Efl Learners' Challenges In Essay Writing: The Case Of A Non-Public High School In Albania

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Abstract :
Writing essays is an important element of the second language learning process and the most difficult one to acquire as it necessitates both effort and constant practice. While it is essential for the students to develop their writing skills and enhance them so as to become successful in their academic life and further academic career, research shows that they face difficulties in terms of both essay organization and language use. This study investigates Albanian high school students' attitudes towards essay writing, the challenges and difficulties they encounter, and the types of mistakes they make. It also explores strategies teachers suggest for students to overcome these difficulties. The data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 141 high school students in a non-public school in Albania. 12 randomly selected student essays were also analyzed to identify students' common errors. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 EFL teachers to explore strategies suggested to overcome challenges and difficulties. The data analyses revealed that students have negative attitudes towards essay writing and face difficulties in essay organization, grammar and vocabulary. Some of the strategies teachers recommend and employ in order to help EFL learners overcome them are reading, brainstorming, and practising group writing. These findings suggest future research could focus on the reasons behind students' negative attitudes and types of errors and the investigation of strategies to overcome each of them.

Key Words : EFL instruction**,** EFL learners, EFL teachers, essay writing, challenges, strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing and its instruction have received huge consideration as a significant field of research in applied linguistics. Once only viewed as the graphic representation of spoken language, nowadays writing has taken more importance (Brown, 2001). Even though writing is a productive skill, just like speaking, it is different. While writing is "consciously learned", speaking is acquired naturally by the kids (Harmer, 2007). Writing is not a matter of talent only. People could write to learn effectively by raising their awareness of its structure and stages. Writing is one of the productive skills, which is complicated in view of the fact that it encompasses both mental processes and use of language components correctly. For Barkaoui (2007), writing is one of the most difficult L2 skills to acquire because it requires mastering a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies. Writing is a very complex cognitive activity. A study conducted by Flower and Hayes (1981), analysing writing from the cognitive rather than solely the mechanical point, indicated that writing is a mental process and consists of different stages such as prewriting, writing and rewriting.

Research draws our attention to its being a mental activity. Nevertheless, Damayanti (2009) claims that writing is both "a physical and a mental act", which means that it is the representation of the language by means of signs and symbols. At the same time we need to express our feelings and convey our message through writing to our audience or readers but to do so, we need to invent ideas, and pour them into writing in an organized and clear way.

Writing an essay is a demanding work since students need to generate new ideas, put them into grammatically correct sentences, and be aware of the structure and type of the essay (Jimenez, Mira, & Rodriguez, 2013). Even if students learn the basics of writing an essay, they could still have trouble in applying them in their works and may lack coherence and cohesion. Furthermore, writing essays requires sufficient linguistic proficiency (Annab, 2016). Students are also prone to committing mistakes in the use of language regarding grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation and also in composing paragraphs. Apart from these, their writing effectively is closely linked with the techniques and methods teachers apply in writing courses. In addition, research shows that L1 may influence many aspects of writing in L2. Another major point is that the development of writing skills also necessitates the cooperation of students and teachers. If students are not well informed about how to write essays and expected to manage it on their own, they will inevitably make mistakes and regard this task as a nightmare and accordingly their stress levels will increase.

A lot of research has focused on essay writing and the challenges EFL learners face. However, such investigation in the Albanian context is very limited. This study is a modest contribution to research in L2 essay writing in general and to the Albanian context in particular. It explores the challenges and difficulties Albanian EFL learners face in essay writing ad the

types of mistakes they make. , the strategies they use to overcome them, and the reccommendations teachers make to their students.

Essay Writing
Essay writing competence is very significant since students need to pass different tests involving essay-writing part in their academic life (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017). It also promotes students' critical thinking and analytical skills. Composing an essay is demanding because you need to allocate your time and attentively structure your paragraphs paying attention to the structure of sentences using the correct grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation. In addition, it requires creativity, which means generating ideas and supporting your arguments through examples and evidence. Students are supposed to put a huge effort into the organization, language use, mechanics, style, and word choice. As essays are formal writings, students must also have a wide range of academic vocabulary. Apart from these, writing a good thesis statement, transitions between paragraphs, coherence, and cohesion are other important aspects in writing essays. Another significant element of essay writing is time management. You are supposed to use your time effectively as there is a time constraint on essays.

The writing process consists of five stages, which are planning, drafting, reviewing, editing, and producing the final product. These stages do not have to be in order (Abas & Abd Aziz, 2018). In other words, they are non- linear and recursive (Harmer, 2007). People re-plan, draft, re-plan, and re-edit before they release their final product. Even if it is time-consuming, encouraging students to plan, rewrite, review and make essential modifications on their works before full submission, will assist them to be much better writers (Abas & Abd Aziz, 2018). There has separated the writing process stages into eight, which are prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing,

reading, revising, editing, and publishing. They are fully compatible with the recursive nature of the writing process.

Teaching writing

Teaching writing to students is very significant owing to the fact that most of the exams applied worldwide measure students' writing proficiency. Hence, language teachers should give importance to teaching writing and should allocate time to improving students' writing skills (Harmer, 2007). However, teaching writing is a very challenging task for teachers as writing involves a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors. (Barkaoui, 2007).

There have been different approaches to the teaching of writing in the course of time. As Hyland (2009, 2013) points out, the nature of approaches to the instruction of writing has been influenced by many elements such as the variety of teacher beliefs and teaching contexts, learner differences and preferences as well as teaching resources and the climate of overall teaching in schools.

In teaching writing, teachers do not follow just one approach due to the diversity in their attitudes towards writing and expertise. In addition, students' different backgrounds and needs are other major factors, which guide teachers in adopting different approaches in their writing classes. In other words, teachers adopt an eclectic approach in writing.

Approaches to teaching writing

Up to the end of 1960s, writing was seen as a representation of speaking and was disregarded (Uso' Juan, Martinez-Flor, & Palmer-Silveira, 2008). Under the impact of structural linguistics, behaviourist psychology and grammar translation approach in language learning, the language learning process was regarded a mechanical progress and writing focused on the product. Students were expected to imitate model texts provided by the teacher, while teachers were primarily concerned with the final product, the layout and its organization, focusing mainly on the accuracy of grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Brown, 2000).

