we have in our minds in order to express our selves and our ideas. S27. Nabila: Writing is an important skill, an effective tool to express ourselves or to transmit messages or ideas. It's a silent way to get out what we have inside. It helps us to construct our language and widen the vocabulary.¹⁶ S28. Anissa: Writing is an important skill that builds up your language learning, it is a way of	9. Topic familiarity determines students' perceptions of the writing task and experience 10. Topic familiarity also determines in a part the task difficulty or ease and therefore students' enjoying the task or feeling anxious, frustrated and confused. 11. Therefore, topic familiarity affects students' mental/ cognitive, affective, and psychological state and therefore the student's writing performance and quality of the final draft and text or essay. 12. The importance of writing as perceived by students: 7.1. As a means of self-expression(psychological, therapeutic, and social needs) 7.2.It allows students to speak up, say what they think about a topic, opinions, ideas, beliefs, etc. 13. Writing allows students to practice their writing skills; students become writers by writing in class and beyond. . Writing is a very important skill for English learners. Through it we can see how good we are in	skills. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect and practice leads to progress, the participants being aware of the importance of writing as a skill for their academic success, do write to master the skill of writing, develop better writing strategies, discover their weaknesses and strengths and improve them. This also helps them expanding their vocabulary, which seems more important to express themselves than grammar that comes as a second priority after vocabulary. Grammar is important to build meaning and make the text clear and readable and thus effectively communicate participants' ideas and feelings to the reader and thus create a connection between the writer and reader which is vital for having the position impact on them. This impact often determines the quality of the text and thus whether the writer is good or not as it will be discussed in chapter two. Expressing their feelings and thoughts and put them into words onto a

self-expression in an effective way.¹⁷ S29. Wahiba: Writing is the expression of our selves in a written form. It has many types , such as description, narration and argumentation. S30. Nayla: Writing is a means to express or describe something using your proper writing style. Also a good reader will be a good writer.¹⁸ S31. Assia: Writing in English is to collect ideas with the same topic and write them in a paragraph or an essay using the English language to transmit your ideas. S32 Lyna: Writing is a means of communication in which we describe ourself and our manner of writing and it can also refer to the personality of the writer. S33. Fella: No answer S34.Salah: Writing is to write a set of sentences about a subject following some methods, organization and strategies. S35. Akila: Writing is the way how to transmit thoughts and opinions in a written form using English vocabulary.²⁰ S36.Hafida: Writing is sub branch of literature. It means writing a clear topics in a variety of fields such as poems,articles,essays, paragraphs, stories, books, etc.	using English words, ideas, and all what we have learnt before. S26. Writing is one of most important skills in English in which you represent the spoken language with letters. S27. Writing is a way in which we use what we have learnt in our minds in order to express ourselves and our ideas. (knowledge)¹⁵ S28. Writing is an important skill, an effective tool to express ourselves or to transmit messages or ideas. It's a silent way to get out what we have inside. It helps us to construct our language and widen the vocabulary.¹⁶ S29. Writing is an important skill that builds up your language learning, it is a way of self-expression in an effective way.¹⁷	sheet of paper seems to help the participants process and understand their psychology and thus they often feel better when writing. Writing therefore is almost similar to seeing a psychologist or talking to a best friend and getting some steam out. This therapeutic function of writing is expressed differently by the participants but all of their descriptions revolve around feeling better, getting better, feeling relieved, being happy, satisfied and realizing their potential by knowing who they are, how they feel and what they think and what makes them different from others. Although academic writing often aims at developing audients' linguistic abilities and increasing their communicate skills through writing by teaching them how to get their messages across effectively and clearly to the reader and thus meet the expectations of the reader and fulfil the aim of a particular genre or type of writing like argument writing which aims primarily at convincing the reader of the validity of the writers opinion and position using solid arguments

S37. Youcef: Writing is the art of expressing ideas and dealing with different subjects by following a set of rules.²¹ S38. Siham: Writing is a means for expressing any feeling, opinion or to speak about any subjects.²² S39. Youssra: Writing in English enables me to express my ideas, feelings and opinions.²³ S40. Ikram: Writing is the act of organizing our ideas and opinions, experiences into a set of paragraphs. S41. Sonia: Writing is the act of transmitting an idea using letters, text, to address to an absent. It has many forms (prose and poetry) and it is organized in many types (argumentation, description, narration).²⁴ S42. Yazid: Writing in English is a productive process in which is implemented much of the knowledge acquired in learning English language. It is in fact the only skill, among the four, that can reflect better how the person masters this language. Q2. How would you define good writing? S1. Good writing is to know how to lead readers to think about what you wrote and to reach the audience's heart and mind with logic and good presentation of ideas. S2. Good writing is being able to write about anything, being able	Q2: Good writing means; The students' answers seem to be in harmony with their perceptions and beliefs of writing. This is logical since writers write and their identity is the result of their ability to practice writing as a skill, ability, competence, craft, talent and art. Writer identity: Students' perceptions of writer identity as a concept not in	backed up by evidence. Yet, to many participants language is often not an end in itself even if improving their English is the major reason for studying the language. However, through writing they also try to accomplish an important psychological needs, understand their state of mind, affect, behaviour by discovering who they are through writing. This is clear in their choices of topics as when given freedom to choose the topics which often the case, except in exams where their options are limited, tend to write about the topics which interest them, are meaningful to them or reflect their personal experiences. This helps them practicing the therapeutic virtues of writing which are not possible to get if they just write to complete a classroom task and this is why in this case, they think writing becomes completely superficial and artificial as it is done for the teacher as a routine or an obligation rather than an empowering process of self-expression, self-discovery and self-realization. Empowerment will be discussed in detail in chapter two as it is one

to express yourself on paper, being cultivated in all domains of life, plus having a huge store of vocabulary. S3. Good writing is to have the ability to express all your opinions, thoughts, and ideas. S4. Good writing is to share one's personal writings with others which is something I hate. S5. Good writing is to be capable to interpret his (writer's) feelings into words. S6. Good writing is to know how to see things that ordinary people cannot see and feel things that they don't. It should have a message to transmit clearly that could be understood. S7. Good writing means to write good essays, novels,...etc. Also to have a strong word vocabulary, good style and have a lot of audiences and readers in which you can convince them. S8. Good writing means that you are able to express yourself, describe the world around you, narrate events, and convince people about a specific topic. It demands a person to have a critical thinking and to be open minded. S9. Good writing is to have the ability to think first then to convince the reader and to produce new ideas. S10. Good writing is to be able to express yourself, and to know either how to translate your knowledge or how to apply your writing skills in appropriate way. S11. Good writing is the best thing forever, it means when I write something, I use all my knowledge and my experiences or what I see every day in world.	relation to themselves as writers: Impact/ influence the reader: S1. To be a writer is to know how to lead readers to think about what you wrote and to reach the audience's heart and mind with logic and good presentation of ideas. Teach them useful details about the topic Help them become better people Represent other people (society and community) who cannot express their opinions on the topic Convince the reader that the writer's position is valid Share knowledge with the reader, no sharing no interaction no impact on the reader. Personal qualities of the writer(character, personality , writer as an individual): - Intelligent, smart, - Knowledgeable about many topics - Avid reader who reads extensively on	of the most important criteria for becoming a writer according to the participants. Another reason why the participants write is their belief that writing is a vital skill and process that they should develop and master if they are to succeed academically. Therefore, writing is a skill which has an instrumental function and value as the educational system is heavily reply on writing for both teaching and evaluation students understanding, knowledge and academic achievement. So, the participants seem to be aware of the advantages of mastering academic writing and one way to do so is by improving their English and expanding their vocabulary and practicing grammar so they can write better sentences and well structured paragraphs and therefore better essays which match the criteria of argument writing as a genre. This is clear through the way participants define argument writing and the criteria they present for a good argument and

S12. Good writing means that you can express yourself and that you have a great vocabulary. S13. Good writing is like a doctor who try to deal with the society problems into texts by giving advices. Belonging to society. S14. Good writing is knowing all things about writing skills. And having a rich vocabulary. S15. Good writing is to write frequently and freely, being able of writing without mistakes and having good ideas. Knowing what to write and about what you're writing. S16. Good writing is expressing oneself freely. Writing about different subjects. Moreover, having a style that differs him/her from one another. S17. Good writing means the way I express myself, my ideas, feelings and my opinion. S18. Good writing is expressing oneself like writing a story, a poem. S19. Good writing is writing everything, narrating stories, writing poems and so on. S22. Good writing means to be a wise person who is able to write whatever thing with competence. S23. Good writing is to be able to write and respect the structure, the content, the spelling and to be able to use strong vocabulary, convince people, influence them by ideas and transmit a message through a piece of writing. S24. Good writing is to be in high level of creativity, having best vocabulary, no grammar mistakes. S25. Good writing is the ability to write different types of writing	many topics so he has ideas to share via writing. 4. Honest ; saying the truth 5. Objective, not biased, careful, critical about the topic. 6. Have their own authentic ideas and acknowledge other ideas so they do not fall into the trap of plagiarism (intellectual honesty). This seems to be a common value in academia and academic writing community at higher education and thus, the student as a member of this community adopts this value, as they are aware of the negative consequences of this behaviour on their academic success though plagiarism is not really punished in the appropriate way. But, teachers encourage students to respect and apply intellectual honesty in their work. 7.	the good argument essay. These criteria seem to reflect the dominant standards of good academic writing promoted by the academic discourse through both teaching and evaluation of writing which is often reflected in teacher's practice as readers and examiners. These criteria for the good argument essay form the participants knowledge of academic writing which is an important aspect of what they bring to the writing process besides personal experiences and knowledge of the world and their reality which are often the results of their interaction with their social, linguistic and cultural and even the political environment which I globally refer to as their writing environment or community which is the space in which they write. This interaction seems vital for participants' journeys to becoming writers since writing is a social act and writers can't grow as writers in isolation from their environment since the latter represents or includes the real and potential readers, the language of writing which reflects the standards of good

