

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study sets out to analyze and evaluate English Language academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools taking Omdurman Locality schools as a representative. The focus on academic writing processes is because of their importance in writing outcomes. The study will attempt to cover this issue thoroughly trying to find different types of writing and what writing processes should involve. To do this, the study will make use of the relevant literature in the field and various data collection techniques that will be used in this study. Based on the expected results, the study will eventually suggest ways to enhance and promote effective writing processes and suggest remedy for the ineffective ones.

1.2. The Problem of the Study

Classroom observation and English teachers' reports, in addition to third year secondary students' low achievement in English writing show that students face writing difficulties either to lack of awareness of writing processes or inappropriate use of them. The researcher, being a teacher of English for nearly thirty years, thinks that this weakness is a crucial result of adopting traditional approaches that mainly focused on the product of writing which resulted in restricting students in what they can write, and encouraging them to use and memorize the same forms of writing regardless to content. White,1988; Jordan, 1997; and Escholz,1980 argue that adopting

the product approach encourages students not to produce texts but to focus on model, form and duplication (cited in Graham&Perin, 2007).

Thus, this study focuses on what goes on before students write. In other words, the study focuses on the writing processes that will enable students to make clear decisions about the direction of their writing by means of brainstorming, drafting and feedback.

More importantly, the study will attempt to find better ways to train and encourage students to use good writing processes to ensure good writing products and bearing greater responsibility for making their own improvements.

To achieve this goal, the study will attempt to analyze and evaluate the academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools to find out what writing processes they use. On one hand, enhance good writing processes, and on the other hand, suggest remedy for the ineffective ones.

The choice of third year secondary students, as a target group, is done on purpose for different factors. First, third year secondary students are considered to be good informants. Second, these students are approaching a new stage of education where they need approaches that enable them to write meaningful essays and reports by means of planning, drafting, reviewing and editing.

1.3. Aims of the Study:

The aims of this study are as follow:

1. To review the literature for analyzing and evaluating of existing English language academic writing processes
2. To help students to better understand and develop their English language academic writing processes
3. To help students overcome the difficulties they experience by developing clear, effective writing in English
4. To encourage and train students to practice academic writing processes
5. To assess the relationship between awareness of writing skills and writing outcomes as perceived by students and teachers

1.4. Significance of Study

The choice of this topic emanates from the importance of the writing skill in learning and the role it can play in learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, classroom observation and English teachers' reports indicate that secondary school students in general and third year students in particular, normally experience writing difficulties either due to lack of awareness of writing processes or inappropriate use of them. Thus, this study constitutes a challenging and significant attempt to analyze and evaluate the academic writing processes of third year secondary students, on the one hand, enhance good writing processes and on the other hand remedy poor writing ones. More importantly, the study sets out to assess the relationship between students'/teachers' awareness of writing processes and writing outcomes. The expected outcomes of the study will be of great value not only to third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, but also to course designers and English teachers in Sudan. Other fields such as translation and journalism could benefit from the results of study as writing competence is required not only in such fields, but many others.

1.5. Questions of the Study

The study will try to answer the following five questions:

1. What English language academic writing processes do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools currently use?
2. To what extent do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use effective writing techniques and what factors affect their writing efficiency?
3. Is there any relationship between students' awareness of the main academic writing processes and the writing outcomes?
4. Are there any differences between male and female students in awareness of academic writing processes and writing outcomes?
5. To what extent are teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools aware of the most common academic writing processes?

1.6. Hypotheses of the Study

The present study which will attempt to evaluate academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools will be set on two main hypotheses. The first hypothesis will assume that third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use both effective and ineffective writing techniques. The second assumption is that the majority of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools seem to use ineffective writing techniques. On the basis of these two hypotheses, the researcher will form five questions to survey third year secondary students' awareness of academic writing processes in general, effective writing techniques, the relationship between awareness of writing techniques and writing outcomes,

gender differences and English teachers' awareness of academic writing techniques.

1.7. The Research Methodology and Procedures

This chapter will describe the research design and the methodological steps and procedures that the researcher will follow to carry out this study. In the beginning, the researcher will describe the target group of study: why choosing the secondary schools in Omdurman Locality and why choosing third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, in particular. Secondly, the chapter will describe the instruments the researcher will use to carry out the study.

1.8. The Limits of Study:

This is a descriptive, analytical study which is confined to analyzing and evaluating academic writing processes as part of the writing skill of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools for the school year 2013/2014 represented by fifteen secondary schools at Omdurman Locality.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher surveys the relevant literature of writing: what it is, why people write and what makes writing difficult. The chapter also reviews academic writing: what it is, the need to improve academic writing, different types of academic writing and what different activities writers practice before, while and after writing.

Characteristics of good and poor writers will be surveyed, as well as some factors that affect writing efficiency. At the end, the chapter provides a review of the relevant literature and to what extent it helped the researcher in the present study.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. Definition of Writing

Lindemann (2001) defines writing as "a process of communication that uses a conventional graphic system to convey a message to a reader" (p.10). When people write, they use graphic symbols: that is, letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds people make when they speak. According to Byrne (1991), writing can be said to be, "the act of forming these symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind." (P.1). The symbols have to be arranged, according to certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences (Byrne, 1991).

Writing is an intricate act of meaning making (Elbow, 1986). It is a complex process of problem solving involving memory, planning, text

generation, and revision (Flower & Hayes, 1981). A unique language act, writing requires thinking methods different from those used for listening, reading, or speaking (Emig, 1983). As well as being the means through which testing and assessment of learning regularly take place, for the learner writing is an important skill in supporting other learning experiences, “as a mean of recording assimilating and reformulating knowledge, and of developing and making through his or her own ideas. It may be a means of personal discovery, of creativity and self-expression.” (Johnson 1999.359). According to (Keith, J.& Helen, J. 1999) writing is viewed as, “a problem-solving cognitive activity, involving strategies of goal-setting, idea generation, organization, drafting, revising and editing (p.346).

2.1.2. Reasons of Writing Difficulties

Many professional writers believe that writing is a difficult activity for most people. According to (Yavuz&Genc, 1998), most students, low and high achievers alike, find writing difficult and view it as something they just have to persevere through in order to pass certain exams (cited in Al Asmari, 2013). Byrne (1991) attributes this to three factors:

1. Psychological factors: As we use speech as a normal medium of communication in most circumstances, we normally have someone physically present from who we get feedback. Writing, on the other hand, is essentially a solitary activity and the fact that we are required to write in our own makes the act of writing difficult.
2. Linguistic factors: As oral communication is sustained through a process of interaction, the participants often help to keep it going. Because speech is normally spontaneous, people pay little attention to organizing their sentence

structure or connecting their sentences. Through interaction, people can repeat, backtrack or expand depending on how other people react to what they say. Unlike speech, in writing, people have to compensate for absence of speech features. To keep the channel of communication open, people have to use their own efforts. They have to ensure that the text they produce can be interpreted on its own through the choice of sentence structure and by the way how sentences are linked together and sequenced.

3. Cognitive factor: People grow up learning to speak and in normal circumstances; people spend much of their time doing it. People appear to speak without much conscious effort or thought and generally they talk because they want to. People usually talk about matters which are of interest and relevant to their social affairs or professions. Writing, on the other hand, is learned through a process of instruction. In order to write, people have to master the written form of the language, and to learn certain structures which are less used in speech, but are important for effective communication in writing. Also, people have to organize their ideas in such a way that they can be understood by a reader who is not present. To many people, writing is a task which is often imposed on them. In many situations, people find it difficult: what to write. For many of us, being at a loss for ideas is a familiar experience especially when are obliged to write. According to Hedge (2010), writing is a difficult task to large numbers of English-language students. He agrees with Byrne that a writer is unable to exploit all the devices available to speaker such as gesture, body movement, facial expression, tone of voice, stress, and hesitation. Hedge (2010), stated that:

Effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of information, ideas or arguments; a high degree of accuracy; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of

vocabulary, grammar patterns, and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers. (p.7)

2.1.3.Reasons for Writing

People write for different reasons. Hedge (2005) summaries different reasons for writing:

- for pedagogic purposes, to help students learn the system of language;
- for assessment purposes, as a way of establishing a learner's progress of proficiency
- for real purposes, as a goal of learning, to meet students' needs
- for humanistic purposes, to allow quieter students to show their strengths
- for acqvisitional purposes, as a careful mode of working with language which enables students to explore and reflect on language in a conscious way
- for educational purposes, to contribute to intellectual development and to develop self-esteem and confidence.

Hedge argues that a good deal to writing in the English-language classroom is undertaken for the first purpose listed above, as an aid to learning. This type of writing allows students to see how they are progressing and to get feedback from the teacher, and it allows teachers to monitor and diagnose problems.

2.1.4. Different Types of Writing

Text linguists recognize a number of text types. Hedge (2005) identifies six categories:

1- Personal writing: This writing is for oneself and it includes various types of aide, memories, as well as diaries and journals.

2- Study writing: This writing is for academic or educational purposes and includes all those tasks that students perform, either writing notes or summaries for themselves or writing essays, reports, reviews which are read and often assessed by teachers.

3- Public writing which is writing as a member of the general public to organization or institutions. There are actually conventions to follow in this type of writing. It includes such activities as writing letters of inquiry, application complaint and form filling of various kinds. This type of writing is also described as functional writing.

4- Creative writing which can include poems, stories, drama, all of what can be for oneself or shared with others. This type of writing is often practiced at primary and lower secondary education as it helps students to build self-esteem.

5- Social writing: This writing establishes and maintains social relationships with family and friends. For example, personal letters, invitations, congratulations, condolences and personal e-mails.

6- Institutional writing which is related to professional roles. For example, agendas, minutes, reports and memos.

2.1.5. Definition of Academic Writing

With reference to the six types stated above, type two, which is study writing, is the main type which this study focuses on. Study writing is more concerned with academic writing which students practice in class for educational purpose. Li (1999), refers to academic writing as, “the written work done in schools, colleges, and universities especially written work that

involves introducing, reasoning, critiquing, and building on rather than written work in other styles such as literacy and free writing.” (p.12). Oshima, A. & Houge, A., define academic writing as, “the kind of writing used in high school and college classes.” (2007:3). According to Oshima & Houge (2007), academic writing is different from creative writing and personal writing which are informal; whereas academic writing is formal and requires the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and organizing ideas in a certain way.

2.1.6. The Need to Improve Academic Writing

As most academic writing courses assess students through written assignments which include coursework and exam answers, I strongly believe that secondary students; in particular; third year students, necessarily need to work more on improving their academic writing for a number of reasons. For one reason, third year secondary students are approaching a new stage of education, that is tertiary education where they will be faced by different tasks of writing such as assignments, essays and reports which are absolutely different from the tasks they have done before at secondary schools. Ballard (1984) argued that while a student is inducted into a particular discipline through lectures, discussions, readings, and laboratory work, “it is through written assignments that the success of this acculturation is most commonly judged.” (p.43, cited in Belcher & Braine, 1995, p.4). Another reason is that, students should learn how to express clearly and directly what they mean to communicate (Zemach & Rumisek, 2005). Moreover, Hedge (2005) argued that students should produce whole pieces of communication, link and develop information, ideas, or arguments for a particular reader or group of readers. Therefore, and to meet the stated expectations and aims, it is out of

necessity that students are to be familiar and aware of academic writing processes which will enable them to carry out these tasks, and build a solid foundation for becoming confident and independent writers in English.

2.1.7. Process Definition:

As defined by Butler (2007), a process is, “a series of steps or actions.” (p.23). She elaborated that writers take these steps to reach a goal and get the results they want.

2.1.8. The Writing Process:

Though many researchers into writing agree that writing is a complex process with a number of operations going on simultaneously, Smith (1982) thinks differently that the process of writing is not a linear one; moving from planning to composing to revising and editing. He stated that writing is, “a recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of replanning in between (p.117). According to Keith and Helen (1999), the writing process is, “the activity of transforming ideas to written text rather than on the outcome of that activity” (p.360).

The process of writing, according to Hedge (2005), is often described as consisting of three major activities or groups of activities that take place at different stages of writing (p.52). To produce a good piece of writing, “we do more than just put words together to make sentences”(Rumisek, L. &Zemach, D. 2003.3).

Oshima, A. and Hogue, A. argue that, “writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act” (2007.15). They state that:

When you first write something, you have already been thinking about what to say and how to say it. Then after you have finished writing, you read over what you have written and make changes and corrections. You write and revise and write and revise again until you are satisfied that your writing expresses exactly what you want to say (2007.15).

Based on the ideas and definitions of the writers and linguists, in particular Hedge (2005) and Al Asmari (2013), it is agreed that there are different activities that writers practice before, during and after writing. These three stages of writing will be presented in details below.

2.1.9. Pre-Writing:

Pre-writing is the first stage of the writing process and the point at which we discover and explore our initial ideas about a subject. It is considered by many authorities and researchers as the most important stage of writing (Ede, L.2001, Dawson, M.2005, Hedge, P.2005, Wing, R. 2009). Graham and Perin (2007) believe that pre-writing,"engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition" (p.18). Hedge and Wing point out that during this stage , writers establish the purpose of writing and the audience for whom it will be written as well as their argument and an outline for the piece of writing. It is at this stage writers begin to get ideas (Butler 2007, Oshima&Houge2007). Prewriting can help writers with their writing process by starting them off on the right foot both intellectually and psychologically. Prewriting strategies help writers generate ideas and figure out a topic's structure; doing both of these things before writing a draft can help writers save significant time and energy (<http://uwp.duke.edu/writing>). The strategies and processes used in the pre-writing stage not only help the writer formulate a topic and solidify ideas, they also serve as a kind of rehearsal for the rest of the writing

process. As the writer uses the vocabulary associated with a particular topic, he or she becomes well-versed in the subject and is able to express ideas with more confidence, organization and clarity.(writing.ku.edu /prewriting-strategies)

There are different ways to generate and collect ideas. Leki(1998), Rumisek(2003), Hedge(2005) and many other researchers consider the following as the most common types of prewriting techniques that writers use to generate and organize ideas about a topic:

- Freewriting
- Brainstorming
- Mapping
- Wh-Questions
- Graphic Organizers
- Out ling
- Cubing
- Small group discussions

Freewriting:

Freewriting is a technique which has the main purpose of generating ideas (Hedge 2005). It tries to overcome the problem of writer's block. When writers write freely, they write whatever comes into their minds without stopping. At this stage, writers do not consider or worry about accuracy (Oshima&Houge, 2007, Rumisek&Zemach 2007, Hedge,2005). Hedge claims that"its main feature is writing as quickly as possible without stopping. Its other main feature, a product of the speed, is that the writer concentrates on content rather on form."(2005.66).