The process approach appeared as an alternative to the product approach following the criticism it received for many reasons (Brown, 2001). As this approach sees writing as a thinking process (Mourssi, 2013) (Uso' Juan, Martinez-Flor, & Palmer-Silveira, 2008), the focus shifted from accuracy and mechanical conventions to the content and message of the text. Students could build up strategies such as prewriting, drafting, rewriting, editing, and publishing. Feedback given by both the instructor and peers throughout the composing process brings out the creativity allowing students to discover what they want to say in their writing tasks (Brown, 2001).

Halliday developed the theory of genre approach describing the language in terms of its functions within the social context in 1978 (Uso' Juan, Martinez-Flor, & Palmer-Silveira, 2008). The genre approach draws our attention to the social context and the purpose of the texts. Being ''predominantly linguistic'' it bears some similarities with the product approach (Richards, 2006). The goal of genre approach is to make the writing context socially meaningful for learners and to guide them to be conscious learners who focus on the comprehension of different genres.

The integrated approach is the combination of three approaches and is an efficient way to improve students' writing competence and to motivate them to produce high-quality writing tasks. Comparing the three main approaches, Badger and White (2000) conclude that the synthesis of these three approaches will assist learners to reinforce their writing skills. Instructors can apply the techniques such as brainstorming, mind mapping, and free writing in order to help students to generate different ideas (Tangpermpoon, 2008). This approach is beneficial to the achievement of students in writing because

engagement with interesting writing activities also increases their interest in writing and the improvement of their writing competence (Suryana & Iskandar, 2015).

The use of technology also provides new opportunities to writing teachers for classroom practice (Hyland, 2009). As in writing classes, students have great difficulty in generating ideas and can experience a writer's block (Vijayakumar, 2011). Teachers ought to make the best use of technology for brainstorming and endowing students with enough information regarding the content. Mind mapping software such as Eddraw facilitate the pre-writing process and make students "mentally prepared' for further stages of writing (Warschauer M. , 2007). In addition, integration of digital technology into the classroom activities is crucial since it increases students' motivation, engagement, and productivity and they become more avid learners (Panagiotis, Krystalli, & Arvanitis, 2018).

Difficulties in Essay Writing

From the point of essay writing which entitles academic writing and effective use of language, transferring knowledge in a coherent and cohesive way, students face a myriad of difficulties (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). This can be demanding not only for an L2 writer but also for native speakers. (Al-Gharabally, 2015). If learners lack linguistic competence, they are bound to make more mistakes in grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation. If they are poor readers, they will have difficulty in generating ideas and supporting their views with strong evidence or examples. Belkhir and Benyelles (2017) attribute the main difficulties linked with essays to three major factors: lack of motivation, lack of sufficient reading, and L1 influence on target language writing: Being a complex activity, writing essays could put a pressure on students (Fakeye & Ohia, 2018) and consequently, lead to apprehension or anxiety before commencing to write their essays. Writing apprehension inhibits students from writing in a proficient way and accordingly, and it affects their academic success.

Research has revealed that EFL learners encounter various difficulties in essay writing. Challenges in terms of essay aspects vary from generation of ideas and arguments, to coherence to lack of resources, academic style, and organisation (Qashoa, 2014), (Nyang'au, 2014), (Annab, 2016), (Pablo & Lasaten, 2018). Meanwhile, in terms of language use learners face difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling (Nyang'au, 2014), (Annab, 2016), (Pablo & Lasaten, 2018). Other research has demonstrated that L1 influence is one of the major challenges Arab EFL learners encounter in essay writing (Adas & Bakir, 2013).

To conclude, studies conducted in many parts of the world, ranging from Arabic and African countries to the Philippines and Indonesia, have investigated the challenges students face in writing essays and the factors that influence the quality of their essays. Even though EFL/ESL learners come from different cultural and sociological backgrounds, they experience approximately the same problems. Some of the factors that make students find essay writing difficult are psychological factors such as lack of interest and lack of motivation, institutional factors such as teacher's lack of methodology and inadequate writing practices, and sociocultural factors which impede students' writing because of some taboo topics. Cognitive factors such as not grasping the essay topic and unfamiliarity with or unawareness of the writing process may also lead students to find essay writing difficult. The most common mistakes committed in language use are particularly grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, organization, coherence, and cohesion.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. It addresses the following research questions:

1. What are EFL learners attitudes to L2 essay writing?
2. What are EFL learners' challenges in L2 essay writing?
3. What are EFL learners' difficulties in essay writing from the teachers' perspective?
4. What strategies do EFL teachers recommend and use?

Context and participants

A total of 15 EFL teachers and 141 EFL learners participated in the study. All the teachers teach in non-public high schools; two of them are from the participant students' school and the other 13 from other schools. Their teaching experience ranges from 3-27 years; only two teachers have been teaching for less than five years, four for 6-10 years, seven for 10-15 years, and two for over 15 years. The 141 participant students were all juniors and seniors from a non-public all-girl high school in Tirana, Albania, respectively 70 and 71. Students were selected from these grades as they are exposed to essay writing more than freshmen. The students' number of years in learning English ranged as follows: 4-7 years (7 students), 8 years (9 students), 9 years (62 students), 10 years (44 students), over ten years (18 students). In the Albanian pre-university education, foreign language instruction starts in the 3rd grade which accounts for most of the students' more-than-nine-year experience in learning English. Additionally, in the participant students' school English is the medium of instruction for all natural science subjects.

Data collection instruments

Student questionnaires, students' sample essays and teacher inteviews are the three instruments used to collect the data for this study. The students' questionnaire contains 10 multiple choice questions which aim at identifying the reasons behind the students' fear of writing essays, in which parts of the essay they encounter more difficulty, and how they can cope with essay writing difficulties. The teachers' semi-structured interview consists of eight questions which collect data about the students' writing difficulties from the teachers' point of view, the methods and strategies teachers use to address these difficulties, and their recommendations to overcome these difficulties. In addition, a total of 12 essays were randomly selected from 11th and 12th grades and they were analysed in detail to detect the common errors committed in the essays.

Essay analyis is organised in two parts. The first part gives the percentage of the errors commited in essays by 11th and 12th grades in total. The second part presents both extracts connected to the mistakes from student's essays and suggested answers. Six essays from 11th and six essays from 12th classes were randomly selected and their mistakes are compared in tables.