and try each time to develop himself. S26. Good writing means having your own style of writing, a wide knowledge, new ideas and new informations and a wide and rich vocabulary. S27. Good writing is to be able to express yourself and your ideas in written form easily. And to be interactive with others by your writing style. S28. Good writing is to be able to play with words creating new ideas, having a unique style and beautiful way of writing, when people appreciate and like what you are writing, this means you are a professional. S29. Good writing for me is a professional one who really knows how to be creative and productive. (Professionalism) good writing refers to professional writing that requires sophisticated English just as the one used by poets, novelists, journalists, researchers and other experts. Students are not "professional" writers because: S30. Good writing is writing everything such as stories and poems, plays and having always his own touch and style. S31. Good writing means we have to know many things about grammar (tenses, punctuation). And expressing himself fluently and transmit a message clearly. Communication/message/clarity S32. Good writing is having many ideas and having your own style of writing, and also you should avoid the mistakes. S33. Good writing is to have enough vocabulary and information about different	Why do students write? 1. They write for the sake of improving their English not for "real purposes" as novelists do. Professional writers according to students do not write to improve their English as it is already "almost perfect" but, they write to share their ideas, knowledge and expertise on a given topic with readers who will learn and benefit from their books , articles and texts. 2. They are not free to write as their writing is guided, evaluated and decided on by the teacher who decides what type of essay to write, when and how. 3. They have a limited audience/readers; teacher, peers and some friends and family members 4. Some students feel obliged to share their texts because of the teacher not deliberately share them with readers as "real" writers do. Texts are meant to be shared with readers. 5. "Real writers" write very easily and never	writing and aims and functions of argument writing as a genre in the academic context, the possible opportunities for writing in the classroom and beyond which put together contribute to the process of becoming writers. The ways participants describe writing seem to reflect the discourse of academic writing or its standards. Some aspects of writing are recurrent like a good structure, organization related to sentences, paragraphs and essays. Also language and good mastery of English are also common features of good writing. Some participants seem to value grammar and the so called mistake free texts and the rich vocabulary which is effective and beautiful to attract the reader's attention. Writing is also about being able to produce texts with certain criteria which again reflect the standards of good writing as practiced in the academic context in which participants write. This is related to the language or discourse of the writing community

subjects which means having a general culture and being educated. S34. Good writing is knowing the writing strategies, how to bring ideas and also write about a huge subjects which deserve to write about it. S35. Good writing is having a good vocabulary and master the language very well. S36. Good writing is producing literary work, applying opinions and thoughts by writing them. S37. Good writing is to get the sense of creativity in literature and writing that's mean to be a skillful and perform writing well and get knowledge about it. S38. Good writing is to be creative, having your special touch when you deal with a subject. Simply make yourself visible in a piece of writing. S39. Good writing is having the ability to express and write about different topics with effective way, which attract the readers. S40. Good writing is to write whatever I want, write diaries, special events or even about problems. S41. Good writing is to be able to transmit your ideas clearly in a piece of writing and the most important is the reader would feel or understand what you are feeling or thinking even if it was one simple paragraph. Communication and impact S42. Good writing is to be a brilliant speaker, thinker and transmitter, have a great ideas, and personal spot towards your	struggle with writing unlike most participants who struggle with English (vocab, ideas, grammar, sentence structure, organisation, logic and critical thinking). 6. Some students think they are not good readers and thus they are not good writers as reading and writing are interrelated and good writers read extensively on different topics to be able to write on them and share relevant and useful details, experiences, and knowledge with readers. Those students claimed they rarely read and wish they could read more especially books, novels, magazines and all types of texts because of the myriad of benefits reading has on their linguistic, cognitive and social skills.	(it includes the criteria for good writing, good argument essay and good argument). Mastering these features and standards means achieving the status of a good writer which seems to be a privilege in the participants environment since the social idealization for being a writer is characterized by many criteria which makes it hard to access to people and sometimes impossible especially in a culture which is heavily based on orality. Many participants directly relate being a writer to two famous Algerian writers who write in French and this seems to reflect their readings and experience with literature. The participants seem to have specific perceptions of the meaning of being and becoming a writer. These perceptions seem to reflect their knowledge of writing as a skill, art, craft and a process. This knowledge is the result of their writing environment, their context and the

written down to attract people's attention.

Q9 .How would you define an argumentative essay? Compare what they said here and how they wrote.

S1.Marya: an essay that gives an opinion or fact and tries to prove his (writer) idea by giving examples and explanations that helps the writer to convince the reader and make him seem logical to the audience.

S2.Fatima: It is an essay in which you use your previous knowledge to develop ideas by which you try to convince the reader of the rightness of your opinion and arguments.

S3.Halima: It is one of the types in which two opinions are different about a specific topic (a controversial topic).

S4.Yacine: an essay in which we defend or reject an opinion that we believe in it.

S5.Ilham: Is a type of writing in which we should convince the reader by given arguments that support his opinion.

S6.Soraya: is one type of writing essays that consists of taking a clear position and try to convince the audience about your point of view.

S7.Meriem: It means to support a topic and defend my position using strong arguments, illustrated examples, real statistics to convince the readers and to persuade them that I'm right.

S8.Insaf: an essay where we find two contradictory topics, we take a clear position defending our opinion (topic) and giving arguments in order to persuade the reader.

standards of good writing and how they perceive writing and readers and why they write. Therefore, becoming a writer is not easy to most of them as most of them seem to struggle to write even when their English is quite good. By this I mean a good command of grammar, sentence structure, syntax and a large vocabulary based on my own criteria for good writing as they are reflected in the correction grid I use to evaluate the students writing both for daily writing practice and exams. I need to describe my criteria and discuss how they relate to the dominant standards of good academic writing and how I agreed with my colleagues to adopt it. How these criteria are common in teaching materials and international English language exams like IELTS.

According to the participants, not everyone can be a writer since writing is a complex process and it's more than jotting down some words on a piece of paper. Becoming a writer depends on a number of qualities and skills the

S9. Soumia: a type of writing in which we should take a position (against/for), then give a solide arguments in order to convince the reader. an idea you bring in order to support your position, and to strengthen it and make it stronger. S9.is a fact or a process of reasoning that we use it to defend our position and to convince the reader. S10.Radia: It is a kind of text in which the writer tries to convince readers by citing logical proofs. S11. <u>Is to take position about a subject (against/for), and giving the different position in details and at the end our opinion.</u> S14.is the strongest genre of essays because you have to convince the reader with your ideas. <u>S15.is a group of paragraphs, and each paragraph can deal with one argument in order to make the reader clearly understand the topic. Structure of paragraphs, each paragraph develops one argument.</u> S16.is a type of essay that take one topic and analyse it with arguments and examples in order to convince a reader. S17.it is a type of essay in which we should refute the opinion of antagonist. We have to provide the reader with suitable arguments to attract his attention. S18.it is concerned with two opinions. These opinions are totally different. The first opinion has a point of view which is different from the second one. Therefore, the writer should take position.		writer should have, knowledge and even some ethics. The participants either see themselves as writers or not based on a number of criteria. The latter seem to be closely related to their writing experiences both past and present, their opportunities to write in class and beyond, the standards of good writing as they understand them and have been taught, how they evaluate their linguistic abilities and competence in English as a language, their positions as students of English as a foreign language in a specific context which is characterized by a rich linguistic scenery as most or all participants are multilingual since they master Arabic, French and English in addition to other languages like Spanish, German, Turkish to name but a few. These criteria are also related to their perceptions of writing as a skill and process since writers are those who write and it's obvious that whenever participants try to describe being or becoming a writer, it is inevitable to describe

S19.is the way in which we convince someone about something by using arguments, statistics, facts. S20.an essay which gives arguments so as to convince the reader about our position, our point of view by giving strong arguments. S21. A type of essay which is mostly used to convince the reader about specific opinion using arguments. S22.an essay in which we talk about a specific topic that we agree with or not and giving arguments defending our position from this issue or problem. S23.a type of texts or essays in which defend a point of view or an opinion by using arguments, examples and trying to convince the reader. S24.it discuss a special issue, where the writer tries to bring different arguments in order to convince the reader about his own opinion. S25.is a piece of writing in which two different opinions are being debated. S26.is to take a position from the two sides, select your ideas which has to be logical, support your ideas and opinions with strong arguments and arganize tem. S27.is a piece of writing in which the writer take a position and try to defend his opinion by setting strong arguments. S28.it is a piece of writing in which the writer take a clear position , and defend his point of view with strong in order to convince his readers. S29.is one type in which we try to transmit our position about		good writing, the process of writing and the functions of writing. Especially that in general good writers are those students who master the process of writing, fulfil the communicative functions of writing as a given genre is concerned or a number of genres common in the academic context. Therefore, the qualities of the good writer revolve around writing as a skill, process, craft, art, knowledge, experience, tool for communication and a social act of self-discovery, realization and recognition which is characterized by constant struggle trying to face the multiple challenges posed by the writing community or environment, readers, process, functions, purposes, standards, expectations, power relationships, content, language, culture and even the politics of writing. The ways that the participants describe the process of becoming a writer or the profile of the good writer also reflect their own understandings or philosophies of academic writing which sometimes march their

something to the others, and convince them by using the appropriate arguments. S30.an essay that defends an point of view using a strong arguments, example, statistics. Its aim is to convince the readers and push him to rethink about his ideas. S31.is an essay in which you introduce arguments in order to represent your opinion whether you are for or against something. S32.it stands on giving effective arguments that should convince the reader, and taking your opinion in clear way. S33.is a set of paragraphs in which the writer tries to convince or difinde his point of view using arguments. S34.an essay in which defend on our opinion and give arguments to make the reader convinced. S35.is a set of paragraphs, introductory one, and at least two developing paragraphs in which you try to explain why you are for or against some things by giving arguments and concluding one. S36.an essay which contains a discussion of reasons and the writer try to convince the reader with bring an effective ideas and improvement. S37.an essay in which we take a position and try to reinforce it with arguments and examples in order to convince the reader. S38.is one of the essay's types, it contains a specific position to defend. It needs to argue with a very logical development of ideas and strong proofs. S39.a type of writing concerned with analyzing topic using argumentations in order to persuade and convince him. Who?		learning experiences and sometimes are different from the official syllabus and agendas of academic writing and seem to put the whole writing pedagogy into question since just like writing seems to be an empowering process for some participants, it is also perceived as an oppressive experience to others as it limits their possibilities to write, freedom to express themselves and puts more pressure on them by expecting them to reproduce the standards of good writing and thus makes writing more challenging as they are expected to write well not just write to express themselves. This is why some participants believe that academic writing is artificial and meaningless sometimes as it forces them to generate ideas for the classroom tasks and exams rather than provide them with genuine opportunities to express themselves and discover who they really are and celebrate their identities as writers. Another reason is that academic writing allows