Freewriting helps students practice fluency (Zemach&Rumisek 2007). The advantage of freewriting as stated by Hedge (2005) is that,"it helps students to discover the things they can write about within a general theme. It also obliges students to redraft, thereby highlighting the importance of redrafting in the process of composing."(p.67). Leki (1995) distinguishes between two types of freewriting,"One type allows you to empty your mind temporarily of everyday concerns so that you can concentrate on the task at hand. The other type helps you to explore your ideas on a subject." (p.21)

Brainstorming (Listing):

Zemach&Rumisek (2007) define brainstorming as, "a way of gathering ideas about a topic" (p.6).The Kansas University Writing Centre adds that,"Brainstorming, also called listing, is a process of generating a lot of information within a short time by building on the association of previous terms you have mentioned." (Found in:writing.ku.edu/prewriting-strategies). When writers brainstorm a topic, they write down every idea that comes to them. They do not worry about whether the ideas are good or silly, useful or not. Much like freewriting, brainstorming involves capturing all of the thoughts and ideas and writing them on a paper. Lisa (2001) comments that brainstorming looks more like a list while freewriting may look like a paragraph. According to Hedge (2005), brainstorming is especially useful in creative writing, where an unstructured flow of thoughts is a good way to get ideas together. It can also be effective as the first stage in more formal types of writing. Hedge (1995) adds that brainstorming a topic in group discussion," produces lots of ideas from which students have to select the most effective and appropriate"(p.13). She concludes that:

Group composition has the added advantage of enabling students to learn from each other's strengths. It is an activity where weaker writers can learn from stronger ones. It also enables the teacher to move from group to group monitoring the work and helping with the process of composition (p.14).

Mapping (Clustering):

Mapping is also called clustering, mind mapping or idea mapping. It is a strategy that allows the writer to explore the relationship between ideas. In clustering, writers write the subject of their composition in the middle of paper. Then, they write down all the things they associate with it. Writers continue the process by finding associations for each of the things they have written down. Finally, writers group items into clusters or categories (Leki 1995, Zemach&Rumisek 2003). Once the strategy has been established with students, they can be encouraged to use it in subsequent writing activities. The advantage of mapping , as stated by Hedge(2005) is that," all the aspects of a topic can be seen in relation and in proportion to each other, and possible links between paragraphs or sections of an essay become easily apparent."

Graphic Organizers:

Sharrock (2008) defines a graphic organizer as,"a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and or ideas within a learning task" (p.3). Graphic organizers are also sometimes referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers or concept diagrams. According to Novak (1991), graphic organizers are used to represent children's conceptual understanding. Kroll and Paziotopoulos (2004) describe a graphic organizer as a concrete Skyscraper Model, to help students become creative and analytical thinkers. Vinetta Bell argues that

graphic organizers can be used during the pre-writing stage or at any other time during the writing process. They enable the writer to organize material logically and to see relationships between and among ideas (Retrieved from: www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/writing-process/5809).

According to Miller (2011), graphic organizers are a good tool to help guide students when they write. They scaffold students' thoughts into writing a proficient piece.

Although there are hundreds of different graphic organizers that have been created for educational use, a select few are proven to increase writing skills and guide writers to create proficient pieces of writing. Miller (2011), presents the following as the most common types of graphic organizers:

- **Outlines:** They are one of the most widely used graphic organizers for scaffolding students into properly organizing their writing.
- **Webs:** The main goal of a graphic organizing web is the extraction of information. This could be character information, events, or other aspects of a text. A web generally has one large circle in the centre with smaller circles branching off of it with connecting lines or arrows (Brovero, 2004; cited in Miller 2011, p.31).
- **Venn diagram:** They are to compare and contrast two topics by finding what they have in common, and what differences they possess (Hedge 2005 and Miller 2011)

Wh-Questions (Journalists' Questions):

When journalists or reporters write newspaper articles, they usually try to write the first sentence so that it will answer the following questions: **who, what, when, where, why**, and sometimes **how**. These questions are also useful for writers when they are describing an event. According to

Leki(1995), asking questions like these may help writers to clarify exactly what subject they are going to discuss in their composition. She adds, "This technique, like listing, is also good for finding details about your subject and for restating your writing if for some reason you get blocked (Leki, 1995.25). The journalists' questions are a powerful way to develop a great deal of information about a topic very quickly. Learning to ask the appropriate questions about a topic takes practice, however. While writing an assignment, writers may wish to go back and ask the journalists' questions again to clarify important points (Retrieved from: writing.ku.edu/prewriting-strategies).

Hedge (2005) presents the following questions:

- What sort of incident was it?
- Where did it take place?
- When did it happen?
- What exactly happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What was the outcome?
- How did the people feel?

Hedge suggests that students can work in pairs and make notes to answer the questions. The advantage of this activity as stated by Hedge is that, "it provides content for students and is thus complementary to activities where they have to generate ideas for themselves. It reflects real-life tasks where writers have to gather information from various sources and create their own text (2005.76).

Cubing:

Cubing involves looking at an idea from six different points of view. According to Hedge (2005), cubing is an invention process which can be visualised as bringing together six sides of a cube which holds the subject inside. Leki(1995), and (Hedge,2005) agree on the following six angles that writers can consider when looking at a subject:

1. Describe it. (What does it look like? What do you see?)
2. Compare it. (What is it similar to? What is it different from?)
3. Analyse it. (What is made of? What are its parts?)
4. Associate it. (What does it remind you of? What do you associate it with?)
5. Apply it. (What can you do with it? What can you use it for?)
6. Argue for or against it. (Take either position. Give any reasons.)

(Leki 1995.30, Hedge 2005.68)

Looping:

According to Leki (1995), looping is a prewriting technique which is similar to freewriting, but it is more focused. She states that,"Looping can help you focus your thoughts on a subject, find the core or center of your thoughts, and pinpoint a main idea on which to elaborate" (1995.28). To use this technique, Leki mentions three steps of looping that writers can follow. To begin with, write down the subject you want to consider and write continuously for five minutes. As with freewriting, writers should not worry about grammar or punctuation. At the end of five minutes, read what you wrote. Then write down one sentence to summarise the essence of what is

written. Next, begin a second loop by focusing on your summary sentence and writing continuously for another five minutes. After writing for five minutes, look for the main idea and summarise it in one sentence. Write that sentence down. Writers should follow the same procedure for their third loop. By the end of five minutes of writing, writers read the third text and summarise it in one sentence. Leki claims that, for most writers, the last sentence usually captures the gist of what they have to say on their topic (Leki, 1995).

Although there are numerous prewriting techniques, there is no best technique or strategy to use. Zemach and Rumisek(2007) remarked that some writers prefer using lists as they do not have to write complete sentences. Other writers prefer mapping because they can easily see the relationship between ideas. A third group of writers would like to use freewriting as they can write quickly and ideas come easily. According to Graham and Perin(2007), teachers of writing need to develop a mixture and appropriate blend of techniques and approaches to writing in order to create proficient writers. They state that, "No single approach to writing instruction will meet the needs of all the students (2007.11).

2.1.10.During Writing(Drafting and Redrafting):

Having considered their audience and purpose of writing after collecting data, writers move to the second phase of activity which is the writing itself. This phase begins with writing a first draft. According to Hogue (2008), writing the first draft should take place in class as the teacher is available for immediate consultation and that he or she can check that everyone is on the right track. In this stage, Leki (1995) claims that writers

should not worry about detail, but they should try to get their ideas down on a paper. Hedge (2005) supports Leki's idea that in this stage, writers tend to focus on getting the content right first and leave details until later.

Having written a first draft, writers move to the second activity in this stage which is writing a final draft. In the final draft, writers focus on the way in which they put the pieces of the text together, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure (Hedge, 2005).

There are different features and activities that students need to produce and practice in this phase of writing. The main features and activities that take place during writing will be presented in details below.

Paragraph Structure:

According to Bailey (2011), paragraphs are the basic building blocks of academic writing. Well-structured paragraphs help the reader understand the topic more easily by dividing up the argument into convenient sections. Butler (2007), Houge (2008), Zemach and Rumisek (2005) and Bailey (2011) define a paragraph as, “ a group of sentences about a single topic”. In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long. It can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005).

Paragraph Organization:

A paragraph has three basic parts:

1. The topic sentence

It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph. Normally, it includes the main idea of the paragraph and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.

2. The supporting sentences

These are sentences that give examples, definitions, information, reasons or other details about the topic. They explain the topic sentence.

3. The concluding sentence

It is the last sentence of a paragraph. It finishes the paragraph by repeating the topic sentence in different ways or summarizes the main points.

Essay Structure

An essay should be organized into an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. According to Rumisek&Zemach (3003), without an introduction and a conclusion, an essay is just a group of paragraphs. The introduction and the conclusion work together to make the topic and main ideas of the essay clear to the reader.

The Introduction

The introduction is the first paragraph of an essay which...

- is usually five to ten sentences.
- catches the reader's interest
- gives the general topic of the essay
- gives background information about the topic
- states the main point of the essay

How to Write a Strong Introduction

A strong introduction...

- introduces the topic clearly.
- gives several sentences of information about the topic.
- states the main idea of the essay.

How to Make an Introduction Interesting

To make an introductory paragraph interesting for the reader, you can include ..

- interesting facts or statistics
- a personal story or example.
- an interesting quotation.(Rumisek&Zemach ,2003.pp71-74)

The Conclusion

The conclusion is the final paragraph of the essay. A good concluding paragraph ...

- the main points of the essay.
- restates the thesis using different words.
- makes a final comment about the essay's main idea.
- may emphasise an action that you would like the reader to take.

Unity and Coherence

According to (Rumisek&Zemach, 2003), unity in writing is,"the connection of all ideas to a single topic" (p.78). In a piece of writing, all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.

Rumisek&Zemach (2003), believe that coherence is related to unity. Ideas that are arranged in a clear and logical way are coherent. When a text is unified and coherent, the reader can easily understand the main points.

When organizing your ideas, think about what type of organization is the best for your topic or essay type. Rumisek&Zemach (2003) present the following table of some examples of writing and good ways to organize them.

Type of writing	Type of organization
Chronology (historical events, person narratives, processes)	Order by time or order of events/steps
Description	Order by position, size, and shape of Things
Classification	Group ideas and explain them in a logical Order
Comparison / Contrast	Organise in point -by-point or block style
Argumentation/persuasion and cause/effect	Order from least important to most important

(p.82)

Cohesive Devices:

Rumisek&Zemach (3003) define cohesive devices as," words and phrases that connect sentences and pharagraphs together, creating a smooth flow of ideas" (p.82). According to Hedge (2005), cohesive devices are"the means by which parts of a text are linked as logically relate sequences" (p.83). They show the relationship between ideas and make the writer's intentions clear.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify a number of cohesive devices:

Reference

A common way of linking ideas across sentences is through back reference by using, for example, it, this, he, she or they. Pronouns and demonstratives are the most common reference words.

Conjunction

Conjunctions are words or phrases which join parts of a sentence together, or link a sentence to the next one. There are different types of conjunctions which describe different functions such as: addition, contrast, cause and effect, comparison, sequence and giving examples.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis refers to the omission of words or phrases

Substitution

Sometimes a word or phrase substitutes for an earlier item in the text in order to avoid repetition.

Form:

Form refers to the layout of a piece of writing. According to Hedge (2005), different forms of writing may have distinctive formats. The writing form includes separating ideas into paragraphs with clear topic sentences. It also includes maintaining balance among points, developing each to the same extent.

Vocabulary:

Word choice represents a major problem area for students. As ideas are generated for writing, students need to build and develop a range of vocabulary and learn how to put them together in order to express those ideas. A wide range of vocabulary makes writing:

- more interesting
- more precise
- more suitable

Style:

According to Cali(), style is the way writing is dressed up or down to fit the specific context, purpose , or audience. Word choice, sentence fluency, and the writer's voice represent the style of a piece of writing

Bailey (2011) believes that there is no one correct style of academic writing, and students should develop their own voice. According to Bailey, there are no rules for academic style that apply to all situations. Students can follow the guidelines below which can help them develop their own style of writing:

- Do not use idiomatic or colloquial vocabulary.
- Use vocabulary accurately.
- Be as precise as possible when dealing with facts or figures.
- Conclusions should use tentative language.
- Avoid adverbs that show your personal attitude.
- Do not contract verb forms: *don't*, *can't*. Use the full form: Do not, cannot.
- Avoid numbering sections of your text, except in reports and long essays.
- Use conjunctions and signposting expressions to introduce new sections.

- Avoid using *etc* or *and so on* when writing lists.
- Avoid using two-word verbs such as *go on* or *bring up* if there is a suitable synonym. Instead, use *continue* or *raise*.

(Bailey, 2011.pp 150-153)

Conventions:

Conventions are the surface features of writing. They include mechanics, usage, and sentence formation. The correct use of conventions makes writing easier to read.

Mechanics

Mechanics, as defined by (Cali), “are the conventions of print that do not exist in oral language, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing” (2009). As mechanics do not exist in oral language, students have to consciously learn how mechanics function in written language.

Usage

Usage refers to conventions of both written and spoken language that include word order, verb tense and subject-verb agreement. As many children enter school with a basic knowledge of how to use language to communicate, Cali believes that usage is easier to learn than mechanics.

Sentence formation

Sentence structure refers to the structure of sentences, the way that phrases and clauses are used to form simple and complex sentences. During writing, students can craft their sentences, combine and rearrange ideas into a single, more compact sentence.

Though conventions can make a piece of writing more easier to read, many authorities believe that teaching conventions in isolation and in the beginning of writing, is ineffective and can interfere with students' development of automaticity(Cali,).Not only so, but even students' motivation to write can suffer when teachers focus on conventions first and ideas last.

How Teachers Can Help Students During the Writing Process

Hedge (2005) argued that it would be unwise to assume that all students, or even the majority of students, are skilled writers in their first language. Thus, EFL writers would definitely need help with linguistic form and organization of texts. Hedge recommended the following activities and techniques that teachers can use to help their students during the process of composition:

1. Teachers can raise students' awareness of the process of composition by talking explicitly about the stages of writing as well as structuring activities to take account of it.
2. Teachers can play a support role during the early stages of the composition process by helping students to get their ideas together. Teachers can encourage students to generate ideas by interviewing other students, pooling information, ideas, or opinions in the class, working from pictures, or reading texts of different genres.
3. Teachers can present good models for writing, indirectly, by promoting good reading habits. They can also provide good models for writing directly, when appropriate, by analyzing textual structure, particularly with some types of more academic writing.

4. Teachers can develop a sense of direction in students' writing by planning relevant writing activities.
5. Teachers can encourage students during the drafting process by creating a workshop atmosphere in their classroom to help students write down their ideas in English.
6. Teachers should provide activities to get students engaged in writing as a holistic process of composition.

Hedge (2005) confirms that, "Giving help during writing proves far more effective than giving it afterwards(p.55).

2.1.11. After Writing:

Revising and Editing

Among the studies on the stages of the writing process, research on the role of editing and revision is noticeable. It is believed that writing is a process of presenting and formulating. In other words, writing is a process of creating meaning. In this process, revision functions as a stage of representing and reformulating (Emig, 1971; Faigley&Witte, 1981; Hall, 1990; Murray, 1974; Sommers, 1980: cited in Li, 1999). The revision stage connects the other two stages of the writing process, planning and composing, in the way it examines (a) whether the finished draft presents the background knowledge the writer has collected for the designated topic, (b) whether the finished draft satisfies the imagine audience, and (c) whether the finished draft reflects the linguistic ability of the writer to the greatest possible extent. Faigley and Witte (1981) indicated that revision could not be separated from planning and composing. Hedge (2005) indicates that

revision activities only make sense as part of a much wider process of planning and composition. She stated that:

Students need to be sure that their plans are reasonably well formed. Then they need to check a first draft to ensure that the 'global' structure of their writing is well organized. In this case, the concept and practice of revision needs to be closely linked with the concept and practice of planning (Hedge, 2005.122).