3. RESULTS

Analysis of Students' Questionnaires

The student questionnaire contains ten multiple choice questions, of which the first two collected information about students'feelings towards writing essays in general. Almost three quarters of the respondents (70%) report they find it quite challenging or difficult, less than one quarter (21%) report they face writing apprehension, and only less than 10% report they take pleasure in writing essays (Table 1). Overall, only 10% of the respondents have positive attitudes towards essay writing.

Table 1 Students' attitudes towards essay writing

Nr	Statement	Percentage
1	I take pleasure in writing essays	9%
2	I find it challenging	21%
3	I am afraid of writing essays	70%

The second question aims at identifying students' feelings before writing essays. As can be seen in Table 2, one-third (33%) of the participant students report they feel scattered, which makes it difficult for them to concentrate on their work and distracts them too. While a little more than one quarter (27%) report they are stressful prior to writing essays, almost the same number of students (26%) report they feel calm. Meanwhile, a small percentage of students (14%) report that they do not feel any kind of fear and keep their calmness before starting to write their essays.

Table 2 Students' feelings towards essay writing

Nr	Statement	Percentage
1	I feel anxious	14%
2	I feel calm	26%
3	I feel stressful	27%
4	I feel scattered	33%

Difficulties in writing essays

This category contains five questions collecting information about the difficulties students face when writing essays and other factors influencing their writing such as time and context. The first question is about mistakes students tend to make in terms of language use. As it can be seen in Table 3, more than half of the students (51.80%) report they have difficulties in vocabulary. 12.80% of the participant students report they have difficulties in grammar and almost as many (13.50%) report that they have difficulty in spelling. While the least reported difficulty is punctuation (9.90%), a little more than ten percent (12%) of the students report they have difficulty in all the four aspects of language use.

Table3 Students' difficulties in language use

Nr	Language areas	Percentage
1	Grammar	12.80%
2	Spelling	13.50%
3	Vocabulary	51.80%
4	Punctuation	9.90%

5	All	12%

The second question of this group collects information about the difficulties students face with different aspects of essay organization and writing, all of which mostly connect with students' use of cognitive abilities. Almost the same percentage of students report they have difficulty in finding evidence to support their arguments (31%) and in linking ideas (30%), while nearly one quarter (23%) report having difficulty with generation of ideas (Table 4). Organisation of the essay is the least reported difficulty (16%).

Table4 Students' difficulties in aspects of essay writing

Nr	Aspect	Percentage
1	Generating ideas	23%
2	Linking ideas	30%
3	Organisation of the essay	16%
4	Finding evidence to support arguments	31%

The third question in this category collects information about students' L1 influence on their L2 writing. When asked about the students' native language impact on their writing skills (Table 5), only 12 % of the participants students report that their L1 affects their L2 writing, almost one third report that it does not, and more than half of the students (57.50%) report that their L1 partly affects their writing.

Table 5 L1 influence on writing skills

Nr	Language areas	Percentage
1	Yes	12%
2	No	30.50%
3	Partly	57.50%

Two other factors that influence students' writing and which may also be challenges for many of them are context and time limit. Asked about where they feel more comfortable when writing essays, more than three quarters of the participants (82%) report that writing essays in class is more stressful than writing at home and less than one-fifth (18%) report that writing in class is less stressful than writing at home (Table 6).

Another major factor in writing essays is time management. Much less than half of the respondents (39.50%) report they can use their time effectively and are able to finish their essays on time. The majority of students, approximately 61%, report that they struggle with managing their time to achieve completing their tasks.

Table 6 Difficulties with time and context

Nr	Diffculty	Percentage
1	Writing at home is stressful	82.30%
2	Writing in class is more stressful	17.70%
3	I can use time effectively	39.50%
4	I cannot use time effectively	60.50%

Strategies to cope with difficulties

Awareness of different strategies to use when writing essays is very important for producing high-quality essays. This question identifies which strategies students employ when writing essays. While less than half of the students (41.80%) report they make an outline and plan how to write, a little more than one quarter of the respondents (28.4%) say they tend to take down notes in order to support their writing. The rest of the students (29.80%) report that they do not follow any kinds of strategies and begin writing their essays directly.

When asked about how they feel towards correction of their errors in writing, more than two thirds of the participants (78%) say they find it helpful because they learn from their mistakes; 7% report they do not mind it, and 15% say they find error correction irritating because it demotivates them.

Analysis of essay samples

To collect data for this part of the study, six essays from 11th classes and six essays from 12th classes were selected randomly. The errors were analysed in terms of frequency and type of error. Table 7 shows the frequency of mistakes and their percentage as adapted from Annab (2016). The most common mistake is spelling (28 or 25.7%), followed by punctuation (13%), use of prepositions (12%) and word choice (12%). The least frequent mistake is the use of gerunds and infinitives (1%), followed by the use of pronouns (3%) and the use of informal words (3%). Other types of mistakes include linking devices, L1 interference, grammar, organisation, and coherence problems connected to the word order.

Table 7 Comprehensive list of errors in essays

Aspect	Frequency of errors	Percentage (%)
Spelling	28	25.7 %
Tense	9	8.3%
Preposition	12	11.0 %
Gerund and Infinitives	1	0.9 %
Vocabulary / Word choice	12	11.0 %
Informal words	3	2.7 %
Singular / Plural	5	4.6 %

Articles	8	7.4 %
Pronouns	3	2.7 %
Punctuation	13	11.9 %
Linking devices	5	4.6 %
L1 interference	4	3.7 %
Ambiguity	4	3.7 %
Organisation	2	1.8 %
Total	109	100 %

Table 8 below is a summary of the errors from 11th grade student essays and their suggested corrections. It shows mistakes in grammar, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and linking words, and the ambiguity arising in the sentences. Among the 17 spelling mistakes, there is confusion in the use of near similar sounds such as c and s, in the use of a instead of e, and in the use of double consonants instead of one or vice versa. In terms of grammar, there is misuse of prepositions (7), articles (4), and plurals (2) as well wrong use of tenses (1) or voice (1). L1 interference is also another factor that leads to errors in grammar structures. Types of vocabulary errors are wrong word choice or word form (5) and the incorrect use of informal words (3). Students' mistakes in the linking words demonstrate use of the wrong linking word (1) or wrong form of the linking word (3). Among the punctuation errors, the most common is the non-use of the comma after fronted adverbials and prepositional phrases.