S40.an essay in which the writer tries to convey the readers about a subject with a set of arguments. S41.an essay in which the writer try to convince people about something using power arguments, examples. S42.an essay about a specific topic and the writer tries to convince the reader by providing some arguments. Q10 .According to you, what is an argument? S1.a sort of proof of your ideas or the subject (topic). It is a sentence that explains the reason the writer thinks his idea or statement is correct and logical. S2.it is an idea in which you develop information about a certain topic to try to prove yourself right. S3.is to give a reason why you are for or against. S4.it is a personal or logical idea that is related directly to our point of view in a way that it serves to persuad other to adopt this viewpoint. S5.argumentation is given reasons and fact about why you think that your opinion is right. S6.is a fact that is used to support your point of view and it enables you to convince the audience about your position. S7.is an idea or thought that should be convinced , in fact, we use argument to persuade my point of view towards something. S8.an idea you bring in order to support your position, and to strengthen it, and make it stronger. S9.is a fact or a process of reasoning that we use it to defend		a very little room for creativity unlike personal writing which is much appreciated by many participants who believe their writing is too much controlled by the teacher as a key reader and examiner. Therefore, they feel obligated to write for the teacher and this seems to void writing from its essence which is to give voice to students to express who they are, how they feel, what they think and how they perceive their reality and the world around them. Some of them claim that they don't write for the sake of writing but they should feel engaged in the process of writing so it's real and meaningful to them. This meaning is vital as it gives a sense of purpose for the participants and thus writing becomes genuine and authentic. This is why they can see themselves as writers not when they feel forced to write, guided or expected to fit the mould of academic discourse and its criteria for good writing.

our position and to convince the reader. S10.is to say something with which you make the other part convinced and change his mind. S11.is to defend about one idea that I think is the best. S12.is a proof, a fact. S13.it maybe an opinion, a general truth which is used by the writer to demonstrate his idea and let the reader believe of what we think. S14.is a very strong fact or cause by which we defined a thesis statement joining by examples. S15.is a strong ideas that help you to show your position and defend your opinion to convince the reader. S16.it can be a fact, a solid opinion or statistics the writer uses arguments in order to convince the readers; moreover, to make his/her ideas or point of view solid. S17.a fact or statement used to support an idea. S18.is a point of view, an idea that we defend by giving examples, supporting sentences to convince the readers. S19.is the idea which I use to convince the reader or the audience. S20.is a proof and something we defende ourself with and it can be a living example or statistics and reasons and experiences. S21.is a proof which is given by the writer in order to convince the reader. S22.it can be examples, statistics or whatever thing that would support an idea. S23.is the reason(why you are for this idea)to convince people.		

S24.is a proof to support your opinion. S25.is sentence used by the writer to make his opinion or position evident which means to defend his opinion. S26.it may be a fact, or an example, or statistics used by the writer to support his point of view, and makes his position strong. S27.is the most important element in the argumentative essay because it has the main function (convince the others) which enable the writer to achieve the essay aim. S28.it is a statement that is said to proof an idea, to defend it, to convince. S29.a statement you use in argumentative essay in order to support your opinion. S30.is a fact of argument. speech which would be more effective and convinced and insist on your position. S31.is a proof that the writer uses in argumentative essay to defined his point of view using arguments. S32.is a proof of your opinion, it maybe a fact or statistic. S33.is a solid reason and explanation in order to convince the others about your point of view. S34.means a discussion of reasons. S35.No answer. S36.is to convince the reader by giving proofs and logics. It is to give a proof. S37.is concept by which we use to convince and persuade people to believe about a specific term, using examples, person's point of view.		

S38.it can be a proof, experience, statistics, or any other thing that its aim is convincing the readers about something. S39.is a solid illustration, or a strong idea that let the reader attract to read about this essay. It means “a prouve” we use to make our idea strong and solid. S40.is an information that can convince the reader. Its general a real one. S41.it can be an evidence , an example from real life or statistics to prove (logic and facts) a certain opinion. S42.a strong point of view that convince the adversair. Q12.Why it is difficult to write argumentation? Give reasons. S1.Yes, for me it is a bit difficult because you need to brainstorm yourself, and organize your arguments , and make sure there are no contradictions in your essay, and that the counter-arguments are weaker and so ... S2.To write an argumentative essay you should take a position but sometimes you can't do so. S3.It's hard to find effective arguments. S4.Lack of information. S5.The most difficult part for me in writing an argumentative essay is developing ideas and arguments about the two contradictory topics especially if I don't have any idea about it. S6.Sometimes, I find some the two opinions are suitable in such case, I find difficulties to choose the right arguments. To write an argumentative essay is maybe		

difficult because convincing people with your opinion is not easy but if you have extra information about the topic you are dealing with and aware about it that would be easy. S7.It is difficult because this type of essays needs some efforts in which you have to talk about your position and refute the antagonist and choose suitable words, ideas, ... is hard. S8.I used to find difficulty of organizing the ideas. S9.My reasons are sometimes it's hard to find arguments that can support my position and sometimes I can even have a clear position and can be a really difficult issues. S10.Because the arguments you may give should be valid not just hollow, shallow ones that would not serve your subject matter and are only for the sake of filling papers, and especially if you do not know about the topic it would be a real problem. S11.Because it is difficult to convince the reader, and sometimes you don't find many arguments to defend your opinion. S12.It is difficult to write an argumentative essay because, I find it complex and when I write an argumentative essay my ideas run away, for example, if I write about something and give arguments of course that moment I feel that I don't have any idea about this.		

S₁₃.It is not easy to convince people. Finding good and solid arguments is hard. S₁₄.Because it needs lots of strong proofs and a very clear point of view. S₁₅.It is difficult to find the right arguments. S₁₆.How to find suitable arguments that convince all different categories and levels. S₁₇- S₄₂ : No other answers?		

Appendix 4

Thematic Analysis of Students' Written Accounts on Their Writer Identity

Q1. According to you, what does it mean to be a writer?

Q2. Do you consider yourself as a writer or not? Justify.

* Underlined utterances, and sentences refer to relevant examples and details to codes. Comments put between brackets (...) are the researcher's comments on students' responses. Words in bold refer to key notions and ideas in students' responses.

Students' answers	Codes
Student 1 Marya A1. *<u>A writer is not the one who writes beautifully but purposefully.</u> He should have strong statements/opinions and is responsible for what he writes as he has an audience he may affect. He should have qualities like passion, responsibility, respectful, conscious, and alert, has values like truthfulness, fair and objective and not offensive. A2. Yes, writing is a passion for me. It makes me feel freedom, reinforces my existence and free from judgment and prejudice. I feel unique and responsible towards myself and my community and the world. I could affect others and change their perception through writing. <u>In my opinion, a writer is a transmitter, deliverer, someone who has something beneficial to deliver/transmit to the world sharing his ideas, beliefs and way of thinking.</u> (purpose).	1. Writing with a purpose Content : strong statements/opinions 2. Responsibility because he may influence/impact the audience 3. Impact on the readers /audience Qualities (passion, responsibility, respect, conscious, respect) Values (truthfulness, fair, objective and not offensive)
Student 2 FATIMA: A1. He has an impact on society. A writer is someone who can influence me and touch	Beneficial content Sharing ideas ,way of thinking and beliefs with the world

<u>something in me and push me to become a better person.</u> Background knowledge is less important than the impact. A2. No, <u>I write and I want to have a positive impact on people</u> but I rarely share with people. Some friends like what I write but I feel afraid of sharing so I am not a writer yet.	Impact on society/ can influence/push/ touch something in me Background knowledge is less important than the impact.
Student3 HALIMA A1. Being a writer means you are a good reader and have read so many books and articles on several topics. You accumulated knowledge before you write. <u>Because the writer is a representative of society. So, he must be qualified for his responsibility.</u> Q2. No, my vocabulary did not reach the required level for writing. I do not read a lot so my background knowledge and culture are still limited and stagnate.	good reader accumulated knowledge representative of society qualified for his responsibility
Student4 : YACINE A1. A writer is someone who knows a lot about the language he writes in (vocabulary and grammar) skillful in an exceptional way in using this knowledge in expressing an idea/strong belief. <u>So, we judge a writer through the quality of what he writes not the quantity the beauty of the writing and the extent to which he grabs the readers' attention and interest and the influence he has on them.</u> Q2. No, I am fond of reading others writing and enjoy the weird and unusual vocabulary and complex grammar structures they use. When I will get enough of this (vocabulary and grammar), I will turn into a writer. I am sure this is so far away.	Knowledge about language Skillful in using this knowledge to express idea/beliefs Quality over quantity of writing Beautiful writing that attracts the readers Impact on readers