To many readers, it seems that revision and editing are the same. However, Leki, 1998; Hedge, 2005 and Oshima&Houge, 2007 argue that revision is different from editing. They believe that revising reconsiders the big issues of content and organization. In other words, writers focus on what they want to say and what ideas they want to express. When editing a piece of writing, writers work on the smaller issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. In other words, when editing a text, writers concentrate on how they say something rather than what they say (Leki, 1998).

If drafting is for the writer, revision is for the reader. During revision you consider your writing from your audience's point of view. You should revise for audience, purpose and form.

Revising for Audience:

When revising for audience, you ask the following questions:

- Is the level of detail appropriate for my audience?
- Are my ideas presented in a logical order that will be evident to the reader?
- Do I use clear transitions to help the reader follow my thoughts?
- Are my sentences clear and specific?
- Do I say what I mean and mean what I say?

- Is my tone and style appropriate for my audience?

Revising for Purpose:

When you revise for purpose, consider the following points:

- Is my purpose clearly stated for the reader?
- Does all of my supporting information clearly relate to my purpose?
- Do I organize my ideas to best fulfil my purpose?

Revising for Form:

When you revise for form, consider the following points:

- Do I follow the established form of the essay I am writing?
- Do I separate ideas into paragraphs with clear topic sentences?
- Do I maintain balance among my points, developing each to the same extent?

While revising focuses mainly on making your content clear, editing focuses on making your piece of writing meets the conventions of stands written English. During the editing stage, you should check the following:

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Word choice
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling

Peer Editing:

According to Rumisek&Zemach(2005), peer editing is showing another student your writing to help you improve the content and organization. A

peer editor's job, according to Oshima&Houge(2007), is to read , ask questions, and comment on what is good and on what might be changed or made clearer. A peer editor should not check grammar or punctuation as this job is to be done by teachers.

Use of Peer Editing

As stated by Rumisek&Zemach (2005), there are two reasons for peer editing. The first is to get a reader's opinion about your writing. A reader can tell you that ...

- you should add more details or explanation.
- something is not organized clearly.
- you have some information that is not relevant.
- there is something that is hard to understand.(p.22)

The second reason to share writing with others is for you to read more examples of writing. "Other people will have had more experiences that you haven't. They may show you fresh ways of writing about experiences. Reading their paragraphs and essays can give you good ideas to use yourself in the future" (Rumisek&Zemach, 2005.22).

Improving Writing:

Helping students with getting ideas together, planning, and drafting, and having revising and editing done, is considered as only a part of the teacher's task. Another important role, according to Hedge (2005), comes with our response to students' writing and the way in which our feedback

helps them to improve their work. Hedge gives four reasons to show why feedback is important:

- a. Writing requires a lot of conscious effort from students, so they expect feedback and can become discouraged if it is not forthcoming.
- b. As writing is a more conscious process, learners monitor their writing to a greater extent than they are able to monitor their speech. Therefore, writing can be a more accurate indication of how a student is progressing in English, and it gives teachers opportunities for diagnosing problem areas.
- c. Writing is easier to revise than speech because it is permanent and available.
- d. As good writers constantly review and revise their writing, our feedback can help them to develop the strategies of good writers (Hedge, 2005).

Providing Feedback on Students' Written Assignments:

According to Williams (2003) written feedback is an essential aspect of any English Language writing course. Kroll (2001) describes feedback as one of the two components most central to any writing course with the other being the assignments the students are given. The goal of feedback is to teach skills that help students improve their writing proficiency to the point where they are cognizant of what is expected of them as writers and are able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity.

Common Methods of Feedback

According to Williams (2003) the most prominently used methods fall into two common categories: feedback on form, and feedback on content.

The most common methods of feedback on form are outright teacher correction of surface errors, teacher markings that indicate the place and type of error without correction, and underlining to indicate only the presence of errors. The first requires students to copy the corrections, and the latter two require students to correct the errors on their own. Feedback on content consists mainly of comments written by teachers on drafts that usually point out problems and other suggestions for improvements on future rewrites. Students are usually expected to incorporate information from the comments into the final written composition.

Faults with Traditional Methods of Feedback

According to Williams (2003) there are several faults that lie with traditional methods of correcting grammatical errors. The outright correction of surface errors has been found to be inconsistent, unclear and overemphasizes the negative (Fregeau, 1999; Cohen &Cavalcanti, 1990). Moreover, when this type of feedback is given, students for the most part simply copy the corrections into their drafts or their final writing. The vast majority of students does not record nor study the mistakes noted in the feedback. Having students merely copy teacher corrections into rewrites is a passive action that does not teach students how to recognize or correct errors on their own. Fregeau argued that the method of teachers indicating the presence of or types of errors without correction is also ineffective. Students often do not understand why the errors were indicated and simply guess the corrections as they rewrite.

As with feedback on form, many faults have been found with standard practices of providing feedback on content (Cohen &Cavalcanti, 1990; Leki,

1990; Fathman&Walley, 1990). Fathman&Walley, as well as Fregeau report that teacher feedback on content in the form of teacher comments is often vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent. This leads to various reactions by students including confusion, frustration and neglect of of the comments. Leki reports that when presented with written feedback on content, students react in three main ways. The students may not read the annotations at all, may read them but not understand them, or may understand them but not know how to respond to them. Teacher comments on content are of little use if students do not know what they mean or how to use them productively to improve their skills as writers. Fathman and Walley note that much like correction of grammar mistakes, comments on content tend to be negative and point out problems more than tell students what they are doing right.

Effective Points of Traditional Methods of Feedback

Despite the negative aspects of traditional methods of feedback mentioned earlier, there are some effective points to some of the common and traditional methods of teacher feedback. Fathman and Walley (1990) discovered that when students receive grammar feedback that indicated the place but not type of errors, the students significantly improved their grammar skills on rewrites of assignments. This idea is echoed by Frodesen(2001), who notes that indirect feedback is more useful than direct correction.

Written feedback has also been found to be effective when it is coupled with student-teacher conferencing (Brender, 1998; Fregeau, 1999). As many students find understanding written feedback problematic,

conferencing allows both students and teachers a chance to trace the causes of the problems arising from student writing and feedback, and to develop strategies for improvements. During these sessions, teachers can ask direct questions to students in order to gain a deeper understanding of student writings. Also, students can express their ideas more clearly in writing and to get clarification on any comments that teachers have made. Leki (1990) points out that students prefer error correction methods that label mistakes and let them make corrections on their own.

Suggestions for Appropriate and Effective Feedback

Williams (2003) believed that teachers have to come up with an effective method that takes into account the shortcomings of common and traditional methods of feedback, the positive aspects and the desires of students.

To lessen student confusion on grammar feedback, teachers should consistently use a standard set of symbols or markings to indicate place and type of error and train the students in what kinds of corrections to make based on each symbol.

Many of the same kinds of improvements that can be made for feedback on form can also be made for feedback on content. The failure of written comments dealing with content mainly comes from a combination of using inconsistent, unclear comments along with not training students in how to properly use the feedback to improve. In order to overcome this problem, teachers should consistently use a standard set of clear and direct comments and questions to indicate place and type of content feedback. These types of comments and questions should focus students' attention on the content of

the composition and the process they followed instead of merely pointing out areas that the teacher found interesting or lacking. Furthermore, teachers should familiarize students with the types of comments that will be used and train students in how to make use of the comments. Without training in how to use the comments to better improve their writing, students are likely to ignore the comments, misunderstand them, or fail to use them constructively (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Kroll, 2001). Teachers can develop and explain their comments to students in individual conferences.

Questions for Consideration when Giving Feedback:

Williams (2003) developed the following sets of questions that teachers should consider when they give their students feedback on form and content:

Form

- Is the feedback clear and easy for students to understand?
- Did I use the system and symbols that I made students aware of?
- Have I consistently marked the same error or types of errors?
- Have I marked anything not gone over in class?
- Will students know what to do with the feedback?
- Did I correct the errors or mark them for students to correct?

Content

- Is the feedback clear and easy for students to see and understand?
- Did I use the system and symbols that I made students aware of?
- Have I consistently marked the same error or types of errors?
- Have I only made negative comments or did I also add some praise?

- Did I make any specific comments or ask direct questions?
- Are the comments I wrote specific to content and problems covered in class?

2.1.12. Factors Affecting Writing Efficiency:

There are several factors that can affect writing efficiency. Two of the main factors are motivation and attitudes. Gardner and Lambert (1972) argued that second language learners' feelings about a foreign language and its cultural values and living styles (attitudes) and their individual reasons for learning the language (motivation) are related to overall learning success and achievement with learning that foreign language.

Motivation

Efficiency in writing is dependent on the student's motivational readiness. Madylus (2006) argues that motivation is the key to effective learning. Williams, M. and Burden, R. define motivation as, "a state of cognitive arousal which provokes a decision to act as a result of which there is sustained intellectual and /or physical effort so that the person can achieve some previously set goal" (197.120, cited in Harmer, 2002.51). According to Horwitz (1990), motivation is "the feelings of the learner toward the particular target language, its culture and the individual pragmatic reasons for learning a foreign language".

Many motivation theorists propose that individual's beliefs, values and goals for achievement play a crucial role in their achievement-related behaviour (Bandura, 1977; Eccles et al – 1983; Nicholls, 1990; Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). Ahuja, G & Ahuja, P state that, "without

Balinger (2009) points out some factors that have an impact on writing motivation. First, classroom contexts and student-teacher interactions drive patterns of writing motivation. Secondly, complex writing tasks often prove to be more motivating than simpler ones (Miller, Adkins & Hooper, 1993). Thirdly, having genuine reasons for writing has motivational consequences (Bruning & Horn, 2000). Finally, authentic tasks often allow students to express and refine their personal "voice" (Elbow, 1986).

Attitude

It is widely accepted that an important predictor of success in a foreign language is students' attitude towards it. In ESL/EFL contexts, students who consider the learning of English as a positive and rewarding experience are less likely to suffer from foreign language anxiety. By contrast, they usually have higher levels of motivation, willingness to participate, and high language performance. Nordquist (2009) argued that whatever your attitude may be, one thing is certain: how you feel about writing both affects and reflects how well you can write (cited in Algomoul, 2011). According to Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010), students' attitude towards the foreign language is very often influenced by: a) teacher-student relationships, b) the general classroom atmosphere, and c) the use of authentic teaching materials and activities. In order to help students develop a positive attitude toward English writing, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010), provide English teachers with the following set of strategies and practical suggestions:

Teacher-Student Relationships

Teachers can make a valuable contribution to developing a friendly relationship with their students. The following is a checklist with appropriate and effective teacher behavior:

1. Remember that your everyday classroom behavior is important. As most students consider their teacher as a role model, you need to be enthusiastic, cheerful and sincere in order to motivate your students to learn English (Brophy, 2004). Students want teachers who are friendly, caring and trustworthy (Elbata, 2008). Always be prepared for the lesson, and show willingness to answer students' questions.

2. Acknowledge the importance of immediacy in your classroom behavior. This involves verbal (use of humor, use of student' first names), and nonverbal (eye contact, positive gestures) immediacy behavior. Such behavior has a positive impact on motivation to learn, and can decrease foreign language anxiety (Frymier, 1993).

3. Provide to all students, regardless of their performance, enough time to answer questions. When students have difficulty answering questions, provide scaffolding rather than calling on another student. Use techniques such as thinking aloud, providing hints and clues, providing appropriate feedback and explaining the stages necessary for task completion.

4. Be extremely careful in providing praise. While the praise can convey “ positive teacher affect” , it should be proportionate to the language performance eliciting the praise (Schunk, 2008). Praise should be appropriate and provided at the time of the desired performance (Kyriacou, 1997).

Fostering a Positive Psychological Classroom Atmosphere

It is important to establish a kind of “classroom community”, in which students feel free to communicate using the foreign language. Bear in mind that you should create a classroom atmosphere in which language errors are considered a natural part of the process of learning a foreign language (Dornyei, 2001). If errors are ridiculed, some students may suffer from communication apprehension, that is, they will be unwilling to communicate using the target language. Teachers can use the following techniques to create a friendly, non-threatening classroom climate:

1. In writing tasks, adopt a correction code. Lee (1997) argued that teachers should prompt students about the location and the nature of errors rather than correcting every mistake. Edge (1989) confirmed that when students get back any piece of written work with too many corrections, their confidence is undermined, and they experience frustration and demotivation.

2. Incorporate collaborative work in classroom. Collaborative writing activities can make students personally involved in the language learning process, and increase motivation (Lee, 2002). They make students feel that their language output is not constantly assessed. As a result, they are more likely to participate and focus on communication, rather on accuracy.

3. Establish a set of classroom rules and enforce them fairly and consistently with all students. For example, make it clear to all students that not completing homework or misbehaving is not acceptable behavior.

Supplementing the Teaching Material with Authentic Texts and Tasks

Students often develop negative attitudes towards learning English as a second or a foreign language due to the lack of stimulating, authentic teaching material and tasks. Authentic material is meaningful to students,

challenging their cognitive abilities, and engages them personally. It also increases an intrinsic motivation. Authentic material and tasks can be selected based on the following guidelines:

a) They should be related to the students' interests, knowledge and everyday experience.

b) They should foster learner autonomy by providing activities and tasks that require students to use English for authentic communicative purposes.

Writing Apprehension

As a naturally occurring phenomenon, anxiety pervades every corner of human life including the writing skill. Writing apprehension has been deemed as a critical issue that teachers have to learn how to address (Smith, 1984). Writing anxiety was defined as a fear of the writing process which outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write (Thompson, 1980). Bloom (1985) used the term "writing anxiety" to describe people who exhibit one or a combination of feelings, beliefs or behaviours that interfere with a person's ability to start or work on or finish a given writing task that he or she is intellectually capable of doing. Many studies have argued that writing apprehension is negatively associated with writing achievement (e.g. Daley & Miller, 1975; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981; Burgoon & Hale, 1983; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Fleming, 1985; Stopla, 2004; Erkan & Saban, 2011, cited in Al Asmari, 2013).

To pursue meaning solutions for writing apprehension, a number of researchers attempted study-based suggestions. For example, Smith (1984) provided some strategies that have worked successfully in various classrooms such as teaching writing as a process, giving clear directions,

sharing of grading criteria, and allowing students to work in peer groups. These, coupled with assigning some ungraded written work, may work toward alleviating students' anxiety levels about their writing (Smith, 1984). Tige (1987) adopted some methods to reduce the apprehensiveness levels in her class such as incorporating journals, allowing ample time for students to complete assignments during class, and encouraging peer critiquing, cited in Al Asmari, 2013).

2.1.13. Suggestions for Making Writing Easier:

Most students, low and high achievers alike, find writing difficult and view it as something they just have to persevere through to pass certain exams (Yavuz&Genc, 1998). As many authorities in the field think of writing a process of communication, and that good writing helps your reader understand your ideas as clearly as possible, Leki (1998) suggests the following points for making the task of writing easier in English assignments:

- Write on subjects that actually interest you.
- Write on subjects that you know about or want to know about.
- Explore your ideas freely before you begin to write a draft.
- Have an idea of your audience.
- Decide what your purpose is and what you want you want your writing to accomplish
- Do not worry about details in your first draft.
- Reread your own writing frequently and objectively.
- Let others read what you have written and give you feedback.
- Do not be afraid to add, delete, or move your ideas around.

- Once your ideas are written, check the grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation to make your writing as correct as you can.