Table 8 List of errors in 11th grade students' essays

Mistakes committed in the essays of 11th classes	Extracts from Students' Essay	Suggested corrections
Spelling mistakes	reduse, sevearly , interupt , adimit, continoueing , carrier , responsability , getting heigher , proffessionists, deegre , excist , benefitial. Studing, choise, ecission, achievments ,enconter	reduce, severely , interrupt , admit, continuing , carrier , responsibility , getting higher , professions , degree , exist, beneficial. Studying, choice, decision ,achievements, encounter,
Grammar mistakes a) Tense	Unlike fast foods, home cooked meals **required** time for shopping as well. ….. Fast foods **should use** in a reduced way. (Lack of passive tense)	Unlike fast foods, home cooked meals require time for shopping as well. ….. Fast foods should be used in a reduced way. (Lack of passive tense)
b) Misuse of plurals	**Those lacks** on a part-timing …….. / Formal education is better for young **peoples,**	Those lack on apart timing …/ Formal education is better for

	lifes	young people, lives
c) Misuse of articles	……… may seem to **be good sign** During **university years,** you have to save money …. Pay **big amount of money** It leads to **loss of traditional food**	……… may seem to be a good sign During the university years, you have to save money …. Pay a big amount of money It leads to the loss of traditional food
d) Misuse of prepositions	enthusiastic **to** this change , may be desirable **from** society , to go **on** universities, ….. advantages that university brings **in** peoples lifes, the disadvantages **at** this decision, i**n** work , there is a bigger chance **at**	enthusiastic about this change , may be desirable by society , to go to universities, ….. advantages that university brings to peoples lifes, the disadvantages of this decision, at work , there is a bigger chance of …
Vocabulary mistakes **a) wrong word choice or misuse of words**	In summation, put them in life, part timing jobs, they broad their minds, poses several health to people	In summary, put them into practice , part-time jobs, they broaden their minds, poses several health threats to people
b) Informal words	Way more incomes are deposited ……., get rid of cooking problems, Well,	Much more incomes are deposited……., Remove or dispose of cooking problems, In fact , As a matter of fact …
Linking words	Further more , Further , Beside the advantages and disadvantages , Counter to this	Furthermore, Moreover, Apart from advantages and disadvantages, In contrast to this
Punctuation mistakes: **The absence of comma after particularly conjunctions.**	Moreover after getting a master degree , Despite all those benefits this phonemonan ………., No doubt there are … , Despite the advantages there are …. , During the university years you have to …. Nowadays an increasing number of students	Moreover , after getting a master degree , Despite all those benefits, this phonemonan ………., No doubt, there are … , Despite the advantages, there are …. , During the university years ,you have to …. Nowadays , an increasing number of students

L1 interference	Yes there sure are advantages People are not on the same thought ….	Of course, there are certain advantages People do not think similarly
Ambiguity in the sentences	Books teach you how not be surprised by the pressure of work will not give good results in real life. The reason why a lot of people choose to go along the path of education is the criteria present it today's society about employment.	Books will not be useful in real life even if they teach you not to get surprised by the pressure of work. The reason why a lot of people prefer education is the criteria range set by today's society to be employed.

Table 9, adapted from Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017), elaborates on the common errors committed by 12th grade students and it contains the same list of error types as 11th grade students list. The analysis reveals that the same error types with minor differences. The spelling mistakes (11) are: lack of one consonant when there should be two, unnecessary use of extra vowels, confusion of letters c and s, and lack of a consonant or a vowel. The grammar mistakes range is as follows: use of wrong tense (3), subject-verb agreement (1), misuse of plurals (2), misuse of pronouns (2), misuse of articles (3), and misuse of prepositions (3). Unlike the 11th grades, there is also misuse of the gerund form instead of the infinitive (1). In terms of vocabulary, there is wrong word choice (4) and misuse of word (2). Furthermore, there are two cases of L1 influence, which has led to the wrong use of the phrasal verb. The most common punctuation mistake, similarly to 11th grade students, is the lack of comma after fronted prepositional phrases or adverbials. Finally, there are two examples of ambiguity arising fromL1 influence and use of wrong word order.

Table 9 List of errors in 11th grade students' essays

Mistakes in the essays of 12th classes	Extracts from Students' Essays	Suggested corrections
Spelling mistakes	Nowdays, accosiated, dissapears, gouverments, eniviromentally, comunity, discus, tansport, phenomen, remedie, awareness, A well-payed job	Nowadays, associated, disappears, governments, environmentally, community, discuss, transport, phenomenon, remedy, awareness A well-paid job
Grammar mistakes **a) Tense** Subject and Verb agreement	If the child **don't have** the opportunity ….. Even if we l**eft** for sometime, we should take care of them. The level of seas **has**	If the child doesn't have the opportunity ….. Even if we leave for sometime, we should take care of them.

	dramatically **increase .** Climate **have changed** a lot	The level of seas has dramatically increased. Climate has changed a lot
B) Misuse of gerunds and infinitives	Children tend to **being** captivated by their careers	Children tend to **be** captivated by their careers
b) Misuse of plurals	Busy lifes , some solution to avoid this kind of situation	Busy lives, some solutions
c) Misuse of pronouns	Due to it's harmful consequences …. These causes … This is the new generation that refuses	Due to its harmful consequences …. This causes … This is the new generation who refuses…….
c) Misuse of articles	One of biggest concern that our society ….. ……..will cause sea level to increase Global warming has become hot topic.. ….., governments of every country	One of the biggest concern that our society ….. ……..will cause the sea level to increase Global warming has become a hot topic.. ……, the governments of every country
d) Misuse of prepositions	….. allows ultraviolet rays from the sun **to** penetrate the earth atmosphere/ Being lonely causes a lot of health problems **at** elderly people So except **of** having people taking care of them	….. allows ultraviolet rays from the sun in**to** penetrate the earth atmosphere/ Being lonely causes a lot of health problems **to** elderly people So except **for** having people taking care of them
Vocabulary mistakes **a) wrong word choice or misuse of words**	**World wide** concern They e**xcept** care from us too They have **healthy** problems We should never **forgot** …. Enviromentally **finally** While sea levels cause floods, which mean the **distraction** of many habitats …	Worldwide concern They expect care from us too They have health problems We should never forget …. Environmentally friendly While sea levels cause floods, which mean the destruction of many habitats …
Punctuation mistakes: **The absence of comma after particularly conjunctions and words. misuse of it**	For example the recent floods….. If we use less cars and plant a lot of trees the percentage of cars …… To conclude global warming is…..	For example ,the recent floods….. If we use less cars and plant a lot of trees, the percentage of cars …… To conclude, global warming is…..