Student5 ILHAM A1. To be a writer is to have the ability to write and transfer the oral speech into words to express your opinions the best. It is the possibility to say whatever you want through papers. We are all writers but are we good writers? Words are bullets, you can shoot but can you get the goal? (purpose) Q2. No, I can write and hold the pen but I am not a writer because when I write, <u>I feel obliged to write.</u> So, writing is not just a skill but an art.	The ability to write/transform speech into words Express opinions Words are bullets, purpose, aim
Student 6 SORAYA A1. Being a writer is to be able to write compositions correctly to be clear, understood and purposeful to transmit a message (experience, story, advice). So, it depends on the purpose and the audience of that piece of writing. The writer needs to be precise and concise and knows when to provide the reader with details. He has to be able to interpret an image, a scene or a conversation into an interesting piece of writing. He needs to have a style and a wide range of vocabulary. A2. No, I do not have the specific skills and rich vocabulary.	Ability to write Accuracy, clarity, understood, purposeful Sense of audience Precise and concise Using details effectively(when necessary only) Ability to interpret events/experiences into interesting texts Style and wide vocab (good language)
Student 7 MERIEM: A1. To be a writer means to have a large imagination, a strong vocabulary to convince the reader or make him live a story (narration). Also, to love reading and writing, to think, enjoy, suffer, complain, transmit, ect. To be a writer is to collect all those aspects in one body and mind.	Creativity /imagination Strong vocab/language Purpose/convince the reader / share experience with the reader (think, enjoy ,suffer, complain, transmit) Enjoy writing and reading/passion

A2. No, I do not have a rich vocabulary and a good style to convince readers. I dislike writing and I prefer to speak directly. I am not patient or have large imagination to write. Good writing means more reading and I prefer watching and listening than reading. So, writing becomes less important according to me.	
Student 8 INSAF A1. <u>Being a writer means the ability to express your ideas, tackle issues related to your outside world (Politics, society, education, ect.).</u> A2. Yes, I write about everything that happens in my life and affects me positively or negatively, I rarely write about the outside world topics like political and social problems because I do not have many data (knowledge) about it. But, I am sure, if I increase my reading about those problems, I can write about them.	Ability to express ideas, tackle issues (purpose) Knowledge(content knowledge) Reading as a source of knowledge
Student 9 SOUMIA A1. <u>Being a writer means the ability to produce a piece of work which requires some techniques</u> , having ideas, critical thinking in order to discuss these ideas and analyze them because the writer produce those ideas for an audience and things should be clear for the reader. Also, knowing all about writing punctuation and respecting it (rules) because they play role in the comprehension of the work. A2. Yes, I am a beginner writer <u>because I am able /capable of producing ideas</u> and transmit them to words and write them. <u>I write everyday diaries and stories. I have the skill</u>	<u>Ability to produce a text</u> Content/ideas Critical thinking/analyze ideas Sense of audience/clear Knowledge about writing/punctuation Respecting the rules of writing /conventions(some SS respect and others resist writing conventions as they are imposed by the teacher) Conventions lead to writing comprehension

<u>of reading which is needed in writing and I read everything (novels books, etc.).</u>	
Student 10 RADIA A1. <u>A writer is a member of his environment. He should be influenced by what he sees around him and what he hears from everything surrounding him.</u> A good writer should write about what he believes. (someone who is influenced by his environment (what he sees and hears around him). He should write about his beliefs) (personality is reflected in writing), avoid plagiarism and imitation (ethics). George Emerson said: « imitation is suicide », he (writer) should be cultivated and creative in style and selective in the way he uses words. <u>The more he cares about details, the more his writings have an impact on the readers.</u> A2. <u>Yes, I have the abilities to be a writer and I started writing a novel about my life focusing on details. I can reach a certain degree of effectiveness because I'm writing about my own experience (real life). But, I still have to improve,</u> (optimistic) widen my culture and knowledge in the field of writing especially methodology. What is important is that I am doing my best to write.	The writer should influence readers, but is also influenced by his environment as a citizen and a member of the community. Environment refers to writing ecology (where writing takes place)
Student 11 CHIRAZ A1. A writer is an artist, an ideal philosopher and a good teacher (writer's roles and positions). It's not easy to be a writer cus you should have an artistic style of writing and be open minded to the world as you are going to write on different subjects. You should experience the phenomena you're going to write /deal with in your	

process. <u>A good writer is a good manager as he doesn't write randomly but in purpose</u> and he should have knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. A2. Yes , I'm a writer with little experience. A writer should not do many mistakes and must be guided and organized. I am less experienced and I should practice more than saying just few words and <u>I will manage since I want to be a writer and a poet at the same time (optimistic)</u>. « No one is perfect that is why a pencil has an eraser » . I can do my best. I can manage.	
Student 12 MALIKA : A1. A writer is not the person who writes books only but the one who writes diaries, texts, essays, and articles too. <u>Everyone can be a writer, all those who can have the ability to write whatever they want (writing is accessible to everyone)</u>. A2. Yes, I am not an expert but I have a pen and I can write words. I like writing in Arabic a lot and <u>whenever I write I feel I'm expressing myself (therapeutic)</u>. I write diaries, short stories about weird things I imagine. I hope to be an expert writer. <u>Everything is possible if we want to (optimistic)</u>.	Since the participants are multilingual, their writer identity is not limited to writing in English ,but it is also the result of practicing the act of writing in other languages such as Arabic, French, Spanish, German, etc. Expertise in writing: competence distinguishes between “good” and “bad” writers.

Student 13 CHIRAZ: A1. To be a writer means that you're cultivated have a good language that helps you write whatever you want , you can tackle any social issue / problem or emotion ,etc. A2. <u>Yes, I write texts, poems, short passages. I started writing at college(middle school).</u>	<u>Participants' positive past writing experiences</u> seem to contribute to their positive attitudes about their writer identities. This means that participants who had little past practice or who do not write outside the classroom tend to be more pessimistic about seeing themselves as writers.
Student 14 SARAH: A1. A <u>student at school, a teacher, an adolescent (teacher's positions and roles) who writes diaries are all writers but not all who holds a pen is a writer (writing is accessible to all , but good writing is not).</u> The true writer is the one who has literary background, inspires his readers and the one who writes regularly with his own style and way of writing and the ability to attract others through his brilliant ideas and marvelous writings. <u>He is not necessarily famous but someone who can change something through his pen.</u> A2. No, I don't write regularly, my simple writing can't be compared to great writers. <u>I'm still a student and a learner. I don't have enough knowledge to be a writer.</u>	<u>Many students can only see themselves as learners or students of English</u> and the writing they do seems to be part of their language learning process. Therefore, they write to improve their grammar skills and expand their vocabulary. However, this language oriented writing practice or wring for learning doesn't seem to help them owning the process of writing by taking the position of writer even if they actually write and the quality of their texts is often more than acceptable.
Student 15 SALIMA : A1. A writer is the one who talks through his writings which is good. <u>He can write about what is turning in his mind, his own thoughts and feelings using that perplex, change and interest the mind are inner voice of the writer.</u> Some write about their feelings and others	<u>Writing soothes students' feelings and mood (therapeutic functions).</u>

because they have to write like students scientific research papers. A2. Yes, <u>I feel relaxed when writing</u>. Writing is an art cus you can express things you can't talk about. I feel in the mind and place of the writer when I read. There are some crucial characteristics in any writer: accuracy, coherence, meaningful ideas, and adequate vocabulary.	
Student 16 SAIDA: A1. The writer is one who produces literary work (novels, letters, and poems),the one who has the <u>ability to transform his thoughts, ideas, imagination</u> into written form with a very nice expressive language. <u>He presents society, family, the country because he tries to talk about everything worth to be known.</u> He tries to understand every element around him and see what others cannot see because he has a deep understanding and feelings. A2. Yes, <u>I feel I have a deep understanding of things, I search for the truth, I feel what others feel. I try to imagine different situations. I can express my ideas and convince people with very strong words.</u> When I'm writing, I feel that the ideas come spontaneously.	Writer as a representative of society. Writer is able to feel and understand others.
Student 17 IMENE: A1. A writer is the person who expresses himself easily through words and has a sense of imagination. He can talk about his or others life and environment describing or narrating his daily life. He is cultivated and he should master language and grammar. A2. Yes, <u>I started writing from middle school about my daily life</u>. I enjoy writing especially	<u>Past writing experiences</u> Participants like to write about the topics and people who are meaningful in their lives. This also makes writing real and meaningful as it serves real and tangible purposes rather than being an obligation and a class routine.

poems because I express easily what I feel. Through writing, <u>I find myself travelling from one world to another. Writing means a lot to me. I can't ignore it as it's my source of happiness (therapeutic) . I would publish it in the future, a real story of a person who is very important for me.</u>	
Student 18 CHAHRAZED: A1. A writer means having the ability to express oneself ideas, thoughts, feeling, and transmit knowledge. <u>The writer is the one who can inspire other people through his writing</u> and can express what others feel and give solutions. It's also an art. A2. Yes, I can write what I feel (good and bad experiences). <u>I feel relaxed when writing which is my helping hand which destroys all the bad things from my mind (therapeutic).</u>	
Student 19 MIRAL: A1. <u>A writer is someone who can write very well as a skillful person since writing is a productive skill. Someone who can play with words to persuade readers and attract them.</u> Who is great in spelling, punctuation to avoid committing mistakes. He writes anything (stories, novels, books, diaries, and different kind of writing). He should be educated person and have a great imagination. A2.No, I can write stories and diaries but I'm not a writer because I should master spelling (I do many mistakes) while writing. <u>I am not a reader as a good writer is a good reader (good writers are good readers too).</u> I am not familiar with words. Reading decreases mistakes.	Participants' negative attitudes and perceptions about their linguistic abilities like mastery of grammar and rich vocabulary seem to influence the way they perceive their writer identities. The more they have a positive evaluation of their linguistic abilities, the more they tend to accept the idea that they are writers.