(1998.5)

2.1.14. Characteristics of Good and Poor Writers

Good and poor writers vary in the way they act *before, during* and *after* writing.

Before Writing:

Good Writers

- State a purpose for writing
- Consider their audience
- Generate plans for writing
- Consider their role in writing
- Identify the type of writing

Poor Writers

- Do not state a purpose for writing
- Do not consider their audience
- Do not make plans for writing

During Writing:

Good Writers

- Change their ideas as they write
- Reshape their plans
- Make a first draft
- Leave accuracy until later
- Concentrate on getting the content right first
- Revise form and content of writing

Poor Writers

- See plans as strait-jackets
- Follow the original plan through without deviation
- Do not allow the interplay between writing and thinking that can create new ideas

After Writing:

Good Writers

- Edit their writing
- Consider whether the overall structure is clear

Poor Writers

- Assume that their writing is clear to others because it is clear to them
- Concentrate on accuracy in grammar, punctuation, etc. without considering whether or not the structure is clear (Hedge, T.2005, PP. 52-54)

2.2. Review of Previous Related Studies

For providing more literature review, the researcher will present some relevant dissertations and studies connected to this study and which have been chosen from different places and times. Doubtless, these dissertations had great value and effect in providing the researcher with the relevant literature, designing tools and procedures used to collect data. Results and recommendations of the previous studies, on their part, helped the researcher a lot in the present study.

2.2.1. Miller, S. (2011). Using Graphic Organizers to Increase Writing Performance, M Ed, State University of New York

Aims of Study

This qualitative study mainly aimed to examine the effects of using graphic organizers as a pre-writing tool to increase student writing proficiency.

Tools:

The researcher used three research based graphic organizers to implement outline, detail web, and compare and contrast. Qualitative data was collected through action research as two fourth grade students and one fifth grade students read a text and filled in a graphic organizer to organize their thoughts and ideas. Students then compiled a writing sample based upon the graphic organizer.

Results of Study

The incorporation of outline, detail web, and compare and contrast graphic organizers to guide and organize students' thoughts and ideas improved their overall writing up to three points on a six point, 6+1 Traits of Writing scale.

2.2.2. Li, J. (1999). Revision Strategies in English Second-Language Academic Writing. M Ed, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada

Aims of Study

This qualitative research aims to examine what revision strategies are used in ESL academic writing by a selected group of university students. It also aims to explore what factors appear to influence the participants' revision process.

Tools

The researcher used questionnaires, observations and interviews to collect data.

Results of Study

The results of the study can be briefed as follow:

1. L1 and L2 writing processes are similar from their broad perspective, but they are different in numerous and important ways.
2. Participants were able to transfer some revision strategies from their L1 writing.
3. Participants were not only able to transfer some of the revision strategies from L1 writing to L2 writing, but were also able to use new strategies to adapt themselves to L2 writing tasks.

2.2.3. Balinger, K.(2009). Academic Writing Motivation: A Qualitative Study of Adolescents' Perspectives, PhD, The State University of New Jersey

Aims of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine six young adolescents' perspectives on academic writing and find out what factors motivate them to write.

Tools

In order to shed light on the issue of writing and motivation, the researcher collected data through interviews, observation and document analysis to find out what motivates middle school students to write.

Results of Study

The study has come to a number of finding. The most important findings can be briefed as follow:

1. Middle school students were motivated to write for school when teachers, classrooms, and tasks provided connections, support, autonomy, and real reasons for writing.
2. Middle school writing instruction is to be developmentally appropriate and reflect the true nature of writing in order to be motivating.
3. Participants agree that the following topics, conditions, and characteristics motivated them to write:
 - being able to relate or connect to a writing topic
 - perceived difficulty of the task
 - establishing enough background information to write with
 - parental involvement with school writing
 - useful writing tasks
 - free writing and freedom
 - time to write
 - interaction with peers
 - authentic writing purposes
 - teacher feedback
 - the level of challenge involved in a writing task

- choice
- opportunities to write in class
- writing based on a model
- creative writing assignments

2.2.4. Al Asmari, A. (2013). Investigation of Writing Strategies, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Achievement among Saudi EFL-Major Students, Research Paper, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

This study, though, it is a research paper; the researcher has found it of great importance and value particularly in terms of literature, methodology and data analysis.

Aims of Study

The study aims to:

1. investigate the use of writing strategies in reducing writing apprehension and uncovering its effect on EFL students' writing achievement.
2. explore association between foreign language apprehension, writing achievement and writing strategies.
3. explore the relationship between writing strategies that EFL university students employ and writing apprehension
4. explore the relationship between writing strategies use and students' writing achievement

Tools

The qualitative and quantitative data for the research were collected from three sources:(1) a personal interview with each of the participants and (2) a short written response to four questions about writing, (3) participants' responses to a writing apprehension questionnaire.

The Findings of the Study

The study has come to a number of important findings. The most significant findings were:

1. Many EFL students suffer from anxiety when writing in English.
2. There are negative correlations between writing strategies and writing anxiety/apprehension
3. There are negative correlations between writing achievement and writing apprehension.
4. There are positive relationships between the writing achievement and writing strategies.
5. Most participants were found to have low awareness of writing strategies.
6. Students' apprehension badly affected their use of strategies and their writing achievement.

2.2.5.Willich, K.(2011).The Analytical Writing Program: An Objective Teaching and Learning Model for Academic Writing in Secondary Learning Environments,PhD, Capella University, USA

Aims of Study

The main purpose of this quantitative study was to determine to what extent the Analytical Writing Program favourably impacts the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and behaviours of teachers and students in the teaching and learning of academic writing at Mater Dei High School.

Tools

To collect data, the researcher designed a questionnaire for teachers and a separate questionnaire for students.

Results of Study

The study has come to a number of findings. The most significant findings can be briefed as follow:

1. The Analytical Writing Program aligns teachers in classroom instruction and teacher pedagogy for the teaching and learning of academic writing.
2. The Analytical Writing Program helped students at Mater Dei to learn, improve, and build confidence in the learning of academic writing.
3. The Analytical Writing Program diffuses the inter-subjectivity between teachers and their students regarding effective writing criteria for academic compositions.

2.2.6.Kim, M.(2002). Process and Product: An Investigation of the Writing of Non-native Speakers of English on a Computer-based Academic English Writing Test, PhD, University of California

Aims of Study

This quantitative study aims to:

1. explore the components being measured in computer –based academic writing tests.
2. explore the processes and strategies test takers employ on computer-based tests

Tools

The data for this study were collected from multiple sources which included:

- (1) essay prompts used in testing sessions, (2) holistic and analytic rating scales to score test takers' essays, and (3) a questionnaire to gather information about test takers' perception about their writing behaviours.

Results of Study

The most significant findings of this study can be briefed as follow:

1. Topic development and Rhetorical organization are the main components that raters pay most attention to in their holistic ratings for academic writing.
2. Both the advanced and intermediate level test takers made similar types of textual changes during proofreading.
3. The advanced group produced longer texts than the intermediate group.
4. The L2 test takers employed a planning, writing, and proofreading process of writing in the given test setting.
5. The high performing group spent more time on planning, but less time on writing and proofreading than the low performing group

2.2.7. Qashoa, S. (2006). Motivation among Learners of English in the Secondary Schools in the Eastern Coast of the UAE, M Ed, the British University in Dubai

Aims of Study

This study aims to:

1. explore the UAE secondary school students' motivation for studying English
2. recognize the factors affecting the students' motivation towards learning English

Tools

Data for the research were collected from two sources:

1. A questionnaire for 100 students
2. Interviews with 20 students

Results of Study

The study has come to a number of findings. The most significant results could be briefed as follow:

1. Learners of English in the Eastern Coast of the UAE are instrumentally motivated.
2. Students feel demotivated because of some subject-related aspects such as vocabulary load and difficulties they encounter in mastering English structures and spelling.
3. Contrary to other studies in the field, the teacher of English is not perceived as the main demotivator for the UAE English learners.

2.3. Conclusion

2.3.1. Comments on the previous studies

1. Doubtless, these studies are a reconsider of experts and specialists' efforts in research. In fact, they provided the researcher with required and relevant information for the present study, particularly in designing data instrument and methodological procedures. Most importantly, the studies gave the researcher a good background of how data is analyzed and presented.

2. There are strong similarities between these studies and the present study as most investigate on academic writing processes in general.

3. However, there are differences between these studies and the present study. The first difference is that some of these studies were conducted at elementary level and others at university level, whereas, this study was conducted only at the secondary level. Secondly, some of these studies were confined in particular areas of writing processes, whereas, this study considered academic writing processes in general.

2.3.2. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the relevant literature of writing: what it is, why people write and what makes writing difficult. The chapter also reviews academic writing: what it is, the need to improve academic writing, different types of academic writing and what different activities writers practice before, while and after writing.

Characteristics of good and poor writers will be surveyed, as well as some factors that affect writing efficiency. At the end, the chapter provided a review of previous related studies and to what extent it helped the researcher in the present study.

2.3.3. Distinctive Features of Present Study

What Makes This Study Distinctive Compared with the Previous Studies

1. It is the first study to be conducted on the academic writing processes of third year secondary students in Sudan which represents a unique status.
2. This study touches a current issue-academic writing – and little research has been carried out so far, not only in Sudan but in the Arab world and that appears clearly in the rareness of published previous studies in Arab countries.
3. The circumstances of the researcher’s work in Qatar has given the researcher wide chances to attend seminars and workshops held on the relevant issue, in addition to the ability of surveying a number of websites which enrich the study with the latest recommendations and suggestions of study in the field.
4. The results of the study will be of great value to course designers and English teachers in Sudan, in particular for those who teach English writing.

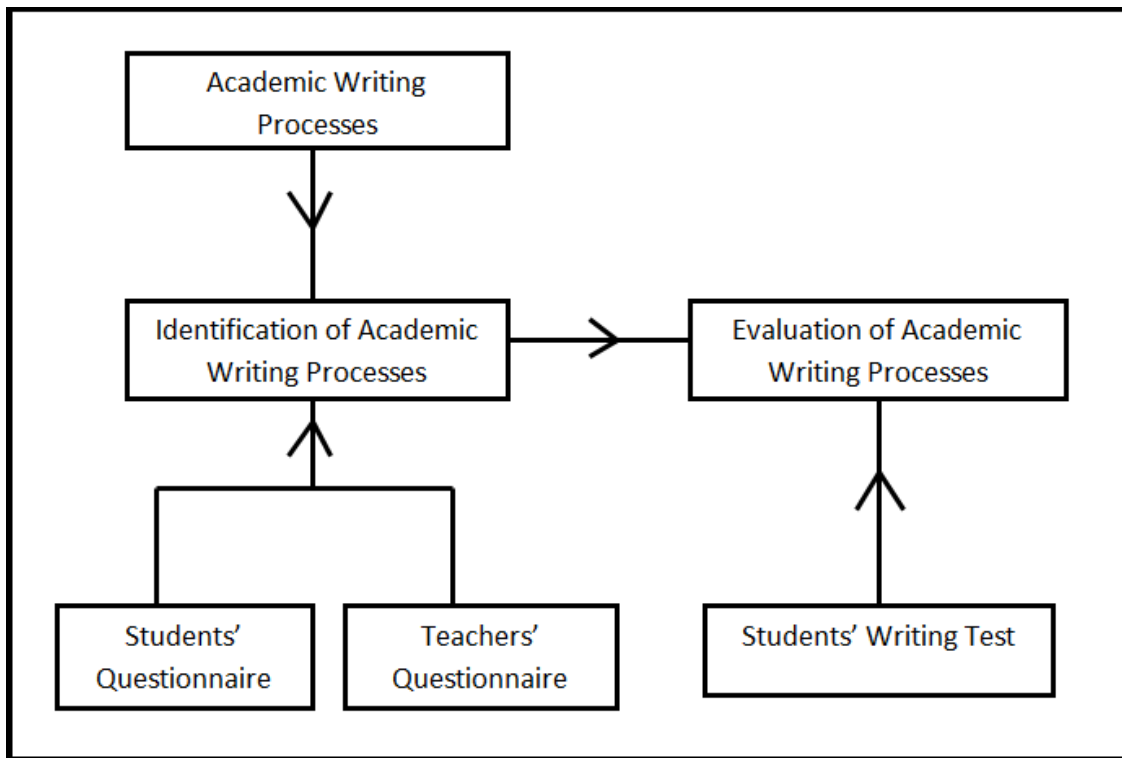
Chapter Three

Methodology and Procedures

3.1. Introduction:

This chapter describes the research design and the methodological steps and procedures that the researcher followed to carry out this study. In the beginning, the researcher will describe the target group of study: why choosing the secondary schools in Omdurman Locality and why choosing third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, in particular. Secondly, the chapter will describe the instruments the researcher used to carry out the study. To brief the research design of study, the researcher forms the diagram below.

Figure (1)
Research Design Chart of Study



3.2. The Target Group of Study:

The target group responses, in general, will be the elements upon which the researcher aims to generalize the results of study, and have

connection with the very study. For this study, the third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools at Omdurman Locality represent the target group of study.

3.2.1 Why Choosing Third Year Secondary Students:

The choice of third year secondary students has been made for different reasons.

1. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools are to be aware of the importance of the academic writing techniques.
2. As third year secondary students are approaching a new stage of education; they need to improve their academic writing techniques to write different tasks such as assignments, essays and reports which are different from the tasks they have done at secondary schools.
3. The researcher believes that by the end of secondary education students should have learned how to express clearly and directly what they mean as their success will be commonly judged through written assignments.

3.2.2 Why Choosing Third Year secondary Students at Omdurman Locality Schools as a Representative of Third Year Students in the Sudanese Secondary Schools

Milroy and Gordon (2003) along with many other scholars point out," the strength of the conclusions we can draw from the results obtained from a selected small group depends on how accurately the particular sample represents the larger population."(cited in Dornyei,Z.2007.96). Based on the this point of view, the researcher considers third year secondary students at Omdurman Locality government schools a good sample as they are very similar to third year secondary students in Sudan in their most general characteristics such as age, educational background, academic capability, social class and socioeconomic status. According to Dornyei(2007), "By

adopting appropriate sampling procedures to select a smaller number of people to be investigated, we can save a considerable amount of time, cost, and effort and can still come up with accurate results.”(p.96). Logistically, there are two main reasons that motivated the researcher to select Omdurman Locality schools. First, the researcher’s residence in Omdurman made him familiar with the location of most secondary schools nominated for carrying out the study. Secondly, and most importantly, ease of access to the schools, transport and communication facilities have all encouraged the researcher to choose these schools for carrying out the study.

Visiting and arranging with secondary schools administrations has gone through long and complicated procedures. In the beginning, the researcher had to meet the Director of Secondary Education at Omdurman Locality. After introducing himself, the researcher showed the director the letter of registration issued by Sudan University of Science and Technology (See appendix 1). Being briefed about the study and its significance, the director of secondary education highly welcomed the idea. For the sake of formalities, and to carry out such a study, the director asked the researcher to get a letter of approval from the Directorate of Statistics and Planning at the Ministry of Education of Khartoum State. At her office in Khartoum North, the researcher met the director of Planning and Statistics. Again, after introducing himself and presenting the letter of registration issued by the university, the researcher briefed the director about the study and its significance in teaching English writing at secondary schools. After going through the aims of study and the tools designed for carrying out the study, the director of Planning highly praised the significance of study as most students at secondary schools need to improve their writing techniques. Accordingly, the Director of Planning and Statistics approved the tools of

study and addressed the Director of Secondary Education at Omdurman Locality requesting him to cooperate with the researcher.(See appendix 2). Finally, the researcher had to take back the letter of approval to the Director of Secondary Education at Omdurman Locality who, on his part, addressed the administrations of secondary schools in his locality requesting them to cooperate with the researcher and help him administer the study tools in the schools nominated for carrying out the study.(See appendix 3).