	Nowadays supporting each other	Nowadays, supporting each other
	In my opinion the best solution	In my opinion, the best solution
	To sum up global warming	To sum up, global warming
	… caused by "greenhouse " effect	… caused by "greenhouse effect"
L1 interference	Loneliness is gaining popularity People tend to close themselves from the society	Loneliness is on the increase. People tend to close themselves off from the society.
Ambiguity in the sentences Because of wrong word order or L1 interference	Nowadays, in our society it has become a common issue the loneliness that embraces the elderies . In order for this problem to go to extreme extent and results in serious social issues, actions must be taken.	Nowadays, the loneliness which elderly people experience has become a common issue in our society. Measurements must be taken so that this problem doesn't expand and result in serious social issues.

To sum up, 12th grades students also have difficulty and make grammar, spelling, and vocabulary errors; however, they have less difficulty in organisation and punctuation. Sometimes their sentences contain ambigutity or do not make sense because of syntactic issues or L1 interference. 12th grades usually spend considerable time on essay writing due to the matura exams (high school graduation exams, among which English is obligatory), in which they are required to write a formal or informal email and an argumentative essay. When compared to 11th classes, their essays contain fewer mistakes related to coherence and cohesion. They are much better at using the language effectively and supporting their ideas with adequate examples or evidence. Organization mistakes are least observed in both gardes. Just one student has not written the conclusion part properly. The others are quite good with the organization of introduction and body paragraphs. 11th grade students are also quite familiar with essay structure and organisation, yet, they need to practise on grammar and spelling in order to use the language more efffectively.

Analysis of teachers' interviews
Teachers are the ones who assess students' essays and give feedback on their mistakes. They spend a considerable time checking students' essays and correcting their mistakes. Thus, they are aware of the common mistakes sudents make and the parts of the essays with which they particulary face hardship. In addition, they play an important role in motivating and guiding students how to write well organized essays. However, teachers' lack of methodology may demotivate students and cause them to produce lower quality essays. The teachers' semi-structured interview consists of 8 questions which collect data about the students' writing difficulties from the teachers' perspective, the methods and strategies teachers use to address these difficulties, and their recommendations.

The 1st, 2nd, and 4th questions are close-ended questions with four alternatives and the other five questions 3rd, 5th, 6th and 8th are open-ended questions. However, the 7th question is both close-ended with four alternatives and open-ended aiming at eliciting teachers' own answers.

1. How do your students react when they are supposed to write an essay?

When asked about students' reactions to writing an essay, seven teachers report that their students do not want to write in the class. Five teachers state that they frequently complain, whereas two teachers say that their students feel extremely stressful. Only one teacher opts for two alternatives emphasizing that the students both frequently complain and feel extremely stressful. None of the participant teachers report that their students take pleasure in writing.

2. Which areas of essay writing do your students find the most challenging?

In terms of difficulties students face when writing essays, there are diverse teacher opinions. Four teachers report that generating ideas is the most frequent challenge that students encounter, four other teachers report that the major challenge is the organization of the essay, and for four other teachers finding evidence to support their argument is the hardest for students. Two teachers think that students have difficulty in linking ideas, while one teacher reports that the organization of the essay and finding evidence to support their argument are the most challenging aspects.

3. What kind of solutions do you suggest your students to overcome the difficulties mentioned in question two?

This is an open-ended question and the teachers have provided solutions to the areas of essay writing they think students face the most challenges. Two teachers who think that generating ideas is the most challenging aspect, share similar opinions

and suggest that the students should read books and articles as well as brainstorm around the topic. They also add that students should do some research into the topic and use different sources in order to improve their writing skills. Another teacher opines that generating ideas is a common problem even in discussions and students can solve this problem by writing short paragraphs and summaries and by reading sample essays. The last teacher thinks that students should support their arguments and include any famous quotation in order to be able to generate ideas.

Two of the four teachers who think students have difficulties in the organization of the essays suggest students should read the essay samples given either in the book or in other sources. One of them believes that practice is the best solution, as students will receive feedback concerning the organization of their essay. The fourth teacher suggests that "TEXAS model" is beneficial to cope with essay organization difficulties. She expands her model into five parts consisting of T-topic, E- explanation of topic, X- example, A- analysis, and S- solution.

With regard to finding evidence to support their argument, teachers give different opinions. One teacher claims that this part is closely related to critical thinking, which students need to do before writing. She/ he suggests that teachers ought to make sure that the evidence is appropriate and if the students do not have an appropriate amount of evidence, they should change their argument. Another teacher thinks that reading sample essays and trying to elicit or brainstorm ideas before they start writing are the best solutions to find evidence to support their argument. The third teacher points out that teacher help is essential and we should promote the students to ponder over normal daily life situations and think of examples that can relate to the argument. The last teacher does not give a tangible solution and

repeats the question saying that students should support their arguments.

As for linking ideas, two teachers' opinions over the solutions differ from each other. The first teacher proposes that teachers explain and re-explain the difficulties they might have and provide them with an example from another essay. The other teacher remarks that students can work on a draft just to make the connections amongst the ideas. Only one teacher who holds the opinion that students have difficulty in both organization of the essay and finding evidence to support their argument advocates that three solutions: a) providing sample structures and revising the structures b) reading and c) organizing open discussions on different topics will be of great help to handle the related difficulties.

4. What kind of language mistakes do students tend to make in their essays?

This question asks for the teachers' opinions about the students' mistakes in terms of language use. Four teachers think that students are prone to make grammar mistakes and four others report that they make more mistakes in vocabulary. Meanwhile, three teachers hold the view that students have the tendency to commit more errors in spelling. While only one teacher thinks that students make more mistakes in punctuation, three other teachers have selected two alternatives. One of the teachers says that they make both grammar and spelling mistakes. One other teacher holds the view that grammar and vocabulary mistakes are more common in students' essays and the last teacher claims that spelling and vocabulary mistakes are more frequent. Overall, from the teachers' perspective, the most common mistakes are in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling respectively.