Student 20 HADJER : A1. <u>A writer is a person who produces literary work (letters, symbols, books) in order to communicate or transmit messages (purpose).</u> He is a clever person who knows what and how to use his skills of writing well especially in poems and novels. A2. Yes, I'm not a great writer but I have some capacities to write. <u>I really wrote stories and they were interesting as my teacher said (teacher as a reader).</u> I have some eloquence in my language (aesthetic aspects of writing) which helps me write more stories of my own imagination. I love writing and reading more than speaking (student's skill preference).	
Student 21 MOUNIRA: A1. Writing is something very interesting and being a writer can be considered as the best thing a person can do. <u>It doesn't mean expressing anything but expressing ideas, discussing problems and giving solutions. It's something very useful to the writer and society (purpose).</u> A2. Yes, <u>anyone can be a writer, we just need to be guided in order to improve our writings</u> (writing is accessible when we can be guided and supported to improve). <u>I'm a writer because I like to express my ideas, I've been taught to write for many years. I learnt many things about writing that had served me</u> (feeling and being a legitimate writer). I would like to know more about writing and practice more as I like this very important skill of any language (student's positive attitude towards writing as a skill).	Positive learning experiences and ability to express oneself and the accumulation of past and present practice of writing also influence students' writer identities.

Student 22 CELIA: A1. Being a writer means you've the ability to express yourself, your ideas and thoughts by writing. A writer is someone who has good, simple and clear language. <u>Who writes not because he is obliged to write (like the majority of students especially during exams), who has inspiration and imagination, is able to transmit a message by his writings.</u> A2. <u>Yes, I didn't consider myself as a writer since my writing was somehow not good but I've changed my mind. Now, I think I'm a writer especially when two of my best teachers told me that my writing is good</u>(the impact of teacher's positive feedback in boosting students' confidence as writers). My studies require writing especially next year (research paper) that's why I'm doing my best to improve my writing skill trying to be as simple as possible.	Freedom: writers are free and choose to write. They are not obliged to write. The role of positive teacher's oral and written feedback.
Student23 LYNA: A1. A writer is someone who has the ability to write. <u>He should master all that is needed in the process of writing such as vocabulary, grammar, coherence and cohesion of ideas</u> more importantly knowing how to transmit the target message to be understood by the audience(purpose). <u>Both students and famous authors are writers but those authors have worked more and developed their inspiration to real life situations such as Katib Yassine.</u> A2. No, I'm not a writer as I don't have that inspiration or maybe as a FL learner, much efforts and background to be a good writer.	Being EFL learners/ students seem to lead students to underestimate their linguistic abilities maybe because they subconsciously compare themselves to the native speaker who is often represented in the teaching and learning materials and in the students' imagination as an ideal user of English. The FEELING of stigma and dominant idealizations of the native speaker.

Student 24 LEILA: A1. To be a writer is to have <u>the ability to discuss certain topics and talk about them in an organized way using clear and specific ideas in coherent paragraphs linked using linking words.</u> The writer should adopt a clear and simple style when writing in order to express his ideas correctly. A2. Yes, as a student at university (student's identity as a language learner impacts writer identity), <u>I've passed through many exams in the module of writing and during my studies especially in writing module, I've learnt some techniques to improve my writings(role of writing instruction in developing writer identity).</u>	Mastering the text structure and using a strong repertoire of vocabulary seem to be vital for being a writer. Language oriented views of writer identities. STYLE Positive past writing experiences
Student25 RANIA: A1. Being a writer means having enough vocabulary to express yourself through words. The one who has a good writing style free of mistakes can be considered as a writer. He can write everywhere and at any time. A2. Yes, I can express my ideas and thoughts in a correct form by my own style, words not limiting myself to one specific type of writing such as poems. The writer can write everything in a good way and in different languages.	Mastery of language Freedom to decide when and where to write.
Student 26 HANA: A1. <u>Being a writer means having the ability to express myself and all what I have in terms of ideas, beliefs, making the world know who I am through my writing. It also means the ability to convey any message (simple, complex, form and domain) clearly and</u>	Having a positive impact on the reader like convincing them is vital for being a writer. So, students feel the need to be recognized and validated by the reader whether it is real like teachers and peers or imaginary.

<u>effectively. Convincing and attracting the audience by tackling their problems.</u> A2. Yes and no. I'm a semi-writer because I can introduce and express myself but <u>I am not really able to tackle the audience interests and problem(dealing with readers is hard). I don't write convincing messages in all kinds of writing but some of them.</u>	
Student 27 NABILA: A1.<u>A good writer is the one who has fluency and accuracy, you cannot wait to read what comes next, beautiful style and chosen words, indirect meaning, pushes you to think, dream, fly far, the letters can be felt and tasted (impact on the reader), you enjoy reading his works which are perfect (organization and content), leaves his touch, not limited in time and place(different topics and times and places),puts a trace in your heart and mind(impact), <u>he is really organized in terms of the shape of his writing and doesn't commit mistakes(mistakes are seen as a crime).</u> To love what you write, has his own adorable world, he is a creator, inventor by using 2 tools: a pen and a sheet of paper.</u> A2.No,it is my ambition but I haven't reached it yet.	
Student 28 ANISSA: A1.<u>Being a writer does not mean to carry a pen and a sheet of paper and start jotting down words but it's more complicated than that(writing is not a mechanical process, it involves awareness, thinking, and logic).</u> A true writer has to be aware of what and how	Past experiences However, some participants don't consider themselves as writers in spite of their positive past experiences of writing.

he writes, to come up with ideas that are worth to be read, to follow a clear methodology, to know well how to organize a piece of writing. A2. Yes, a <u>slightly amateur writer because I really enjoy this activity</u> especially when I was at high school. I used to look for good topics and issues (social and cultural) <u>inspiring topics, the best writing strategies so to be systematic and methodological. Writing is a pleasure that makes our thinking deeper and more reasonable if it is methodological and rich of good ideas(positive past writing experience).</u>	
Student 29 WAHIBA: A1. A writer is a person who is talented in his domain and likes writing not a cultivated person necessarily. He is that person who expresses his own ideas and feelings using a correct language. He should be creative, sensitive, has deep feelings and a different point of view about what happens around him (personality, identity), this is why they have chosen this art to express their emotions in poems and novels. A2. No, I feel difficulties while expressing my ideas. I make mistakes and I find that my message is not clear and complete. I prefer speaking.	Participants' preferences of other skills like speaking compared to writing also seem to influence their perceptions of writer identities. Writing is not my cup of tea. So, they are not passionate about it but do it for the sake of academic success only, because the teacher asks so but there is no passion and enjoyment in writing, according to them.
Student 30 NAYLA A1 To be a writer means that you master the writing skill and the steps of this process. It is common that a good writer is the one who uses to be a good reader. Because, the more	

you read different and many books or novels the more you be knowledgeable and cultivated person. A2 For me, <u>I write poems, short stories or somehow, I use to (create) imagine the end of some stories. So, in this case I can't consider myself as a writer because the word is huge for me (writing is inaccessible to me).</u>	
Student 31 ASSIA: A1.<u>To be a writer is to be able to produce a piece of writing which contains coherent ideas and relevant examples and you need to master some skills like vocabulary and grammar (writing conventions). You need first to gather your ideas about a certain topic and then organize them to produce a paragraph or an essay (writing is an organized system or process). You need to have the imagination and the critical thinking to analyze the topic(writing requires critical thinking).</u> A2.Yes, I consider myself as a writer but not a competent one. Sometimes, I write small paragraphs (exams and writing session) but writing is not my favorite hobby and I don't write very often.	
Student 32 LYNA: A1.<u>Being a writer means that you are able to write in an organized way i.e., representing the form of the paragraph, knowing the characteristics of an academic writing and applying them. It consists also of forming the ideas related to the topic which are the results of what you've learnt previously(writing conventions). I think that someone who reads</u>	

a lot is a good writer since he has many information that enable him to tackle many subjects (topics). A2.No, I don't think I'm a writer because I'm not able to discuss any topic given to me. Sometimes, I've only simple ideas which cannot make my writing attractive for the reader. I can manage the shape of the essay, but not the information because I don't read a lot.	
Student 33 FELLA: A1.To be a writer means to know what I am going to write and about what (subject), also, writing means to convince people and maybe change their thinking about that ideas. A writer should eradicate his fears and shyness because he cannot write if he is shy. A2.No, personally, I can't consider myself as a writer because I have fears and shyness and I can't convince other people about my subject.	
Student 34 SALAH: A1.To be a writer means to have many qualities and you know how to use these qualities. Among these qualities we may mention vocabulary and word choice, accuracy and correction, a large imagination, and the ability to use words in an artistic way. Talking about wording and vocabulary, it is quite significant for a writer to have that ability of putting the right words in the right place. In addition to that, correction on grammar, punctuation is so important to be a good writer. Imagination is also an essential characteristic of a writer or a good writer. It is the source of ideas and inspiration and I	

strongly believe that someone with a limited imagination cannot be a good writer. (is a source of ideas and inspiration: my comment). Finally, for me, writing is an art and the writer should have a beautiful and attractive style of writing. A2.No, personally, I don't consider myself as a writer since I don't have or master these qualities. I rarely read books because I believe that a writer should be a reader first.	
Student 35 AKILA: A1.Being a writer is being a good and an honest person who expresses everything he says in an honest way in order to convey his messages. He follows some strategies to help him build his ideas and information. The most important thing is that he has his own style that goes with the same level of the readers. Then the good writer is the one who write clear articles or texts or novels, so that he can communicate with his followers in an indirect way, thus, he will be the best writer for them by paying attention to his style of writing and in using grammar and vocabulary etc. A2.No, I am not a writer since I find writing somehow difficult. I face some problems expressing my ideas. I prefer speaking rather than writing and this is the most important reason why I am a bad writer. I prefer to express my ideas orally and I feel lazy in writing. Speaking is more comfortable for me. My problem with writing is that I cannot write what's in my mind since I am a good speaker so I cannot be a good writer.	