Before leaving the office of the director of secondary education at Omdurman Locality, the researcher had collected the most important, statistical information about the locality secondary schools needed for the present study such as: the number of boys and girls schools, the number of students at third secondary, the number of teachers of English who teach third secondary and the locations of schools. The researcher highly appreciated the role of the director of education and thanked him for his cooperation.

To choose samples from the list of boys and girls schools given, the researcher considered some features and characteristics such as schools location and number of students, as well as social and economic status of students.

There are some points and facts to be mentioned about the schools selected for carrying out the present study:

1. All the boys and girls secondary schools selected are government schools. The researcher excluded the private schools as most people believe that only students who come from high social class join these schools.
2. Schools chosen are located in different areas in Omdurman that represent different social and cultural sectors of students for the sake of diversity.

Below is the list of secondary schools selected by the researcher for carrying out the present study:

Boys' Secondary Schools:

1. AL-Mutamar Secondary School
2. Mohammed Hussein Secondary School
3. WadiSaidna Secondary School
4. Abu Sid Secondary School
5. Bait AL-Mal Secondary School
6. Omdurman AL-Ahliya Secondary School
7. AL-DawHajouj Secondary School

Girls' Secondary Schools:

1. Omdurman Government School
2. Abu Anja Secondary School
3. HajaMadina Secondary School
4. AL-DawHajouj Secondary School
5. AsmaAbdulraheem Secondary School
6. Ali AL-Sayed Secondary School
7. AL-Mulazmeen Secondary School

3.3. The Study Instruments:

The data for this study was collected by using three instruments in order for the problem to be looked at from a variety of angles. These instruments are: a questionnaire for third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, and a questionnaire for teachers of English of third year secondary students, and a writing test for third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools.

3.4. The Use of Multiple Methods:

This study, therefore, uses multiple methods to generate answers to the research questions. The main reasons for the use of multiple methods are stated in Tindall (1996, 147) “All methods have their limitations, their own validity threats and distortions. A danger of using only one method is that the findings may merely be an artifact of the method.” Golby (1994, 11) agreed that, “Methods should be dictated by the need to understand, not selected on doctrinal grounds.” This allows for the information gathered through one method to be compared with that collected using alternative methods, so that weakness in a particular method can be overcome by the use of others.

3.5. The Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was one of the main procedures that the researcher used to collect data from students and teachers. Richards, J. et al (1986) define questionnaire as, “a series of questions designed to collect statistical information”. Al – Dabous, J.(2003, 780) defines a questionnaire as, “printed form containing structured questions that are either pre-coded or leave space for an answer to be written.” The advantages of using questionnaires according to Micheal (1990) are that : they are inexpensive , wide ranging , can be distributed and collected in a short time , can be simple and clear and the information can easily be interpreted and analysed .Despite all the above argument in favour of questionnaires, the researcher was aware of some shortcomings and disadvantages of such a method. For instance, a structured questionnaire limits the participants' choice of answers, therefore limiting the depth and richness of the information. To minimize this shortcoming, the researcher included some open-ended questions in students' questionnaire “to allow respondents to feel that they can contribute

more individual points of view and detailed information than is elicited in closed questions” (Mc Donough et.al 1997.176).

3.6. Students' Questionnaire:

The aims:

The researcher designed this questionnaire to help get answers to the questions that represent the aims of the study. The aims of the students' questionnaire can be briefed as follow:

1. Finding out what writing techniques third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use *before*, *during* and *after* writing, and to what extent they are aware of these techniques
2. Finding out how students use these techniques to write compositions
3. Finding out what writing difficulties students usually have
4. Finding out some individual differences between students related to writing strategies such as motivation, social and cultural factors

3.6.1. Designing the Students' Questionnaire:

The researcher designed close / open - ended questions to get specific information from participants. To design such a questionnaire, the researcher first planned an initial design based on the use of relevant literature and dissertations related to the field. In addition, the researcher used his own experience of teaching third year students' textbook when it was first published in 1997. The questions were formed in such a way to find answers to the questions of study following this order: pre-writing, during writing and after writing techniques (Hedge, T.2005), in addition to considering some individual differences among students (Skehan, P. 1989, Guthrie, J.T, 1997). Based on the principle above, the researcher designed a questionnaire for students. It consists of twenty three questions. Each question is meant to

deal with a specific writing technique, organization or consider an individual difference. (See the unmodified version, appendix: 4).

The initial version of students' questionnaire mainly consists of two sections. The front page of the questionnaire is an introductory section which explains the aims of the questionnaire and indicates the importance of students' opinions. Students are also assured that their answers will be highly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Section One contains two pieces of information about informants' age and gender. In Section Two of the questionnaire, the researcher formed twenty three questions to investigate the following items:

Question 1: This questions aims to find out what students should do before beginning to write.

Question 2: The aim of this question is to find out what students should do after choosing a topic. In other words, should students start writing immediately after choosing a topic or gather ideas first?

Question 3: This question aims to find out whether students are familiar with some prewriting techniques, particularly, freewriting.

Question 4: This questions aims to find out if students are aware of the importance of freewriting as a technique that can help writers improve fluency writing.

Question 5: This question aims to find out how often students state a purpose of writing before beginning to write. Doubtless, stating a purpose of writing is important in the writing process as it influences the choice of organization and the choice of language (Hedge, T.2005).

Question 6: The question aims to find out whether students consider or think about the eventual reader or readers of their writing. In fact," thinking about

the reader helps the writer to select what to say and how to present it in the most appropriate style.” (Hedge, T.2005:52).

Question 7: The question investigates how often students give a title for their article or composition. The researcher aims to remind students to have a title for their article as it gives the reader an idea about the topic.

Question 8: This question aims to find out what writers should focus on when they practice journal writing which is a type of prewriting techniques in which writers mainly concentrate on content.

Question 9: This question aims to find out whether students practice pair and group writing in class as, "Brainstorming a topic in group discussion produces lots of ideas from which students have to select the most effective and appropriate.”(Hedge, T.2005.13)

Question 10: This question aims to find out whether students are aware of the importance of an introduction in writing as it excites the reader.

Question 11: This question aims to investigate students’ awareness of paragraph structure, particularly, the topic sentence which is the most important sentence in a paragraph as it briefly indicates what the paragraph is going to discuss(Oshima and Houge, 2006).

Question 12: This question aims to find out whether students focus on the correct use of conventions in writing.

Questions 13: This question aims to find out if students use numbers and percentages in writing to give an accurate account of a situation (Bailey, 2011)

Question 14: This question aims to draw students’ attention to persuasive writing as it is considered a popular kind of essay question. Persuasive writing forces students to think on their own, take a stand on an issue,

support their stand with solid reasons, and support their reasons with solid evidence (Oshima and Houge, 2006).

Question 15: This question is designed to find out whether students can identify the main sentences in a paragraph and which sentence is used to end up a paragraph.

Question 16: This question is related to question 15. It aims to remind students of the importance of a conclusion in writing as it summarizes the main points of the article.

Question 17: This question aims to find out what students do to edit their writing. It draws students' attention to the importance editing in the writing process.

Question 18: This question aims to draw students' attention to peer editing. The researcher designed this question to make students aware of this new technique and its role in the process writing. According to Oshima and Houge(2006)," A peer editor is a classmate who reads your paper and helps you improve the content and organization." (p.18)

Question 19: This question is designed to discuss an important part of the writing process, which is feedback and whether students make use of their teachers' feedback to improve their writing. Hedge (2005) believes that feedback is part of the process of writing and a genuine source of learning.

Question 20: This question aims to find out whether students revise the content of their topics and make sure that it is relevant to the question of writing.

Question 21: This question is designed to find out who students get help from when faced by some difficulties in writing.

Question 22: This question aims to find out how students feel as they approach writing in English. In other words, to what extent students are

motivated to write in English. Madylus(2006) believes that motivation is the key to effective learning.

Question 23: This question aims to find out students' opinions about writing, and whether they think it is easier or more difficult than reading.

3.6.2. Piloting for Reliability and Validity:

For the sake of questionnaire reliability, piloting took place with the help and advice of senior experts and highly qualified staff in the field of ELT. The team consisted of:

1. Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed (Sudan University of Science and Technology)
2. Dr. Ali Ahmed Hussein (Qatar University)
3. Dr. Abdulla Ibrahim Ali (Evaluation Specialist, Supreme Education Council, Doha)

In the light of the valuable comments and ideas, and as suggested and directed by the team of experts, the researcher reformed the students' questionnaire after modifying some techniques and omitting three questions to avoid ambiguity and repetition. (See the modified piloted version, appendix: 5).

3.6.3. Procedure:

In order to carry out the students' questionnaire, the researcher had to make contacts with the administrations of the selected boys' and girls' secondary schools in Omdurman Locality. In the beginning, the researcher introduced himself and presented the letter from the Director of Secondary Education to the administrations of secondary schools. Being briefed about the study and its significance, all headmasters and headmistresses of the secondary schools selected highly welcomed the idea and encouraged carrying out such a study in their schools. Then the researcher met with his

colleagues, the teachers of English at the meant schools and explained to them the importance of the study and the role they were expected to play. They all promised to give the utmost help and support.

Later, and after arrangement and coordination with the administrations of the schools, in the period from 27/01/2014 to 05/02/2014, and under the researcher's own supervision, the questionnaire was carried with third year secondary students. (See appendix: 6). 532 participants took part in the questionnaire classified as follows: 263 male students and 261 female students.

Before asking students to answer the questions of the questionnaire, the researcher introduced himself and why he was there. Then the researcher gave general instructions to participants verbally. Students were given an idea about the type of the job they were supposed to do. They were also briefed about the study and their role in participating in it. Students were ensured that their answers would be highly confidential and would only be used for study purposes. It was pleasing that all participants were responsive and enthusiastic to take part in the questionnaire.

Not only so, but in all selected schools where the students' questionnaire was administered, headmasters and headmistresses expressed their happiness and satisfaction of having their students taking part in such study. In addition, and by the end of administering the questionnaire, in many schools visited, teachers of English asked the researcher to give their students more hints of writing techniques that students really need. During the process of administering the students' questionnaire, the researcher realized the need of carrying out such a study as many students asked the researcher for his mobile number to contact him later.

Worth to be mentioned, due to effective piloting, the questionnaire went smoothly with no difficulties or complaints raised by participants. To obtain clear and precise information, the researcher provided students with a translated Arabic version of the questionnaire. That, on its part, played a positive role on students' participation and resulted in effective performance. (See appendix 7)

3.6.4. Timing:

As stated earlier, the students' questionnaire was administered during the period from 27/01/2014 to 05/02/2014. In fact, the administration could have been done before that, but to avoid affecting schools schedule and teachers' plans to complete their syllabus, the researcher chose that period for two reasons. First, that period coincided with the researcher's end of first semester vacation in Qatar. Secondly, and most importantly, by that time most students would have completed their school syllabus. So, taking part in the questionnaire would provide them with more writing techniques that would definitely help them in their coming secondary certificate examinations. The researcher believes that was a really convenient time as most students had little loads and stress.

3.7. Teachers' Questionnaire:

Third year teachers of English are usually considered to be directors and trainers for students. They are supposed to lead and direct students to effective writing techniques. As such, it was deemed appropriate to form a questionnaire for third year teachers of English for the following reasons:

1. Teachers represent a 'corner stone' of the learning process in general.
2. Teachers' awareness of the effective academic writing processes would definitely lead to good teaching and training of their students.

The justification for using a teachers' questionnaire in the present study was to find out to what extent English teachers are aware of the common academic writing processes because their awareness would enable them to teach their students how to write in English.

3.7.1. The Aims of the Teachers' Questionnaire:

The aims of the teachers' questionnaire can be briefed as follow:

1. To find out what teachers of English language in the Sudanese secondary schools do to activate and motivate their students write a text
2. To find out what writing techniques and activities teachers of English language in the Sudanese secondary schools use and train their students to use *before, during* and *after* writing
3. To find out what teachers of English language in the Sudanese secondary schools do to improve students' writing speed
4. To find out what teachers of English language in the Sudanese secondary schools do to help poor writers improve their writing techniques

3.7.2. Designing the Teachers' Questionnaire:

There are certain characteristics for an ideal questionnaire. According to Davison (1970, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994. 93) in order for the questionnaire to be an ideal it must be:

clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable . Its design must minimize potential errors from respondents. And since people's participation in survey is voluntary, a questionnaire has to help in engaging their interest, encouraging their co-operation, and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 93) added that " ambiguity, complex questions, questions with negatives need to be avoided".

Bearing these types of questions in mind, the researcher formed a combined questionnaire of close / open - ended questions to get more

information from participants. The researcher used this method as a means of finding out what kind of interactions go on between teachers and students during a writing lesson. The initial design consisted of two sections which aimed to find out what academic writing techniques and activities that teachers use in the classroom. (See the unmodified copy, appendix: 8).

To design such a questionnaire, the researcher made use of the relevant literature and similar studies. In addition, the researcher used his own experience in ELT that lasted for nearly thirty years.

The initial version of the teachers' questionnaire was designed of eleven questions. Each question was meant to investigate a specific point as follow:

Question 1: This question aims to find out whether teachers of English are aware of the main steps of the academic writing process. Being aware of the writing techniques, teachers can play a support role during the early stages of the composition process. In addition, planning activities structured by teachers can help students to develop a sense of direction in their writing (Hedge, 2010).

Question 2: This question aims to find out what activities teachers ask their students to practice to gather ideas about a topic.

Question 3: This question aims to find out what activities teachers use to get all students engaged in class writing. Doubtless, group brainstorming and in-class writing of first drafts are especially helpful in the early stages of writing. (Oshima&Houge, 2006)

Question 4: This question investigates what items teachers ask students to focus on in the organizing stage of academic writing. Again, teachers' awareness of crafting skills will enable them to train their students use the skills effectively.

Question 5: This question aims to find out how teachers help students to build a well-organized paragraph. Teachers' awareness of the elements of a good paragraph will enable them to help students write a well-organized paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence.

Question6: This question aims to draw teachers' attention to an important technique in academic writing, which is writing the first draft and whether to be written in class or outside. According to Houge, "First draft should be done in class as the teacher is available for immediate help and consultation." (2008.9)

Question7: This question aims to find out what items teachers ask students to focus on when editing their writing. To edit a text, teachers can draw students' attention to work on the smaller issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics (Oshima and Houge, 2006).

Question 8: This question aims to find out what items that teachers ask their students to check in the revising stage of writing. To many people, revising might seem as the same as editing. However, (Oshima and Houge, 2006) distinguish between editing and revising. In the revising stage, students check the big issues of content and organization. In other words, students revise for audience, for purpose and for the form.

Question 9: This question aims to find out how teachers get their students check their writing before handing it in to be graded.

Question 10: This question aims to find out what items teachers usually comment on or draw students' attention to when giving students feedback on their writing. As writing requires a lot of conscious effort from students, they expect feedback and can become discouraged if it is not forthcoming.

