



MOHAMED KHIDER UNIVERSITY OF BISKRA  
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## **ACADEMIC WRITING IN HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **PREDICAMENTS AND PROSPECTS**

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## **Identifying Gaps in Academic Writing of EFL Master Students at Tlemcen University**

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### **Abstract**

There is growing evidence that lack of academic writing competence among university EFL master students has an impact on their overall academic performance. In fact, foreign language proficiency levels in English is strongly related to students' academic performance. Although, many EFL students at Tlemcen university have a general understanding of grammar rules, not many are able to write academically at levels expected of them. This is aggravated by students' lack of knowledge of their own academic writing abilities. This paper reports on a case study conducted to identify critical gaps in academic writing standards among EFL master students at Tlemcen University. The study employed a pragmatic case study approach, drawing on qualitative methods as deemed appropriate. The present study investigated the challenges faced by master students in academic writing and identified common grammatical, structural and syntactic errors made in writing tasks. The data collected from the study revealed that most students enjoyed writing tasks and drafting essays and working with peers to brainstorm ideas and opinions for their drafts. A majority of respondents agreed that they were well aware of referencing systems and the need to substantiate their ideas with supportive evidence. However, many respondents claimed that they were unable to evaluate their own work and that their evaluations frequently differed from those of their professors. The rationale of the study is to come up with treatments and approaches to help students improve their academic writing skills.

**Key words:** academic writing, EFL students, critical gaps