Student 36 HAFIDA: A1.To be a writer is to have the convenient intellectual level to write. If the writer wants to write something a novel, he must have the competency to do that among those competencies utilize his linguistic skills in a proper way, the linguistic eloquence, he must consider grammar side. He is supposed to have his artistic skills to persuade the reader. For example a personal touch between the lines to persuade the reader to read without boredom by using jokes, funny words. A good writer is a person who has his own different positive characteristics among them honesty, easy handwriting, open to the world, can discuss different subjects in his writings without discrimination, who has the ability to create new ideas and transmitting his information to the reader in the best way. A2.No, I don't consider myself as a good writer because I don't have those capacities.	
Student 37 YUCEF: A1. A writer is the one who can produce a valuable piece of writing by following specific steps in terms of organization and content. A2.Yes, I do consider myself as a writer because studying English for four years in high school of teachers especially in writing module provided me with the knowledge and support that helped me a lot in this domain. Now, I don't write for the sake of writing. When I write, I have an aim and a guide to follow in my writing. My teachers' evaluation during my study inspired me a lot	

(second and third year). So, I learned a lot from my teachers' remarks.	
Student 38 SIHAM: A1.To be a writer is to love literature, nature beauty, life , etc because a writer is someone who can transmit what is happening in the real life into pieces of writing (stories, novels, poems).It means to have the ability to express myself in speaking about different topics and situations and have a huge vocabulary, correct grammar, and a beautiful style to attract your readers. A2.Yes, personally, I write when I feel alone just as a means to forget about things that hurt me. I am a beginner in writing and I wish I will improve my writing and be a good writer why not	
Student 39 IMENE: A1.For me writing is a pleasure when I am under pressure, I write to feel some kind of relief. Being a writer enables me to think positively and see the world in a beautiful manner. When I take my pen, I start writing directly and the ideas flow enormously. I really enjoy writing especially for pleasure .I really miss the writing sessions when we were asked as students to write, just write. It was mainly a wonderful thing. A2.I may consider myself as a writer since writing makes me happy in some sort. For me, it is an effective way to transfer knowledge, experiences, and even thoughts to the audience. Even when I write for personal reasons, it is entertaining and very enjoyable.	Past writing experiences And freedom just write and for pleasure not to be evaluated and judged by the teacher.

Student 40 IKRAM : A1.For me to be a writer is this ability to transmit the very chaotic ideas and feelings you have in a simple way no matter if it is direct or not. The important thing is that the person who reads would be able comprehend the content. It is also the capacity to say what people couldn't say because they were silenced or could not put it in words. It is a matter of transmission above all. I value consciousness, honesty and creativity in the writer and having commitment and engagement to serve a certain issue through writing this the most important criterion. The good writing style is not enough to call someone a writer. A2.Yes/No, basically, it depends on how much I am involved in the issue.	
Student 41 SONIA: A1.A writer is the intellectual person who creates texts and stories and who plays with words and produces a satisfying piece of writing. A2.Yes, I do consider myself as a writer because I used to write from childhood and adolescence about my ideas, plans, feelings, and school acts that required writing a letter does not make of someone a writer it depends on the subject. A writer is skillful and purposefully productive. Technically speaking, a writer must have audiences, fans, and followers.	

S42. YAZID : Since I don't consider myself as a writer, I am hardly expected then to provide more about writing. One cannot give what he doesn't possess, right? But, I will try to explain my definition of a writer. I think writing is the best way to interact with others in a larger scale by transcending the limits of time and space. People can read things written by writers who lived centuries before and from countries they've never visited or even heard of.(impact) It is a persisting message that can be read, interpreted or analyzed by people not meant to be addressed at the first place. Private letters written in discretion ended up sources of **inspiration for generations** after. Random diaries or commentaries were subject of massive academic studies which gave birth to some major philosophical trends. Though writing is primarily limited in its content and the audience targeted, deeply shaped by the contemporary context of the writer and his/her experiences or daily common life(writer's environment), it will always have the ability to be revived, rekindled to produce an **impact** may be greater than the initial one at the time of its birth. So, writing is for me "the fountain of youth of knowledge"(writing leads to new knowledge).

Appendix 5

ENSB Academic Writing Curriculum of First, Second, and Third Year

ARCHITECTURE GLOBALE DE LA FORMATION

(TRONC COMMUN) PROFESSEUR D'ENSEIGNEMENT FONDAMENTAL

ET PROFESSEUR D'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE

(3ans)

1ère Année : (Tronc Commun PEF / PES)

Modules	Volume Horaire	Coefficient
1. Writing :	4 : 30	2
2. Grammar :	3 : 00	2
3. Reading Techniques :	3 : 00	2
4. Speaking and Listening :	4 : 30	2
5. Phonetics :	1 : 30	1
6. Intr. to Linguistics :	1 : 30	1
7. Intr. to Western Civ and Lit :	3 : 00	2
8. Arabic	3 : 00	2
9. Computing :	1 : 30	1
Total	25 : 30	15

1st Year Common Core / Writing

Writing

(Volume Horaire : Annuel : 135hrs. Coefficient 2)

- Process of writing.
 - Brief introduction to the paragraph.
 - Planning.
 - Drafting.

- Revising.
- Types of construction
 - Phrase.
 - Clause.
 - Sentence
- Subordination – Co-ordination – Capitalization.
- Outlining.
 - vertical list.
 - tree diagram.
- The English paragraph.
 - indentation and topic sentence.
- The narrative paragraph.
 - (process – Chronology) the semicolon.
- Guide writing.
 - (The narrative paragraph) the colon.
- The descriptive paragraph.
 - spatial development.
- Free writing.
 - punctuation review.
- Expository paragraph by examples.
- Parallelism.
 - Vocabulary growth.
- Summarizing and paraphrasing.
- Free writing activities.
- Wordiness.
 - The apostrophe.
- Note taking.
- Sentence openings.
- Spelling.
- Parentheses – Dash – End Marks.
- Connectives.
- Punctuation review.

1st Year Common Core / Writing

- Comma splice ; run-on sentences.
- Vocabulary Growth.
 - using idioms.
- Force in writing.
 - General review.

2ème Année : (Tronc Commun PEF / PES)

Modules	Volume Horaire	Coefficient
1. Writing :	4 : 30	2
2. Grammar :	3 : 00	2
3. Reading Techniques :	3 : 00	2
4. Speaking and Listening :	4 : 30	2
5. Phonetics :	1 : 30	1
6. Inter. to Linguistics :	1 : 30	1
7. Inter. to Western Civ. and Lit :	3 : 00	2
8. French :	3 : 00	2
9. Computing :	1 : 30	1
Total	25 : 30	15

Writing

2nd Year Common Core / Writing

(Volume Horaire Annuel : 135 hrs. Coefficient 2)

Term 01

- General review.
 - Types of constructions, some punctuating elements.
- Review of the English paragraph.
 - Topic sentence.

- Unity.
- Coherence.
- Introducing the English composition.
 - The composition outline.
- The thesis statement.
- Types of introduction.
- Developmental paragraphs.
- Paragraph linking.
- Concluding the composition.

Term 02

- Composition developed by examples.
- Vocabulary growth, free writing activities.
- Composition developed by comparison and contrast.
- Composition writing, model and guided writing.
- Spelling, the examination paper.
- Composition developed by definition.
- Argumentative composition.
- Review of the different types of development.

Term 03

- Vocabulary growth.
- Composition developed by cause and effect.
- Composition writing.
- The elliptical clause.
- Composition developed by classification.
- Letter writing (formal and informal letters).

3ème Année : (Tronc Commun PEF / PES)

Modules	Volume Horaire	Coefficient
1. Writing and Grammar :	4 : 30	2
2. Speaking and Phonetics :	3 : 00	2
3. Reading :	1 : 30	1
4. Linguistics :	1 : 30	1
5. Brit. Civ and Lit :	3 : 00	2
6. Am. Civ. and Lit :	3 : 00	2
7. Int to Psychology :	1 : 30	1
8. TEFL : From Practice to Theory :	1 : 30	1
9. Pedagogical Trends & Educational Systems :	1 : 30	1
10. Communication & Attitude Preoccupations :	1 : 30	1
Total	25 :30	14

3rd Year Common Core / Writing & Grammar

Writing and Grammar

(Volume Horaire Annuel : 135 hrs . Coefficient 2)

Term 01

1st week

- Wr. : General review of the English composition.
- Gr. : General review of “phrase, clause, sentence”.

2nd week

- Wr. : Expository structures “understanding expository writing”.
- Gr. : Determiners.

3rd week

- Wr. : Pre-writing: invention and arrangement.
- Gr. : Pronouns.

4th week

- Wr. : The writing process.
- Gr. : Complex tenses : “active.”

5th week

- Wr. : Rewriting : structural revision.
- Gr. : Complex tenses : “passive”.

6th week

- Wr. : Audience and voice: “ style, tone,” etc...
- Gr. : Sentence tags.

7th week

- Wr. : Expository composition developed by examples.
- Gr. : Phrasal verbs.

8th week

- Wr. : Expository composition developed by comp
- Gr. : Verb types and the non-finite verb.

3rd Year Common Core / Writing & Grammar

Term 02

1st week

- Wr. : Composition developed by cause and effect.
- Gr. : Catenative verbs.

2nd week

- Wr. : Vocabulary growth: free writing activities.
- Gr. : Stative verbs.

3rd week

- Wr. : Expository composition developed by definition.
- Gr. : Revision session.

4th week

- Wr. : Expository composition developed by logical division.
- Gr. : Indirect speech.

5th week

- Wr. : Argumentative composition.
- Gr. : Cleft sentences.