Teachers' feedback can help students to develop the strategies of good writers (Hedge, 2010).

Question 11: This question aims to find out teachers' awareness of the importance of journal writing and to what extent it can help students improve their academic writing.

3.7.3. Piloting:

For questionnaire reliability, piloting took place again with the same team who gratefully did piloting for all research methods. Their feedback, comments and ideas were clear and valuable. On the basis of experts' ideas and suggestions, the researcher did fundamental and necessary changes. Instead of asking teachers to answer the questions of the questionnaire in writing, which might seem like a test, and to encourage teachers to take part in the study, the researcher provided options from which participants can choose answers. (See the modified piloted version, appendix: 9).

3.7.4. Procedure:

In fact, the process of administering the teachers' questionnaire was not that difficult. In the beginning, the researcher met with his colleagues, English teachers of third secondary who teach in the same schools selected for carrying out the present study. The researcher briefed his colleagues about the study and its significance in teaching the writing skill in secondary schools, in particular third secondary. The researcher pointed out the importance of teachers' participation in the study as they work in the field. All teachers welcomed the idea and promised to help. The researcher went through the questions of the questionnaire and answered teachers' enquiries about some points dealing with academic writing techniques. As not all English teachers were present at schools due to their schedule, the researcher asked the heads of English departments in these schools to brief their

colleagues and help them complete the questionnaire. The process of distributing the teachers' questionnaire took place in accordance with students' questionnaire. The stage of collecting back the completed questionnaires caused the researcher some trouble due to transport factor, in addition to teachers' time and work circumstances which made it difficult to find all teachers available at schools. About fifty third year teachers of English participated in the study. They were all responsive. The results of the questionnaire, which are important, would be discussed later in chapter five.

3.7.5. Timing:

The teachers' questionnaire was carried out during the same period of administering students' questionnaire. As it was mentioned earlier, the process took about two weeks from 27/01/ 2014 to 06/02/2014.

3.8. A Writing Test for Third Year Secondary Students:

A writing test was used as one of the most important methods to collect data for the study. The justification for using such a test in the study was the need to know how effectively third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools implemented their academic writing techniques to write an essay following the instructions and plan given.

3.8.1. Test Definition:

Al-Dabous (2003. 1038) defines the test generally as, "any means by which the absence or presence or amount or nature of some quality or ability in a student can be observed, or inferred, and appraised or even measured."

Specifically, Thompson defines a test in educational terms as, "a procedure that is designed to get participants to show certain kinds of behaviour e.g. the ability to read and extract information from a text" (2003. 6).

3.8.2. The Need for Tests in General:

Generally speaking, there are imperatives that create the need for tests at the personal level, the social level, and at the educational level, the element which concerns us. But why writing tests are used? Hughes stated that “the best way to test people’s writing ability is to get them to write” (1989. 75). Weigle(2002) argues that as the role of writing in second-language increases, there is an ever greater demand for valid and reliable ways to test writing ability, both for classroom use and as a predictor of future professional or academic success. In teaching terms, Thompson stated that" tests provide teachers with tools to measure their pupils' achievement of course objectives, to assess pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to help plan future work.” (2003.7).

3.8.3. The Aims of Using a Writing Test in the Present Study:

As students' awareness of academic writing techniques was investigated through a questionnaire, earlier presented in this chapter, a writing test was used to fulfill the following purposes:

1. to evaluate students' awareness of writing techniques into practice
2. to evaluate the relationship between writing techniques and writing outcomes
3. to evaluate whether students implemented their writing strategies successfully or unsuccessfully

3.8.4. Characteristics of Good Tests:

To form a good test, the designer of a test should have established the general purpose of his test beforehand. Having established the general purpose, according to Pumfrey, there are three dimensions that must be considered if the teacher is to select a test which will provide the information he or she requires. These dimensions as stated by Pumfrey, “Firstly, which of the goals does the test claim to measure? Secondly, from what source is

the information collected? Thirdly, to what use will the information collected be put? "(1985.9).

Having considered the three dimensions stated, it is important for a teacher or test designers to understand certain characteristics of tests. According to Pumfrey:

“The three most important characteristics of any test are: validity, reliability and practicability. The validity of a test indicates the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure. Its reliability describes the degree to which the instrument produces consistent results. Its practicability is concerned with the extent to which a particular instrument is of use to the teacher in his or her particular situation.” (1985.19).

In order for the test to be satisfactory, Thompson added a fourth characteristic: utility. According to Thompson, “a good language test is that purposeful and useful. Tests that have utility can supply teachers and pupils with useful feedback and can help improve future learning.” (2003.11). Bachman and Palmer (1996.17) maintain that “the most important consideration in designing and developing a language test is the use for which it is intended, so that the most important quality of a test is its usefulness.”

3.8.5. Designing the Writing Test for the Present Study:

White (1994) notes that most test developers consider at least the following four minimum requirements for writing tasks: clarity, validity, reliability, and interest.

To develop a test of interest, according to White, the task must be interesting, both to the writers and to the readers. Having considered the dimensions, requirements and characteristics of a good writing test in mind, the researcher designed a writing test for third year secondary students in which students were asked to write a persuasive essay about the advantages

and disadvantages of the Internet. To design such a test, the researcher made help of relevant studies in the field, ideas of experts and specialists in the field of ELT and used his own experience of EL teaching at different levels. Bearing in mind that “a good test should be easy to operate in the situation in which it is used.” (Thompson, 2003: 10), in addition to schools timetable and the need of time for both teachers of English and students, the researcher developed a forty five- minute test. To choose a writing topic for third year secondary students, the researcher thought of a subject that would nearly get most students engaged in the task, and would have something to say about. Moreover, the choice of the topic is to be relevant for the purposes of the test. To far extent, the choice of the topic about the Internet fulfilled the researcher’s expectations as most students are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet and have their own different points of view about it. (See the unmodified version, appendix: 10).

3.8.6 Why Choosing the Area of Persuasive Writing for the Test:

As it was difficult to test all different types of academic writing, the researcher thought of a popular area of academic writing in which students could express their own point of view. The choice of persuasive writing, to high extent, met the researcher’s expectations as this type of writing forces students to think on their own,"take a stand on an issue, support their stand with solid reasons, and support their answers with solid evidence.”(Oshima, A, 2006.142)

3.8.7. Piloting:

Doubtless, piloting is an important step in designing and writing a valid, reliable and useful test. Piloting for this test took place with the same team of experts and specialists who did piloting for the study. In addition, valuable ideas and comments of third year teachers of English were taken

into consideration. On the basis of the rich feedback and valuable comments and recommendations of the piloting team, the researcher provided students with a plan and a set of instructions. This modification was adopted to find out whether students are used to have instructions to follow and a plan to fill in before writing. In addition, having a plan for writing will help the researcher to find out whether students focus only on the text or whether they consider the process, the issue which the present study focuses on. (See the modified version appendix : 11)

3.8.8 Procedure:

The administration of the writing test turned out to be an easy task for the researcher. In fact, it took less effort and coordination as schools' administrations and participants were already informed that the students' questionnaire would be followed by a writing test. About 526 students took part in the writing test. They were the same subjects who did the questionnaire: 261 male students and 265 female students. All students did the test under the researcher's own supervision (see appendix: 12). As a reminder, general instructions were given to participants verbally. They were briefed about the purpose of the test. They were also assured that their answers would be highly confidential and would only be used for study purposes. The researcher emphasised that participants should write a persuasive essay independently, on their own. The researcher stressed that not taking the job seriously, could lead to false results and would in no way serve the purpose of study topic. Being briefed about their job, ensured about confidentiality of their answers, all students showed great pleasure to take part. Participants were then reminded of the time allocated for the test. Then the researcher distributed the test sheets among students. Before asking students to write, the researcher went through the writing prompt making

sure that students understand the prompt and the type of writing. Then, the researcher went through the instructions given. For Bachman and Palmer(1996:181), “ well-written instructions make it clear to the candidate exactly what is being asked of them by the test procedure and task, the nature of their expected response and in some cases how this will be rated.”. Students were informed to fill in the plan in five minutes before beginning to write. This time, unlike with answering the questionnaire, to many students the task of writing on their own seemed difficult and unpleasant. The researcher felt a sense of demotivation among many students who started asking about how long the essay should be, and the number of words they should write. To calm students down and to motivate them, the researcher reminded students not to worry about the quality of writing. The researcher also reminded students that the grades of this test would definitely not affect their results of the coming secondary certificate exams. Given some confidence tips and raising their motivation, students started writing. Meanwhile, the researcher went round observing students’ behaviour, the way they plan and organize their writing and whether they started by filling in the plan given or writing immediately without having a plan. After thirty minutes, students started giving back their written work. The researcher checked the sheets as they were given, primarily for any unanswered questions. Worth mentioning again, due to productive piloting, the writing test was carried out smoothly without any difficulties regarding designing, content and procedures. The results of the students’ writing test, which are important, will be discussed later in chapter five.

3.8.9. Timing:

The researcher intended to administer the writing test after administration of the students' and teachers' questionnaires. The purpose of this step was to consider any areas of weakness that appeared in the results of students' questionnaire, in particular. The test was carried out during the period from 27/01/2014 to 06/02/2014 (See appendix: 11). In fact, the researcher specified this time for carrying out the writing test for two reasons. Firstly, by that time third year students were about or almost finished their writing lessons in the syllabus. Thus, their writing techniques were supposed to be fostered. Secondly, after doing the questionnaire, students had become aware, or at least had some helpful ideas about academic writing techniques which they lacked before. Worth to be mentioned that the process of designing the study tools, piloting, editing and writing the final drafts took about six months.

3.9. Analysis of Data:

To analyse data collected through questionnaires, the researcher used a descriptive, analytical and computer-based statistical method. First, the researcher put the information collected in form of numbers (1- 4). Then, a special statistical programme **SPSS** (Statistical **P**ackage for **S**ocial **S**cience) was prepared. Relevant variables and definitions were provided. Then the data was entered by the researcher with help of a specialist in statistical methods. Percentage method was also used to quantify and analyse data, in addition to T-test and correlational analysis. To analyse the results of the writing test, the researcher adopted Jacobs et al.'s(1981) Analytic Scoring Scale in which scripts are rated on five aspects of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics(See appendix: 13).

3.10. Some Research Problems That Faced the Researcher:

1. The high cost of English reference books compared with Arabic references
2. The high cost of transport while administration of study tools that made the researcher rent a car in order to save time, reach schools early morning and avoid traffic congestion
3. Rareness of similar studies in Arab countries, consequently, the researcher had to surf the internet intensively to find similar studies

Chapter Four

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction:

This study tried to answer five main questions: First, what writing processes do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools currently use? Second, to what extent do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use effective writing techniques, and what factors affect their writing efficiency? Third, is there any relationship between students' awareness of their writing processes and the writing outcomes? Fourth, are there any differences between male and female students in using academic writing processes and in writing outcomes? Fifth, to what extent are teachers of English of third year secondary schools in Sudan aware of the most common academic writing processes?

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of these five questions and the discussion of these results.

4.2. Section one: Results of Study

4.2.1. Results of Question One

“What academic writing processes do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools currently use?”

To answer this question, the researcher analysed the answers of students' questionnaire. The results of analysis show that third year secondary students in Sudan currently use the following academic writing processes.

Pre-writing Processes:

1. Brainstorming

About 11.8% of students use brainstorming strategy to gather ideas about a composition (see table 1.1).

2. Freewriting

25.9% of students think that freewriting can help them improve their writing fluency (see table 1.2).

3. Stating a Purpose of Writing

24.8% of students state a purpose of writing before they start writing a composition (see table 1.3).

4. Considering an audience

19.8% of students consider their audiences when they write a piece of composition (see table 1.4).

5. Style: Word Choice

25% of students choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write a composition (see table 1.5).

6. Collaborative Writing (Pair and Group Work)

4.3 % of students practice pair and group discussions in class (see table 1.6)

Planning

7.8% of students make a plan for writing a composition after gathering ideas about the topic of writing (see table 1.7)

Drafting

31.8% of students write their first draft of composition (see table 1.8).

Organization

1. Introduction

17.9% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to excite the reader (see table 1.9).

2. Paragraph Structure

a. The Topic Sentence:

57.9% of students think that the topic sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph (see table 1.10).

b. The Concluding Sentence:

29.5% of students use a concluding sentence to end up a paragraph (see table 1.11).

Conventions: Mechanics

47.7% of students focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition (see table 1.12).

Conventions: Language Use

32.9% of students focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition (see table 1.13).

a. Revising Form:

26.4% of students check that both the positive and negative features of a topic are discussed equally (see table 1.14).

b. Revising Content:

18.4% of students check that the content of their composition is relevant to the question of writing (see table 1.15).

Editing

9.6% of students use peer editing when they end up writing their composition (see table 1.16).

Feedback

20.2% of students review their writing mistakes making use of their teachers' feedback (see table 1.17).

Table (1)

Analysis of Third Year Secondary Students' Awareness and Use of Academic Writing Processes

The tables below present results of the analysis of students' questionnaire for each question.

Table 1.1
Question 1. Pre-writing: Brainstorming

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	354	66.5
	2.00	82	15.4
	3.00	63	11.8
	4.00	33	6.2
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.1 shows that:

66.5% of students can gather ideas about a composition by editing ideas.
15.4% of students can gather ideas about a composition by organizing ideas.
11.8% of students can gather ideas about a composition by brainstorming ideas.
6.2% of students can gather ideas about a composition by writing the first draft.

Table 1.2
Q.4. Pre-writing: Freewriting

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	2	.4
	1.00	121	22.7
	2.00	168	31.6
	3.00	103	19.4
	4.00	138	25.9
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.2 shows that:

22.7% of students think that freewriting can improve their organization.
31.6% of students think that freewriting can improve their grammar.
19.4% of students think that freewriting can improve their cohesion.
25.9% of students think that freewriting can improve their writing fluency.

Table 1.3

Q.5. Pre-writing: Stating a Purpose of Writing

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	256	48.2
	2.00	65	13.2
	3.00	79	14.8
	4.00	132	24.8
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.3 shows that:

48.2% of students never state a purpose of writing before they start.

13.2% of students sometimes state a purpose of writing before they start.

14.8% of students often state a purpose of writing before they start.

24.8% of students always state a purpose of writing before they start.

Table 1.4

Q.6. Pre-writing: Considering an Audience

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	224	42.2
	2.00	111	20.7
	3.00	92	17.3
	4.00	105	19.8
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.4 shows that:

42.2% of students never consider an audience when they write a composition.

20.7% of students sometimes consider an audience when they write a composition.

17.3% of students often consider an audience when they write a composition.

19.8% of students always consider an audience when they write a composition.

Table 1.5

Q.7. Pre-writing: Style(Word Choice)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	235	44.4
	2.00	93	17.3
	3.00	71	13.3
	4.00	133	25.0
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.5 shows that:

44.4% of students never choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write a composition.

17.3% of students sometimes choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write a composition.

13.3% of students often choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write a composition.

25% of students always choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write a composition.

Table 1.6

Q.8. Pre-writing: Collaborative Writing

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	343	64.5
	2.00	79	15.0
	3.00	85	16.0
	4.00	23	4.3
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.6 shows that:

64.5% of students never practice pair and group writing.

15.0% of students sometimes practice pair and group writing.

16% of students often practice pair and group writing.