5. How can students reduce their mistakes mentioned in question four? What do you suggest?

With regard to grammar mistakes, teachers suggest similar solutions such as practicing grammar through plenty of exercises, analysing the grammar in essays and practicing them. One teacher points out that reducing grammar mistakes is a long process and reading more would be a solution to the problem. As for the mistakes related to the vocabulary, all four teachers recommend reading extensively especially magazines, articles, and books, which will help students enlarge their vocabulary. Only one teacher thinks that keeping a diary and doing writing exercises will help students reduce their vocabulary mistakes. While another teacher draws our attention to the students' different proficiency levels implying that the methods to address the challenges should vary accordingly, she still highlights the importance of reading and listening input from topics that can be related to the diction or choice of words.

Three teachers give different solutions with respect to spelling mistakes. One of the teachers considers that reading raises students' awareness of their mistakes, whereas the other teacher believes that the students should practice spelling and dictation time after time, asserting that practicing continuously will assist students in minimizing their mistakes. The last teacher suggests that students can focus on spelling rules and mostly on misspelled words. She also suggests that they can also have a personal list of the words with which they have trouble in spelling. The teacher who thinks students have more difficulty with punctuation suggests that students can overcome this difficulty by learning the punctuation rules; they can also replace the punctuation mark with another one and see if it makes sense.

The teacher who thinks students tend to make grammar and spelling mistakes advises students to read as well. There are two suggestions made by the teacher who claims the students make more grammar and vocabulary mistakes. She recommends that they draft and edit their essays prior to

submission. In addition to this, the students should revise the vocabulary relevant to the topic before writing an essay. Lastly, the teacher who opts for both spelling and vocabulary mistakes emphasizes the significance of proof reading to decrease spelling mistakes adding that three minutes for proof reading be obligatory. She criticizes the level of students' vocabulary, which is usually B1 level and the frequent repetition of words noticeable in their essays. She urges students to make use of synonyms and paraphrasing.

6. What kind of methods do you follow in correcting students' writing tasks? Do you correct every mistake?

Most of the teachers prefer providing a marking scheme or criteria in correcting students' essays and do not correct every mistake. Only two teachers report that they correct all mistakes. Eleven teachers give more importance to the content and correct some recurring crucial mistakes. The other two teachers say that sometimes they correct and sometimes they do not correct them depending on the type of the writing activity and the content. If it is creative writing, they do not pay heeds to the mistakes. However, they correct the mistakes in the essays.

Their methodology in correcting students' mistakes is alike. They check the structure of the essay, grammar mistakes, if punctuation is properly used and vocabulary mechanics, spelling as well as evaluating coherence and cohesion. Out of 15 teachers, six of them emphasize they use assessment criteria but the other nine teachers do not provide an exact method they use to correct students' mistakes. As for the feedback on students' essays, only one teacher writes an overall comment based on the standard assessment criteria. One teacher confesses that she is aware of the importance of methodology such as using symbols, marking criteria, reformulation, responding, commenting, scaffolding, and self-correcting.

Nevertheless, she is not able to use them properly. In other words, she knows the methods in theory but has difficulty in putting them into practice.

7. Which methods do you apply in your class to develop students' essay writing skills?

The aim of this question is to provide insights into the strategies or methods used by the teachers to improve their students' essay writing skills. It is both a close-ended question containing four alternatives and an open-ended one giving further opportunity to the teachers to write their comments. Six teachers provide the students with a sample essay. Three teachers selected two alternatives, which are brainstorming and discussing on the essay topic. Two teachers only discuss on the topic. Two teachers use all the techniques given in the questionnaire. Only one teacher opts for brainstorming and the last teacher asks organizes discussions about the topic and provides the students with a sample essay. The most frequent used strategies are providing sample essays (10 teachers) and discussing the essay topic (8 teachers), followed by brainstorming (5 teachers). The least frequent strategy is the question and answer technique.

Four teachers stated their further opinions in the ''others….'' part of the questionnaire. Among them, only one teacher declares that she uses pre-writing tasks such as discussion about some key words and brainstorming around key words. She also exploits the technique of comparison between two or more related techniques. Two teachers comment that providing the essay outline depending on the type of the essay such as advantages and disadvantages or problems and solutions essays are of great help. The last teacher writes critical thinking is important but he/ she does not make any further explanations.

8. How can you relieve the students' stress related to writing essays? What kind of solutions do you suggest?

The last question is open-ended and elicits solutions and recommendations from the teachers. Even though teachers' ideas vary, most of them suggest analysing essay samples to familiarize students with the structure of essays and practising writing as often as possible. We group the solutions proposed by the teachers as below.

1. Following a particular structure or outline. Most of the participant teachers suggest that one of the best ways to relieve students from essay-related stress is to make the process as easy as possible. This can be achieved through an essay outline or essay structure which students have to follow when writing their essays. Teacher 1: "*Students should follow the structures of the essays: Introduction, development and conclusion.*" Teacher 2: "*The structure of the essay should be studied before the lesson. They should be accustomed with the techniques needed.*" Some teachers also suggest that analysing sample essays is an activity that can help students' familiarize with essays in general and essay structure in particular: "*Also they should analyse sample essays.*" "*I share sample essays and give some tips talking about the topic.*" Teacher X: "*"I relieve their stress by making explanation of writing easier and giving essay tips. Two suggestions are 1.Essay diagram / outline and 2. TEXAS theory.*"

2. More exposure to language input and output. To overcome the challenges students encounter with generation of ideas, two of the teachers suggest more *exposure to language input* through either more reading or watching TEDtalks. Extracts from teachers 'answers: "*I always advise my students to read a lot so that they won't be short of ideas.*" or "*There may be different ways/techniques such as watching TED TALK speeches, which can*

help them generate ideas." Some teachers also encourage designation of different individual or group writing activities that offer frequent practice opportunities. For example, "*Every beginning of the year I ask my students to make their writing groups of 3 or 4. Every day one of the group members writes one paper of the story which is created by the group and goes on until the end of the year.*"; "*Try writing a group essay, each member has to develop one part.*" Another technique employed to familiarize students with writing is providing opportunities for free writing, especially about their favourite topics or TV programs. Teacher X"*The teachers sometimes should let students just write their thoughts and ideas to help students generate ideas and make them feel free while writing essays.*"; "*Students should keep writing in English, reading an article about the things they love and especially TV shows and discussion of programs.*"

3. Feedback and motivation Feedback is essential to learning and motivation and some teachers suggest that providing positive feedback and pointing out individual accomplishments with particular parts of an essay will contribute to student motivation and will make them feel more relaxed. Teacher 3: "*If there is improvement in their essays, the teacher should emphasize this.*" Teacher 4: "*I motivate them so that they can rework together with their teachers and peers.*" Other teachers recommend direct motivation and encouragement as instruments that remove students' stress: "*...but I try to make them feel at ease first. I encourage them…*" Another recommended motivational activity is peer editing through checking other students' work and through both giving and receiving feedback: "*They can share works so that they can get others' opinions.*"

4. DISCUSSION

This section is organised based on the main themes and ideas thata arose from the data collected from students and teachers' questionnaires and the analysis of student essays with the aim of discussing the findings considering both students' and teachers' perspectives.