6th week

- Wr. : Vocabulary growth.
- Gr. : Comment clauses.

7th week

- Wr. : Revision of the different types of composition development.
- Gr. : Revision session.

8th week

3rd Year Common Core / Writing & Grammar

- Wr. : Letter writing (formal and informal letters.)
- Gr. : Conditionals.

Term 03

1st week

- Wr. : Research paper.
- Gr. : Questions, answers, negatives.

2nd week

- Wr. : Note-taking techniques.
- Gr. : Substitution.

3rd week

- Wr. : Quoting and paraphrasing.
- Gr. : Ellipsis.

4th week

- Wr. : Free-writing activities.
- Gr. : Modals.

5th week

- Wr. : Narrative writing.
- Gr. : Semi-modals.

6th week

- Wr. : Creative writing: “poetry writing”.
- Gr. : Adverbs with two forms.

7th week

- Wr. : Short stories.
- Gr. : Intensifiers.

8th week

- Wr. : Revising session.
- Gr. : Revising session.

Appendix 6 : Samples of Students' Argument Essays

Good brain in strong body.

Primary school is known to be the basis or the root for the coming stages of learning. That's why it must have a great deal of care and importance and permit students to enhance their physical and mental skills. Although education is primary responsibility is to train minds not bodies, I believe strongly that primary schools should devote much time for sportive activities.

It is obvious that children like to move and play; they need to offload the energy that they have. That is why it is necessary to provide them with sportive activities. First of all practicing helps them to fight the routine and having something to occupy the bored inside them. Second, Practicing is a way of fighting violence. Recent statistics show that same sports as Karate, gymnastics and Boxing minimize the degrees of violence. In addition to that, a good brain is in good body; it is proved that the brain has more ability to receive information and store them.

- offloading - the negative energy that it suffers from. Furthermore, sportive activities and help them healthy. It may fight some illnesses such as obesity and diabetes. Moreover, Practicing encourage them to learn the sense of sharing, competition and sportsmanship.

Another argument is a category of people who considers training bodies in primary schools as worthless thing to do because it is a waste of time. It is argued that there is no available time or areas or coaches to practice. Another argument is that it is not suitable to weaken a child at the age of six with harsh activities that he can not support in fact he can't manage a physical and mental training at the same time. Furthermore, training children is a responsibility of parents and not school as well there are some parents who refuse it because they consider it as a source of harm in which the child may

Violence on T.V

Television is the most important technological invention through centuries. It had occupied humans' life thanks to its different programs that serves all the tastes especially violent ones. An enormous amount of people enjoy watching violent programs.

However, I strongly agree with banning violent T.V.

First of all, some people think that violent programs are so exciting and they provide entertainment for the audience. However, I totally disagree with this idea because violence on T.V can create an aggressive society. For instance, a child who watches programs that contains violence such as cartoons will imitate all what he has seen on T.V while playing with his friends.

In addition, the opposers claim that these programs are very attractive for children since it involves action and suspense. In contrast, I think that this attractiveness of violent programs can lead to long time watching which affect negatively on the children's education. For example, when a student spend a lot of time watching T.V, he

Example

will neglect his studies. As a result, the learning process will be put in danger because of violent programs.

Finally, the opposers believe that violent programs enable children to defend themselves. However, I strongly believe that imitating T.V violence is very dangerous because children are not able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad for them; and about the idea of self defence, children can defend themselves without watching violent programs and that by engaging in sports clubs such as boxing.

To sum up, although violent programs can provide some fun and entertainment for the audience, I still believe that those programs should be banned from T.V.

fact crient.

fact - He needs to communicate.

fact - Loneliness will lead to serious problems

Opinion - Happiness depends on others

- Conclusion.

No man is an island

Arabic!!

Since As the appearance of human in earth man meant to live in social community & surrounded by different cultures and traditions

As if pure

we 3 opinions there are certain people believe that man can live alone, whereas others completely reject this idea by arguing that he can't live alone for many reasons. Why he??

First of all, some people say that man can live alone because they thought that he is far from responsibilities and obligations. This means, man has nothing to occupy his

mind, he escapes from problems as well as, he doesn't care about whether his family is going well or not, how his children get money, to learn what they eat, wear...
Seems, they mentioned that he can live alone because he is free to do whatever he wants and whenever he wants without punishment. Now think that there is no source of power above him, no strict institution to restrict, no authority, so, he violates the law (steal, corrupt, consume things... etc).

violate spellings

Although, many people believe that the loneliness of human is beneficial for him, I strongly believe that no one can live alone because everyone is responsible for his act and his own as the prophets (PBUH) says, in addition, when we go back to the first creation we found that God creates male and female to live together. However, many psychologists confirm that man can't live alone since he is

Religion

SS 4

environment that is full with violence, so they will hardly get used to it. Finally, and as a result of all the discussed reasons above, crime rates will dramatically increase and the statistics prove this. (talking about statistics in general)
All in all, it is high time violence in movies and video games and television programs should be banned.

Unleashed
Stop Violence on T.V.!

I. The Outline:

The topic is related to SS daily life.

Introduction:

Revised Statement: Violence in video games, movies and television programs should be censored.

Body =>

Block 1:

Violence in video games, movies and television programs should be censored because:

1. Horror and action movies and video games have the biggest "fan base" among all other movies and video games categories. (fact)

2. They represent the biggest portion of the income of movie industry. (fact)

3. It is "just" acting and all the scenes are unreal.

Block 2:

1. Children and adolescence are likely to emulate the dangerous scenes and acts. (fact)

Furthermore, some of the behaviors are control against our religion, and if we consider others as the most affected, we find some people do not keep respect in public places, buses for example. And people. Thirdly, about all these we do not forget health, that some people are suffering from illnesses cause of internet, like obesity, lack of view and blood pressure. In addition, it caused of addiction on some people cannot live without internet.

the whereas the others, think that internet has positive aspects. First, it is mean of technology, helps people or students for researches, projects and preparation lessons. Second, it is a way of communication, as we see nowadays we are connecting with other people from all over the world, and to get in touch with.

starting
args without
any development
using
examples
experience +
opinion +
examples

To conclude, we cannot say that internet has just is good thing in our society or bad, so that according to users, it can be a blessing as it can be a curse.

The outline

Introduction Th. S. many people claim that internet is society.

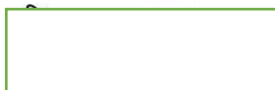
Block 1

Topic sentence: it is high internet
1st arguments = they consider it as a waste of time
2nd opposite argument
our generation are affected
3rd opposite arguments
Above all these

Body paragraphs

Appendix 7

Samples of Students' Placement Test



Yacine

Instruction:

ENS students are not concerned by post-graduation studies since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you:

- present your position
- use relevant arguments to defend your position
- present and refute the opposing position

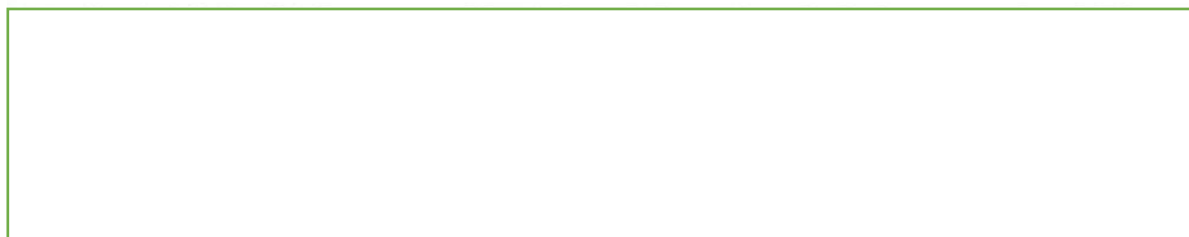
Heg., Do Not Underestimate Our Capacities!
The current Algerian constitution guarantees the right of education for every Algerian citizen. Just in case you do not know, E.N.S. students are also Algerian citizens with full rights. Among these rights: The right to pursue higher education studies. Since then, the majority of the training school of teachers students are highly concerned by post-graduation studies and teaching in universities, contrary to the popular belief that many believe in which says that they are not concerned by them any longer since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers.

who tell you that the Teachers do not have kids? ? ? ?

For me and all who defend our right of pursuing post-graduation studies, it is a kind of unfair division not to let us in. First of all, the pre-service school of teachers students have the priority over universities students to teach in universities - which means continuing post-graduation studies - since we are formed and trained for almost five years to be teachers studying some specific disciplines such as: Psychology, Communication, T.E.F.L., pedagogy, material design. Thus, it is really unfair to let universities students who have no idea about teaching and maybe no appreciation to it. So, E.N.S. students have a priority over any other university student in the sector of teaching.

too long sentence
→ S. Student

m. Or



Secondly, these future teachers entered F.N.S. with high grades and certificate in the Baccalaureat exam which is not the case for university students. It is true that it is not a test of measuring student's level yet it still gives an overview about their capacities & their background knowledge.

Finally, most of the modules that we are studying in F.N.S. are immediates in our career as middle and secondary school teachers and are directly related to higher education teaching, i.e. some disciplines that we master in F.N.S. will not be taught elsewhere university such as: Linguistics, literature and civilization.

To put it in a nutshell, students of F.N.S. are the first concerned with post-graduation studies for all the reasons cited before.

where are the counterarguments ???

This is an open essay.

- Format: (A)
- Content: (A1,2)
- Organization: (A)
- Vocabulary: (A)
- Spelling & Mechanics: (A)

Instruction:

ENS students are not concerned by post-graduation studies since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you:

- present your position
- use relevant arguments to defend your position
- present and refute the opposing position

Hey, Do Not Underestimate Our Capacities!