4.3% of students always practice pair and group writing.

Table 1.7

Q.2. Planning

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	64	12.3
	2.00	78	14.7
	3.00	328	62.2
	4.00	62	11.8
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.7 shows that:

12.3% of students write their first draft after gathering ideas about their composition.

14.7% of students write their first paragraph after gathering ideas about their composition.

62.2 % of students start writing their composition after gathering ideas.

11.8% of students make a plan for their composition after gathering ideas.

Table 1.8

Q.3. Drafting

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	169	31.8
	2.00	102	19.2
	3.00	12	2.3
	4.00	248	46.6
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.8 shows that:

31.8% of students write their first draft after making their plan.

19.2% of students write their first paragraph after making a plan.

2.3% of students write a title for their composition after making a plan.

46.6% of students think about a writing style after making a plan.

Table 1.9

Q.9. Organization: Introduction

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	95	17.9
	2.00	29	5.5
	3.00	200	37.6
	4.00	207	38.9
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.9 shows that:

17.9% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to excite the reader.

5.5% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to summarize ideas.

37.6% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to give aims and methods.

38.9% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to state the purpose of writing.

Table 1.10

Q.10. Organization: Paragraph Development (The Topic Sentence)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	73	13.7
	2.00	78	14.7
	3.00	72	13.5
	4.00	308	57.9
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.10 shows that:

13.7% of students think a supporting sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph.

14.7% of students think a concluding sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph.

13.5% of students think an imperative sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph.

57.9% of students think the topic sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph.

Table 1.11

Q.13. Organization: Conclusion

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	35	6.6
	2.00	139	26.1
	3.00	334	62.8
	4.00	24	4.5
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.11 shows that:

6.6% of students use the topic sentence to end up their paragraph.

26.1% of students use a supporting sentence to end up their paragraph.

62.8% of students use a concluding sentence to end up their paragraph.

4.5% of students use an introductory sentence to end up their paragraph.

Table1.1

Q. 14. Conventions: Mechanics

Valid	.00	3	.6
	1.00	78	14.6
	2.00	94	17.7
	3.00	98	18.4
	4.00	259	48.7
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.12 shows that:

14.6% of students never focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition.

17.7% of students sometimes focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition.

18.4% of students often focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition.

48.7% of students always focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition.

Table 1.13

Q.11. Conventions: Grammar

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	1	.2
	1.00	57	10.7
	2.00	177	33.3
	3.00	122	22.9
	4.00	175	32.9
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.13 shows that:

10.7% of students never focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition.

33.3% of students sometimes focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition.

22.9 % of students often focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition.

32.9% of students always focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition.

Table 1.14

Q.12. Revising Form

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	211	39.8
	2.00	68	12.8
	3.00	78	14.7
	4.00	174	32.7
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.16 shows that:

39.8% of students never check that both the positive and negative features of a topic are discussed equally.

12.8% of students sometimes check that both the positive and negative features of a topic are discussed equally.

14.7% of students often check that both the positive and negative features of a topic are discussed equally.

32.7% of students always check that both the positive and negative features of a topic are discussed equally.

Table 1.15

Q.17. Revising Content

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	270	50.7
	2.00	33	6.2
	3.00	87	16.4
	4.00	142	26.7
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.17 shows that:
50.7% of students never check that their answer is relevant to the question of writing.
6.2% of students sometimes check that their answer is relevant to the question of writing.
16.4% of students often check that their answer is relevant to the question of writing.
26.7% of students always check that their answer is relevant to the question of writing.

Table 1.16

Q.15. Editing

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	354	66.5
	2.00	68	12.8
	3.00	59	11.1
	4.00	51	9.6
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.14 shows that:
66.5% of students never give their composition to someone else to read after they finish writing it.
12.8% of students sometimes give their composition to someone else to read after they finish writing it.
11.1% of students often give their composition to someone else to read after they finish writing it.
9.6% of students always give their composition to someone else to read after they finish writing it.

Table 1.17

Q.16. Feedback

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	286	53.8
	2.00	49	9.2
	3.00	89	16.8
	4.00	108	20.2
	Total	532	100.0

Table 1.15 shows that:

53.8% of students never review their writing mistakes after getting feedback from their teachers.

9.2% of students sometimes review their writing mistakes after getting feedback from their teachers.

16.8% of students often review their writing mistakes after getting feedback from their teachers.

20.2% of students always review their writing mistakes after getting feedback from their teachers.

Table (2)

Q.18. Dealing with Writing Blocks

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	.00	3	.6
	1.00	192	36.1
	2.00	91	17.1
	3.00	163	30.6
	4.00	83	15.6
	Total	532	100.0

Table 2 shows that:

36.1% of students ask their peers for help when they face difficulties in writing.

17.1% of students ask their parents for help when they face difficulties in writing.

30.6% of students ask their teachers for help when they face difficulties in writing.

15.6% of students do not ask for help when they face difficulties in writing.

Table (3)

Q.19. Students' Individual Differences in Writing

	Frequency	Percent

Valid	1.00	177	33.4
	2.00	149	28.0
	3.00	124	23.1
	4.00	82	15.5
	Total	532	100.0

Table 3 shows that:

33.4% of students suffer from writing apprehension as they prepare to write in English.

28.0% of students feel hesitated as they prepare to write in English.

23.1% of students feel bored as they prepare to write in English.

15.5% of students feel highly motivated to write in English.

Table (4)

Q.20. a. Comparing Writing to Reading in Terms of Difficulty

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	131	24.6
	2.00	398	74.8
Missing	0.00	3	00.6
Total		532	100.0

Table 4 shows that:

24.6% of students think that English writing is easier than reading.

74.8% of students think that English writing is more difficult than reading.

0.6% of students did not answer the question.

Table (5)

Q.20.b Students' Writing Problem Areas

Table 5 shows students' main problem areas in writing. Data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of students' answers to part two of question twenty of students' questionnaire.

Problem Area		
	No.	Percentage
Vocabulary	86	21.6 %
Grammar	66	16.5 %
Spelling	68	17.0 %
Idea Development	47	11.8 %
Lack of Practice	76	19.2%
More Effort	23	5.8 %
No Reasons	32	8.1%

4.2.2. Results of Question Two

“To what extent do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use effective writing techniques and what factors affect their writing efficiency?”

The table below presents students’ awareness of the most common academic writing techniques and to what extent they use these techniques. Data, figures and percentages are extracted from the analysis of students’ answers of the questionnaire.

Table (6)
Effective Writing Techniques

Technique	Q	Frequency	Percentage
1. Pre-writing			
a. Brainstorming	1	63	11.8%
b. Freewriting	4	138	25.9%
c. Stating a purpose for writing	5	132	24.8%
d. Considering an audience	6	105	19.8%
e. Style (word choice)	7	133	25.0%
f. Collaborative Writing	8	32	4.3 %
2. Planning	2	62	11.8%
3. Drafting	3	169	31.8%
4. Organization			
a. Introduction	9	95	17.9%
b. Paragraph structure	10	308	57.9%
c. Conclusion	13	334	62.8%
5. Conventions			
a. Mechanics	14	259	48.7%
b. Grammar	11	175	32.7%
6. Revising			
a. Form	12	174	32.7%
b. Content	17	210	39.5%
7. Editing	15	51	9.6%
8. Feedback	16	108	20.2%

Table (7)

Factors Affecting Students' Writing Efficiency

The table below presents some individual factors that affect students' writing efficiency. Data, figures and percentages are extracted from the analysis of students' answers of the questionnaire.

Factor	Q	Frequency	Percentage
Writing Apprehension	19	117	33.4 %
Lack of Confidence	19	149	28.0 %
Demotivation	19	124	23.1 %
Motivation	19	82	15.5%

4.2.3. Results of Question Three

"Is there any relationship between students' awareness of the main academic writing processes and the writing outcomes?"

The table below presents students' performance in the writing test. Data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of students' writing test which was scored according Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (see appendix 13). The scores 0 to 3 present:

- 0 presents poor performance
- 1 presents fair performance
- 2 present good performance
- 3 present excellent performance

Table (8)
Analysis of Students' Writing Test

Planning

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	497	94.5 %
1	20	3.8 %
2	9	1.7 %
3	0	0.0 %

Content

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	173	32.9 %
1	204	38.8 %
2	120	22.8 %
3	29	5.5 %

Organization

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	325	61.8 %
1	98	18.6 %
2	85	16.2 %
3	18	3.4 %

Vocabulary

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	312	59.3 %
1	104	19.8 %
2	93	17.7 %
3	17	3.2 %

Language Use

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	314	59.7 %
1	114	21.7 %
2	91	17.3 %
3	7	1.3 %

Mechanics

Grade	Frequency	Percent
0	224	42.6 %
1	164	31.2 %
2	104	19.8 %
3	34	6.5 %

To work out students' average performance in each feature of writing, the researcher used the average value of performance for each feature. The table below presents students' average performance in the writing test.

Table (9)
Students' Average Performance in the Writing Test

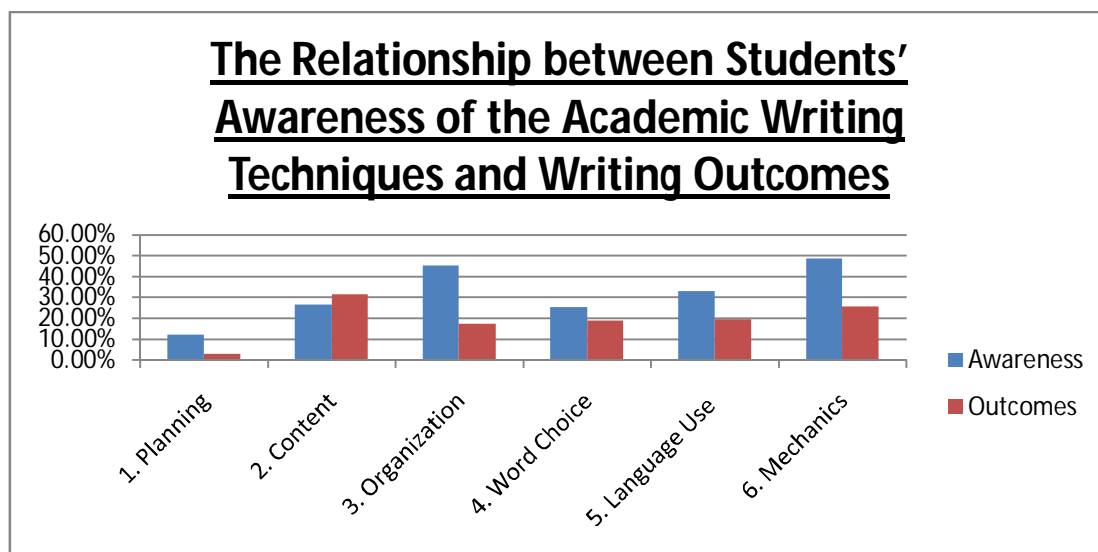
Writing Feature	Percentage
Planning	2.8%
Content	31.4%
Organization	17.4%
Vocabulary	18.8%
Language Use	19.5%
Mechanics	25.6%

To compare students' awareness of the writing techniques with students' performance in writing, the researcher considered features that can only be tested in writing. The table below presents average results of students' awareness of the academic writing techniques and writing outcomes. Data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of students' questionnaire and students' writing test respectively.

Table (10)
The Relationship between Students' Awareness of Writing Techniques and Writing Outcomes

Writing Feature	Awareness of Writing Techniques (Students' Questionnaire)	Writing Outcomes (Students' Writing Test)
	Percentage	Percentage
1. Planning	11.8 %	2.8 %
2. Content	26.7 %	31.4 %
3. Organization	45.1 %	17.4 %
4. Word Choice	25.0 %	18.8 %
5. Language Use	32.9 %	19.5 %
6. Mechanics	48.7%	25.6%

Figure (2)



And by using Spearman's correlational analysis it was found that there is no significant relationship between awareness of the academic writing techniques and writing outcomes as shown by the table below.

Table (11)

Spearman's Correlational Analysis between Awareness of Writing Techniques and Writing Outcomes

Number of Techniques	Correlation	Significance
6	0.429	0.397(0.4)

The results of this important question will be discussed in section two of this chapter.

4.2.4. Results of Question Four

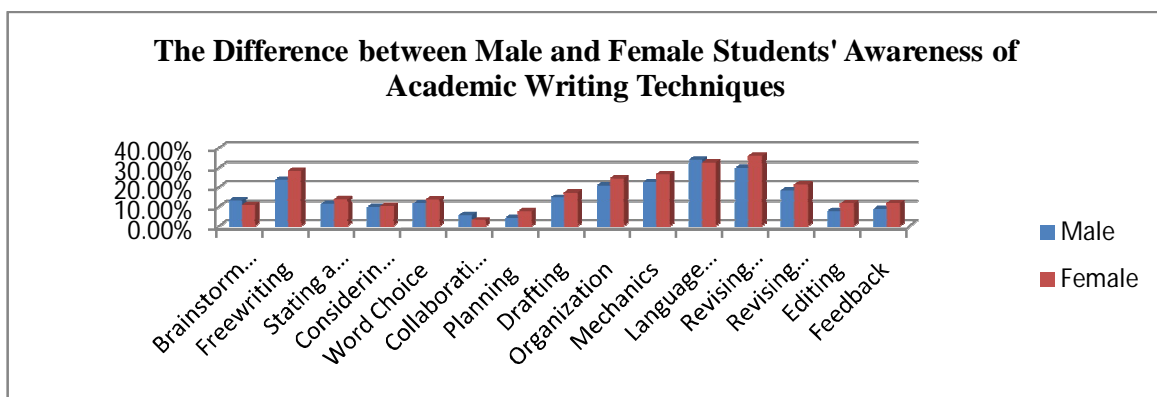
“Are there any differences between male and female students in awareness of academic writing processes and writing outcomes?”

The table below presents the results of both male and female students' awareness of academic writing techniques. The data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of students' questionnaire.

Table (12)
Male and Female Students' Awareness of Academic Writing Techniques

Writing Technique	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Pre-writing: Brainstorming	34	12.9%	29	10.8%
2. Pre-writing: Freewriting	62	23.6%	76	28.3%
3 Pre-writing: Stating a purpose	60	11.2%	72	13.6%
4. Pre-writing: Considering an audience	51	9.6%	54	10.2%
5. Pre-writing: Word Choice	31	11.5%	38	13.5%
6. Pre-writing: Collaborative Writing	15	5.7%	8	3.0%
7. Planning	22	4.2%	40	7.6%
8 Drafting	78	14.6%	91	17.2%
9. Organization	110	20.8%	129	24.3%
10. Mechanics	119	22.4%	140	26.3%
11. Language Use	89	33.8%	86	32.5%
12. Revising Form	78	29.7%	96	35.7%
13. Revising Content	97	18.3%	113	21.2%
14. Editing	20	7.6%	31	11.5%
15. Feedback	46	8.6%	62	11.6%

Figure (3)



And by using Mann-Whitney Test, it was found that there are no significant differences between male and female students in terms of awareness of academic writing processes, except in three areas as shown by the table below.