Learners' attitudes towards essay writing

The data collected from the student questionnaire revealed that the majority of students have negative attitudes towards writing essays: they either find it challenging or are afraid of writing. Only less than ten percent take pleasure in writing essays. In order to further explore students' attitudes towards essay writing another question was asked to identify students' feelings before starting to write an essay. This question's results also showed that the vast majority of the students feel anxious, stressful or scattered before writing an esssay and only a little more than a quarter can keep calm and concentrate on their work. Further investigation of these beliefs revealed that most of the respondents share more negative feelings when they are expected to write an esssy in class than when writing at home.

Writing in class is not welcomed by the majority of students; they feel under pressure and not quite calm. One of the reasons for these attitudes may be the time limit. In this study the majority of students report they struggle with managing their time to achieve completing the writing task within the required time. They might find it distracting or the time limit might lead to writing without paying attention to different types of mistakes thus students end up writing poor quality essays (Al-Gharabally, 2015). The question arises: do students produce better essays if they were asked to write them at home? Although from the students' perspective, writing at home is less stressful and they are free of time constraints, this is an issue that requires further research. Meanwhile,

according to Al Ghrabally, writing at home puts the students at risk as they do not have the chance of interacting with their peers and they could develop a writer's block. In addition, students who are devoid of ideas or procrastinate their work may tend to plagiarise through inserting fragmented pieces of others' work without acknowledging the sources (Negre, Forgas, & Trobat, 2015).

Research also shows that the main reason why most students feel so is that they find this task overwhelming and difficult manage (Durga & Rao, 2018) Writing is an aquired skill, and acquiring these skills is hard not only for EFL/ESL learners but also for native speakers.

Our investigation of students' attitudes from the teachers' perspectives also revealed that all students react negatively when they have to write an essay in class; none of the teachers report that their students take pleasure in writing in class. According to them, their students frequently complain, feel stressful, or do not want to write their essays during class time. In order to overcome their fears and negative attitudes and to develop their writing skills, students can be guided (Adas & Bakir, 2013), and the ones who can provide this gudiance effectively are the teachers.

In order to find out what guidance EFL teachers use to help students remove stress stemming from writing anxiety or apprehension related to essays, we asked an open-ended question. It revealed that teachers use a variety of strategies and make very useful suggestions. They resommend that teachers should help, guide, motivate and encourage their students through their familiriasation with essay structure, essay organisation, and use of language properly. As the students' essay-related apprehension and anxiety may also lead to more difficulties, more challenges and, as a result, to more mistakes, and even lower academic success (Fakeye, 2018), teachers also

recommend different strategies to cope with each of them.

Error correction and teacher feedback is another significant factor highly influencing students' attitudes towards essay writing and their success in it. There is a constant debate if the teacher should correct each mistake or not and there are claims that students do not take advantage of it and as a result, it is useless and ineffective. Harmer (2007) and Raimes (2004) claim that overcorrection will be demotivating and useless for students and therefore, they advise teachers not to focus on every mistake in the written tasks. Al-Ghrabally insists that correcting students' mistakes with a red pen in written work will only increase the students' anxiety and frustration (2015). Contrary to these beliefs, the students in our study report positive attitudes believing they learn from their mistakes. Just a small percentage find it annoying and believe it reduces their motivation. The remaining students take their mistakes for granted and do not mind if the teachers correct them or not. For those students who do not like seeing correction with red pen pervasive in their essays, the teacher can write general comments rather than correcting every mistake.

Difficulties and challenges in essay writing

We investigated students' difficulties in terms of language use and essay writing aspects by analysing data from questionnaires and sample essays. Analysis of the questionnaire data demonstrated that students report most frequent difficulties in vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation respectively. Meanwhile, the sample essay analysis revealed that in terms of language, the most common are grammar errors, followed by spelling vocabulary and punctuation. The grammar errors range from incorrect use of prepositions and tenses to articles, pronouns, and plural nouns. Mistakes in vocabulary appear in the form of wrong word choice or incorrect use of informal words; sometimes they are unable to make a distinction between formal and informal words. Punctuation difficulties are present in the misuse or non-usage at all of the punctuation marks, particularly of the comma after fronted adverbials and/or prepositional phrases. This shows that students should pay attention to the correct use of grammar structures and the employment of vocabulary that fits in their essays. In addition, analysis of teachers' questionnaires also showed that grammar and vocabulary are two of the most challenging aspects of language use in essay writing.

Concerning aspects of essay writing, most of the students report they have difficulty in finding evidence to support their arguments as well as in generating and linking ideas. As reading is essential to strengthening writing skills and assisting students to generate ideas, this suggests that they might need to invest more in reading. Organization of the essays is the least reported difficulty, a finding also supported by the essay analysis, which revealed this aspect of essay writing is not a frequent mistake. One possible explanation of this finding may be the frequent provision of sample essays, which most teachers recommended as a strategy to improve this aspect of essay writing. Meanwhile, even from the teachers' perspectives, students encounter more difficulties in supporting their arguments and organizing their essays. In their opinion, generating and linking ideas are a little less frequent difficulties. L1 interference is accepted by the students (Pablo & Lasaten, 2018).

These findings are in line with Pablo and Lasaten (2018) who also report that their students in high schools have poor writing skills and they have trouble in grammar, sentence construction, and word choice and their essays disregard the value of cohesion and coherence, as well as with Belkhir and Benyelles (2017). Other

studies also report that the common mistakes are abundant in vocabulary and grammar (Annab, 2016). Ariyanti and Fitrina's study showed students mostly had problems in grammar and coherence (2017). In addition, Nyang'au's findings reveal that spelling, punctuation, word choice and grammar mistakes are overtly seen in students' essays (2014).