The current Algerian constitution guarantees the right of education for every Algerian citizen. Just in case you do not know, E.N.S. students are also Algerian citizens with full rights. Among these rights: The right to pursue higher education studies. Since then, the majority of the training school of teacher's students are highly concerned by post-graduation studies and teaching in universities, contrary to the popular belief that many believe in which says that they are not concerned by them any longer since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers.

For me and all who defend our right of pursuing post-graduation studies, it is a kind of unfair division not to let us in. First of all, the pre-service school of teacher's student have the priority over universities' students to teach in universities - which means continuing post-graduation studies - since we are formed and trained for almost five years to be teachers studying some specific disciplines such as: Psychology, communication, T.E.F.L., pedagogy, material design... Thus, it is really unfair to let universities' students who have no idea about teaching and maybe no appreciation to it. So, E.N.S. students have a priority over any other university student in the sector of teaching.

Secondly, these future teachers entered E.N.S. with high grades and certification in the Baccalauréat exam which is not the case for university students. It is true that it is not a test of measuring student's level yet it still gives an overview about their capacities & their background knowledge.

Finally, most of the modules that we are studying in E.N.S. are ~~unneeded~~ in our career as middle and secondary school teachers and are directly related to higher education teachings, i.e. some disciplines that we master in E.N.S. will not be taught elsewhere ~~university~~ such as: Linguistics, literature and civilization. ???

To put it in a nutshell, students of E.N.S. are the first concerned with post-graduation studies for all the reasons cited before.

Try not to use it.

F: 2

C: 3

O: 2

E & H: 3

V: 3

(12)

Instruction:

ENS students are not concerned by post-graduation studies since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you:

Marya

- present your position
- use relevant arguments to defend your position
- present and refute the opposing position

12/21

Yes, yes To Post Graduation!

High School of Teachers has a large question mark about whether ENS students should have the right to post-graduate or not. Some may say that these students shouldn't think of taking higher degrees and that they were meant to be teachers in primary, elementary, secondary schools while others refuse to study under boundaries of not having post-graduation.

To begin with, people who think these students are not concerned by post-graduation believe that this High School has given contracts to them to become teachers in a specific school, i.e., government has a plan already for having a specific number of teachers in the near future which means by allowing post-graduation studies this number will be oscillatory. Furthermore, by providing the ENS' students with jobs, the rate of unemployment will decrease. However, when post-graduating, they lose their jobs and on contrary will help increase the unemployment rate.

Yet, in spite of what preceded, others believe that ENS students should not be excluded from this choice. The latter is a right and a choice they have and they are free to decide whether they stick to the contract or to get higher degrees.

What is more, ambitious students especially are eager to learn more and are supposed to be mostly concerned by graduation for further enlargement of their knowledge and expertise. Graduation is a door to higher levels that should remain open besides since ENS' basic goal is providing students knowledge and dragging them to wish to learn more. The school should rather encourage students to take their choice into consideration.

In brief, I strongly disagree with the statement about, even though the opposing position is to some extent correct. To me, my position of thinking post-graduation should be in their hands is more convincing.

- Formed (17)
- Content (21)
- Organization (3)
- VOC (21)
- Grammar & Mechanics (3)

Instruction:

ENS students are not concerned by post-graduation studies since they are trained to become secondary and middle school teachers. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you:

Marya

- present your position
- use relevant arguments to defend your position
- present and refute the opposing position

... Say yes To Post-Graduation! ...
 ... High School of Teachers has a large question mark about whether ENS students should have the right to post-graduate or not. Some may say that these students shouldn't think of taking higher degrees and that they were meant to be teachers in primary, elementary or secondary schools while others refuse to study under boundaries of not having post-graduation. To begin with, people who think these students are not concerned by post-graduation believe that this High School has given contracts to them to become teachers in a specific school and the government has a plan already for having a specific number of teachers in the near future which means by allowing post-graduation studies this number will be excessive. Furthermore by providing the ENS students with jobs the rate of unemployment will decrease. However, when post-graduating they lose their jobs and on contrary will help increase the unemployment rate. Yet, in spite of what presented, others believe that ENS students should not be excluded from this choice. The latter is a right and a choice they have and they are free to decide whether they stick to the contract or to get higher degrees. What is more, ambitious students especially are eager to learn more and are supposed to be mostly concerned by graduation for further enlargement of their knowledge and expertise. Graduation is a door to higher levels that should remain open besides since ENS' basic goal is providing students knowledge and dragging them to wish to learn more, then the school should rather encourage students to take their choice into consideration. In brief, I strongly disagree with the statement about, even though the opposing position is to some extent correct. To me, my position of thinking post-graduation should be in their concern is more convincing.

1/10
 well organized

20

1/10
 4/15
 3/15
 3/14

Appendix 8

Summary of the Thesis in Arabic

كتابة المقال الجدلي باللغة الإنجليزية: رحلة البناء و التعبير عن هوية الكاتب لطلبة السنة الثالثة بالمدرسة الوطنية العليا للأساتذة ببوزريعة - الجزائر

ملخص:

هذه الأطروحة عبارة عن دراسة حالة نوعية استكشافية لمجموعة من طلبة السنة الثالثة بالمدرسة الوطنية العليا للأساتذة ببوزريعة (ENSB) من خلال رحلة بناء هوية الكاتب الطالب و تجربتهم في بناء هوية و صوت من خلال الكتابة الأكاديمية و خاصة المقال الجدلي في الجامعة أو التعليم العالي في الجزائر باللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية. هذه التجربة هي نتيجة لتفاعل الطلبة مع البيئة الأكاديمية او مجموعة الكتابة الأكاديمية. من خلال هذه الدراسة ،وجدنا أن الطلبة يدركون و يتفاعلون مع هذه البيئة الأكاديمية بطرق مختلفة و كذلك الشيء بالنسبة لهوية الكاتب الخاصة بهم. هذا الاختلاف يبدو نتيجة لتاريخهم الشخصي كأفراد و ما يجلبونه إلى القسم من معارف ،قيم و تجارب سابقة على المستوى اللغوي ،الثقافي، و الاجتماعي و كيف يتموقعون ككتاب في هذه البيئة من خلال الأدوار المتوقعة منهم و المكتسبة نتيجة الاستراتيجيات التي يطورونها للتفاوض حول هذه المواقع و الأدوار في محاولتهم للتأقلم مع توقعات و متطلبات البيئة الأكاديمية المتمثلة في توقعات اساتذة الكتابة الأكاديمية ، زملائهم في القسم و اصدقائهم الذين يمثلون مجموعة القراء سواء كانوا واقعيين أو افتراضيين . خلال عملية بناء هوية الكاتب الطالب ، هنالك صراع مستمر بين متطلبات القارئ المحلي و الدولي نتيجة لمكانة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة دولية و كذلك الثقافات المحلية و الدولية و ما يحدث داخل قسم الكتابة من تبادلات و تفاعل من خلال العملية التعليمية و خارجه أي البيئة الاجتماعية و الثقافية و الانا و الاخر بالنسبة لكل طالب و الانا و النص كتجسيد لهوية الكاتب. هذه الهوية هي نتيجة تفاعل العوامل المذكورة سابقا إلى جانب إدراك الطالب بماهية و وظائف الكتابة الأكاديمية و المقال الجدلي ، تقييمه لمهارات الكتابة الخاصة به و متطلبات المقال الجدلي كنص (Genre) و توقعات القراء، معايير الكتابة الأكاديمية الجيدة حسب البيئة الأكاديمية للطلاب و كذلك المعرفة العامة بموضوع المقال الجدلي من خلال القراءة و التجربة الشخصية . تم جمع البيانات الكيفية باستخدام استبيان خاص بالطلبة المشتركين في الدراسة و عددهم إثنان و اربعون طالب ، تحليل المحتوى لتمرين خاص بالتفكير النقدي الكتابي الخاص بهوية الكاتب الطالب او ما يعرف بالكتابة التحليلية و التفكيرية و تحليل المحتوى لمجموعة من المقالات النقدية الجدلية للطلبة حول مواضيع من اختيارهم. بينت النتائج أن رحلة بناء هوية الكاتب الطالب في السياق الأكاديمي ليست مسألة تحكم في اللغة الإنجليزية و مهارات و إستراتيجيات الكتابة الأكاديمية فقط و انما القدرة على انتاج و كتابة نصوص أو مقالات جدلية خالية من الاخطاء النحوية و الإملائية و هو شيء مستبعد عموماً بل هذه العملية تتعدى ذلك لتمس جوانب نفسية، عقلية ،ثقافية و إجتماعية مرتبطة ببيئة الكتابة الأكاديمية ما يجعلها نتيجة لتفاعلات إجتماعية و ثقافية ينخرط فيها الطلبة و تساهم في بناء مهاراتهم و هويتهم ككتاب في البيئة الأكاديمية .هذه الهوية هي كذلك نتيجة لسعيهم المستمر في الدخول للجماعة او المجتمع الأكاديمي من خلال فهم و ممارسة السردية الأكاديمية كلغة، ثقافة ،قيم ،أيديولوجية، و سياسة و محاولاتهم المرور من المحيط الى المركز، من دخلاء الى أعضاء فاعلين في المجتمع الأكاديمي من خلال ممارسة الكتابة الأكاديمية كطلبة و افراد، التفاعل مع كتاب اخرين، زملاء و أساتذة بهدف الحصول على الاعتراف بأحقيتهم و مشروعيتهم ككتاب مما يسمح لهم بالاندماج في هذا المجتمع كأعضاء فاعلين لا كأعضاء مهمشين ويساعدهم على تعزيز ثقته ، إيصال صوتهم، و اثبات وجودهم و هويتهم ككتاب و طلبة.

كلمات مفتاحية: هوية الكاتب الطالب ،رحلة بناء هوية الكاتب ،صوت الكاتب، الكتابة الأكاديمية ، المقال الجدلي ،التفكير النقدي ،المعرفة ،مجتمع الكتاب ، و الخطاب الأكاديمي (السردية).