For many researchers, the influence of L1 over L2 writing is undeniable and students accept it too (Pablo & Lasaten, 2018). For them, ESL learners may undergo "lexical, syntactical, and morphological difficulties as influenced by their native language". Another problem arising among L2 learners is the tendency to think in their L1 rather than in English. L1 interference could create adverse effects because every language has different writing conventions. That is to say, L1 effect over L2 writing is inevitable but still EFL teachers should encourage students to think and write in English.

Although many studies report L1 interference as a challenge for many L2 learners (Adas and Bakir, 2013; Nyang'au, 2014; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2015; Benui, 2016; Dipolog-Ubananan, 2016), most of the respondents in this study report that L1 only partly affects their writing skills. This corresponds with the sample essay analysis, which also revealed very little L1 interference. However, as L1 interference may fall into different categories, further research could investigate factors underlining Albanian EFL learners' errors in grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

Strategies to overcome difficulties
In terms of strategies employed to overcome these challenges, it is worth noting that students exploit some useful strategies such as making an outline and taking notes, while just a small percentage prefer writing directly. Using strategies is useful for students as it allows them to write their essays in an organized way and to make transitions more easily. If students

start writing their essays directly, they are more likely to get off the topic or scattered and end up in poor writing. Bearing in mind the previous points, teaching students writing strategies is of vital importance.

The respondent teachers recommend a variety of strategies to help students overcome the difficulties they encounter in essay writing. As a solution to the challenge of generating ideas, teachers suggest reading and brainstorming about the topic, reading sample essays and writing short paragraphs or summaries. In addition to reading sample essays, strategies suggested to overcome the difficulty with organization of ideas include teacher feedback and the topic-explanation-example-analysis-solution (the TEXAS) model.

As for finding evidence to support arguments, teachers suggest students should be encouraged to brainstorm, read sample essays and to ponder over everyday life situations. Meanwhile, strategies to overcome the struggle with linking ideas range from sample essays, reading, and discussion of the topic to working on a draft of the essay and making connections amongst the ideas.

The most interesting finding in this study is the group writing strategy suggested by one of the teachers. While group work is a common activity in language classes nowadays, its employment for writing purposes is not very frequent. This group writing plays a pivotal role in developing students' writing skills in view of the fact that it stimulates students to interact with their friends. In addition, writing as a group will be of great help to alleviate students' anxiety and stress.

To sum up, teachers recommend a wide range of strategies to assist students in overcoming challenges they encounter with different aspects of essay writing, which include reading, brainstorming and discussing about the topic, reading sample essays and writing paragraphs, summaries or drafts, as well as using special writing

models. These findings correspond with those a study conducted in Switzerland, (Solagha, 2013) which reports teachers believe firmly that practicing sufficiently is the best way for students to disregard their writing difficulties and prevents them from "further forthcoming difficulties".

Concerning strategies to overcome mistakes in language use, most teachers suggest solutions such as practising grammar forms through exercises and analysing grammar in sample essays. For mistakes related to vocabulary, teachers recommend reading extensively especially magazines, articles and books, as well as listening about the topic. Strategies to reduce spelling mistakes include raising students' awareness of spelling rules and practising spelling. Another suggested solution is preparing a list of words students find difficult to spell. Learning the rules and paying attention to them in writing is the strategy teachers recommend for punctuation mistakes.

Another aim of this study was to investigate the teachers' favourite error correction techniques and the methods they implement in their assessments. Most of the teachers are cognizant of the necessity of evaluation or assessment criteria and except for two of them, the rest avoid correcting the students' every mistake. This concurs with Brown's (2001) and Harmer's (2001) views on error correction as well. Harmer advises teachers to avoid overcorrection that leads students to be discouraged from writing. Instead, he urges that teachers should make use of symbols instead of underlying all mistakes in red pen and should give positive comments.

Among 15 teachers, only six of them declare that they use assessment criteria. In fact, providing students with evaluation criteria is useful for both teachers and students. Students will grasp why they have received these grades in their essays and in which fields they are deficient. As for teachers, they will be more objective and fair in their assessments.

Lee draws our attention to making a distinction between direct and indirect correcting pointing out that the former is suitable for beginners, as teachers can address their mistakes more easily, while the latter is more impactful for advanced learners (2004). It is recognizable that some teachers are in favour of indirect correcting and make use of symbols and comments (Lee, 2004). Most teachers ignore peer correction and self-evaluation. Only one teacher confirms that she gives feedback to the students by writing a comment on students' essay. Even experienced teachers might face difficulty in evaluating their students' work because it is too demanding. Ferris (2007) highlights that responding to the students' written work is the most difficult, tiring and time-consuming part of a teacher's job. Ferris believes that giving feedback that suits to the needs of individuals is a very important part of being an effective teacher adding that teachers will transform this boring and exhaustive task into an enjoyable and rewarding task by the means of various effective techniques.

5. CONCLUSION

Writing essays is one of the most significant areas in second language learning because it gives students the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned about the language and to express their ideas in an organized way. However, it is also one of the most challenging skills to acquire. This study investigated students' attitudes towards essay writing, the challenges they encounter in writing essays and the strategies they employ to overcome them. To obtain broader insights, the study also explored students' challenges and strategies from the teachers' perspectives.

The findings revealed that in general students have negative attitudes towards writing essays; most of them find writing essays very challenging and feel fear or anxiety before starting to write essays. In terms of essay organization, the most

common challenge is finding evidence and linking ideas, while in terms of language use, students face difficulty in grammar and vocabulary. Sample essays analysis also revealed that students make more grammatical and spelling mistakes and avoid using correct punctuation or linking words, which are essential in formal writing.

To help students overcome their difficulties and produce much better essays, teachers employ and suggest different strategies such as brainstorming, discussing, analysing sample essays in their classes, reading extensively, practising on grammar and spelling, and practising group writing. Most of the teachers do not prefer correcting mistakes of students as they deem that students will be demoralized and it will not make a postive contribution to their development.

These findings have some implications for classroom practices and research. Teachers should try to create a relaxed atmosphere and teach students strategies to familiarize them with essay writing and overcome their fears. In addition, they should also allocate time to practise different aspects of language use from grammar to spelling and vocabulary. Furthermore, motivating students to become good readers can also be a good strategy that will both remove their anxiety and enhance their writing quality. Future research can investigate reasons behind students' fears, their mistakes, and the strategies to overcome them.

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