Table (13)

Mann-Whitney's Test of Differences between Male and Female Students' Awareness of Academic Writing Techniques

Technique	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Z	Sig.
Brainstorming	Male	263	266.32	-.032	.974
	Female	269	266.68		
Freewriting	Male	263	251.22	-2.397	.017*
	Female	269	281.44		
Purpose	Male	263	251.04	-2.485	.013
	Female	269	281.62		
Audience	Male	263	265.53	-.148	.882
	Female	269	267.44		
Word Choice	Male	263	269.42	-.462	.664
	Female	269	263.65		
Collaborative Writing	Male	263	254.99	-1.839	.066
	Female	269	277.75		
Planning	Male	263	265.27	-.198	.843
	Female	269	267.71		
Drafting	Male	263	263.79	-.431	.666
	Female	269	269.15		
Organization	Male	263	267.63	-.179	.858
	Female	269	265.39		
Mechanics	Male	263	266.00	-.084	.933
	Female	269	266.99		
Language Use	Male	263	264.00	-.388	.698
	Female	269	268.95		
Revising Form	Male	263	255.40	-1.705	.088
	Female	269	277.35		
Revising Content	Male	263	242.15	-3.906	.000**
	Female	269	290.30		
Editing	Male	263	253.72	-1.973	.049*
	Female	269	279.00		
Feedback	Male	263	274.79	-1.684	.092
	Female	269	258.39		

*Significant at 0.05

**Significant at 0.01

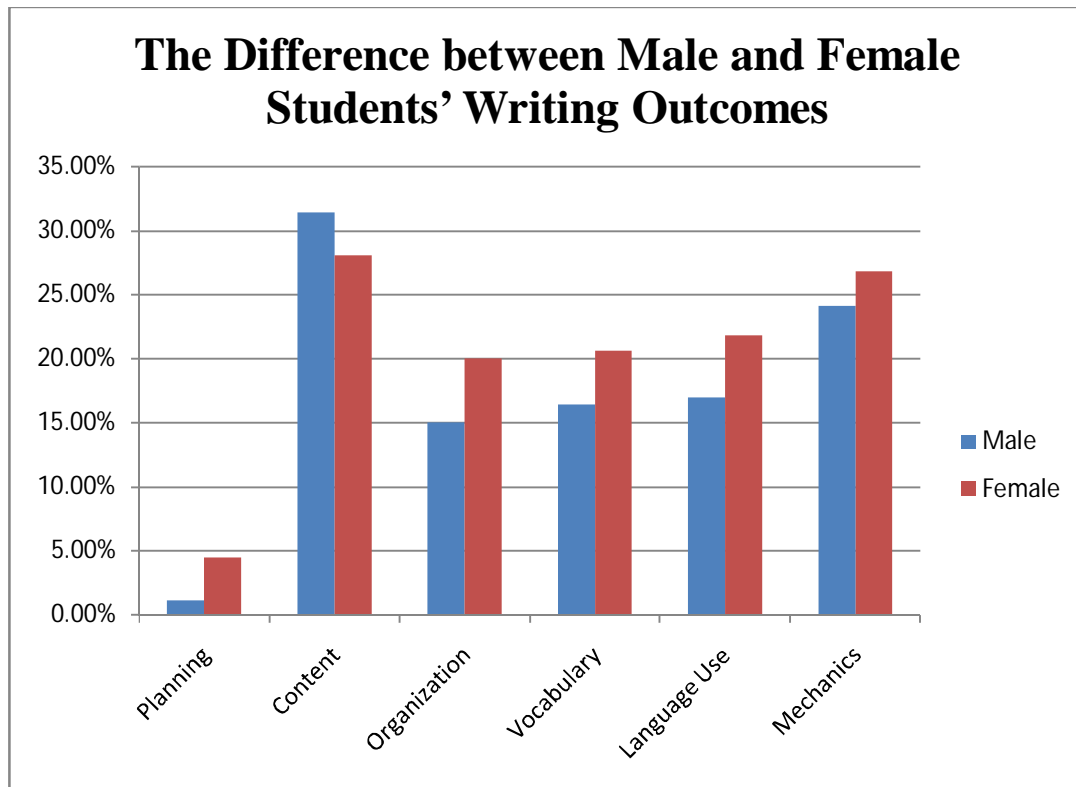
The table below presents the results of both male and female students' writing outcomes. Data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of students' writing test.

Table (14)

Male and Female Students' Writing Outcomes

Writing Feature	Male	Female
Planning	1.1%	4.5%
Content	31.4%	28.1%
Organization	15.0%	20.0%
Vocabulary	16.4%	20.6%
Language Use	17.0%	21.8%
Mechanics	24.1%	26.8%

Figure (4)



And by using T-Test for finding the differences between independent samples, it was found that there are significant differences between male and female students in terms of writing outcomes as shown by the table below.

Table (15)

**T-Test for Finding Differences between Male and Female Students’
Writing Outcomes**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	DF	T-value	Sig.
Male	261	3.2490	3.82543	524	-3.201	001*
Female	265	4.4340	4.62171			

*Significant at 0.01

4.2.5. Results of Question Five

“To what extent are teachers of English in Sudan aware of the most common academic writing processes?”

To answer this question, the researcher rated teachers’ answers to teachers’ questionnaire. The researcher followed this scale to assess teachers’ answers:

0 represents complete lack of awareness

1 represents fair awareness of technique

2 represent good awareness of technique

3 represent excellent awareness of technique

Then after giving marks for each answer, the teacher transferred marks into percentages. The researcher considered below 50% awareness as “poor”. Awareness between 51-56% is considered as “fair”. Awareness between 66-85% is considered as “good”. Awareness between 86-100% is considered as “excellent”.

The table below presents the results of teachers' awareness of the most common academic writing techniques. The data, figures and percentages are based on the analysis of English teachers' questionnaire.

Table (16)

Teachers' Awareness of the Most Common Academic Writing Techniques

Technique	Q.	Frequency	%
Academic Writing Techniques Awareness	1	10	20.2%
Pre-writing	2	9	18.2%
Collaborative Writing	3	27	54.6%
Organization	4	16	32.2%
Paragraph Structure Techniques	5	21	42.5%
Drafting	6	26	52.0%
Revising	7	12	24.8%
Editing	8	9	19.6%
Peer Editing	9	12	24.0%
Feedback	10	8	16.4%

4.3. Section Two: Discussion of the Results of Study

4.3.1. Introduction

The present study aimed to analyse and evaluate academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools (Omdurman Locality Secondary Schools as representative). The study has used different techniques to address this issue and has come to a number of significant results presented earlier in section one. In this section, the researcher would present discussion of these results in the light of the results of the questions of study as they appeared on the study.

4.3.2. Discussion of the Results of Question One

Academic Writing Processes

“What academic writing processes do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools currently use?”

By analysing the answers of students' questionnaire, it has been found that students use the most common academic writing processes that they need to improve their academic writing. These processes include pre-writing techniques, drafting, organization, editing and revising. However, frequencies, percentages and figures clearly show apparent lack of awareness of most skills in particular pre-writing, planning, editing and revising which are considered by many authorities in the field of writing as the most important processes. A number of cognitive-oriented studies have found that expert writers use more effective planning and revising strategies than inexperienced or poor writers. Not only so, studies have indicated that good writers spend more time planning and revising their writing (Cumming, 1989; Hayes, Flower, Shriver, Stratman & Carey, 1987; Sasaki, 2000; Lapp, 1990, cited in Algomoul 2011). More discussions about the academic writing processes that third secondary students in Sudans use and to what extent they are effective will follow in the next question.

4.3.3. Discussion of the Results of Question Two

Effective Writing Techniques

“To what extent do third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use effective writing techniques and what factors affect their writing efficiency?”

To discuss the results of this question, it is worth mentioning what effective writing techniques are and how they help students in writing.

Graham & Perin (2007) argue that effective writing techniques help students learn to write well and use writing as a tool for learning.

Regarding the results of students' questionnaire and by analysing these results, it has been found that third year secondary students in Sudan rarely use effective writing techniques and with very little awareness of these strategies. The frequencies, percentages and figures show remarkable comments.

Below, the researcher would present detailed discussion of each effective writing technique, and to what extent students are aware of it.

Pre-writing Techniques

Pre-writing is the first stage of the writing process and the point at which we discover and explore our initial ideas about a subject. It is considered by many authorities and researchers as the most important stage of writing (Ede, L.2001; Dawson, M.2005; Hedge, P.2005, Wing, R. 2009). Graham and Perin (2007) believe that pre-writing, “engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition” (p.18). Hedge and Wing point out that during this stage, writers establish the purpose of writing and the audience for whom it will be written as well as their argument and an outline for the piece of writing. It is at this stage writers begin to get ideas (Butler 2007, Oshima & Houge 2007). Prewriting can help writers with their writing process by starting them off on the right foot both intellectually and psychologically. Prewriting strategies help writers generate ideas and figure out a topic's structure; doing both of these things before writing a draft can help writers save significant time and energy. The present study considered the following features of pre-writing.

1. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an activity which aims to help students to get ideas together. It can be done in pairs or groups or with the whole class. According to Zemach and Rumisek (2005), writers can brainstorm ideas in different ways. They can use lists, freewriting or mapping. As shown in table (1.1), only 11.8% of students use brainstorming to gather ideas about a composition. The researcher believes that this little percentage shows clearly how most students ignore the importance of pre-writing techniques in general, and particularly, brainstorming. Another point to discuss is that since brainstorming is almost a pair or group work which only 4.3% of students practice, the researcher strongly believes that this little practice negatively affects the use of brainstorming. The researcher thinks that this due to lack of enough practice and training. Teachers of English who are supposed to encourage and train their students to use brainstorming in addition to other pre-writing techniques, they themselves seemed to be unaware of the importance of pre-writing techniques. The results and analysis of teachers' questionnaire support this fact as only 30% of teachers are aware of the importance of pre-writing techniques (see table 13). So, to enable students use pre-writing techniques, the researcher believes that teachers should be familiar with the most common methods of pre-writing, and guide their students to use as many types of pre-writing activities in writing.

2. Freewriting

Freewriting is a pre-writing technique which aims to help students to generate ideas and overcome the problem of writer's block (Hedge, 2005). Freewriting is a technique that students can practice individually apart from brainstorming. It obliges students to redraft, thus highlighting the importance

of redrafting in the process of composing. As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, the results state that only 25.9% of students think that freewriting can improve their writing fluency. The researcher believes that students need to be aware of the importance of freewriting. In addition to raising students' awareness, teachers of English need to give more practice to their students and train them on how to free write during writing lessons. Throughout my experience of teaching English in both Sudan and Qatar, I observed that freewriting practice as a device of improving students' academic writing is absolutely neglected. The situation is completely different in Qatar where teachers often ask their students to practice freewriting. As for me, I ask my students to have a special notebook for freewriting. I used to allocate the first five minutes of a lesson for freewriting practice. I followed this technique three days a week. In the beginning, I observed that students were reluctant and unwilling to write. They sometimes ask the question, "What shall we write about?" Later, through practice and continuous encouragement, students improved their writing fluency. For most students, writing had become a habit. I would really like to share this piece of experience with my colleagues in Sudan. I would like to invite them to try this experience which I believe it would definitely help students to overcome a lot of writing difficulties.

3. Stating a Purpose of Writing

Before beginning to write, the skilled writer decides what his or her purpose of writing is, and what he or she wants his/her piece of writing to accomplish. As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, 24.8% of students state a purpose of writing (see table 1.3). The researcher believes that most students ignore the importance of stating a purpose of writing as it influences the choice of style, the choice of organization and the choice of

language. Not only so, but having a purpose of writing beforehand keeps the writer's mind focused on the topic. The researcher attributes students' little awareness of this important technique of writing to lack of enough practice in asking the question "Why am I writing this composition?" In fact the student must have learned to set his or her own purpose, but if he or she cannot do this satisfactorily, the teacher's guidance should help provide him a purpose (Ahuja, G. & Ahuja, P. 1995). Finally, the researcher strongly believes that writing without having a purpose beforehand is like travelling to a place which you do not know where it is. Consequently, one might get lost or stuck on the way.

4. Considering an audience

Considering an audience for writing is another important technique which goes together with stating a purpose of writing. The two skills together influence the choice of writing style, the choice of organization and language (Hedge, 2005). As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, 19.8% of students consider their audiences when they write a piece of composition.

The researcher believes that this little awareness of the importance of considering an audience before, and while writing is a result of lack of practice. This researcher's idea is consistent with Hedge (2005) who argued that "Helping student writers to become aware of their readers and develop a sense of audience is an important task for the teacher, especially with secondary school learners (p.22)." Hedge justified this point as secondary school learners might not have developed a strong sense of audience in their first-language writing. So, in order to raise students' awareness of considering an audience, teachers of English should motivate students to develop a sense of audience and provide incentives for clear writing by

creating real audiences wherever it is possible. In addition, the researcher would like to remind teachers to point out to students that different styles suit different purposes and audiences.

5. Word Choice

Word choice represents a major problem area for students. As ideas are generated for writing, students need to build and develop a range of vocabulary and learn how to put them together in order to express those ideas. Good writers choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, 25% of students choose the exact word to convey meaning when they write (see table 1.5). As word choice contributes to the writer's style, the researcher believes that students need to develop their awareness of the importance of word choice, and build a wide range of vocabulary that makes their writing more interesting, more precise and suitable. The researcher attributes students' unsatisfactory awareness of this important element to two main factors. First, most students are not good readers. Through reading different types of texts, I believe students can build a wide range of vocabulary from which they can choose appropriate words in writing. Most authorities in the field of writing agree that good readers are good writers. Second, I believe that the way the new vocabulary is presented in class does not help students to grasp the new words. The researcher would like to draw teachers' attention to the importance of presenting key vocabulary in a variety of ways either by eliciting or pre-teaching. The results of students' writing test show that most students have a very limited vocabulary and that they often use the same words all the time. Finally, the researcher believes that students' limited vocabulary is one of the main causes of writing blocks as students lack words to build sentences.

6. Collaborative Writing

Group writing, as argued by Hedge (2005), is a good example of an activity in which the classroom becomes a workshop as students work in pairs or groups.

As presented in table 1.6, it is found that only 4.3% of students practice pair or group writing in class. The researcher believes that this result is serious. It clearly shows that nearly most students ignore the great importance of collaborative discussions and writing in class. Hedge (2005) points out that the group interaction contributes in useful ways to the writing process. She mentioned that brainstorming a topic in group discussion produces lots of ideas. Moreover, group discussions and writing help students in the choice of words, the best way to link ideas and organizing their texts. Most importantly, Hedge stated that:

Group composition has the added advantage of enabling students to learn from each other's strengths. It is an activity where weaker writers can learn from stronger ones.

It also enables the teacher to move from group to group monitoring the work and helping with the process of composition (2005.14).

Being of such significance and importance, the researcher strongly believes that students' awareness of collaborative writing is to be seriously considered as it plays a great role in improving low achievers' progress. Throughout experience of teaching English writing for nearly thirty years, the researcher strongly supports Hedge's deep thoughts. Not only so, but collaborative writing enables the teacher to observe students' writing closely, interfere and give help immediately where and when it is needed, and particularly for weaker students. In the current situation of our schools in Sudan, collaborative writing might be faced by major problems represented in class size and seating. Yet, the researcher believes that

teachers should find suitable ways of doing collaborative writing as it is a technique that most students desperately need.

Planning

Many previous studies (e.g. Hayes & Flower, 1986; Stratman, 1987; Cumming, 1989; &Sasaki, 2000) have found that expert writers use more effective planning than inexperienced student writers. Lapp (1990) indicated that skilled writers spend time planning the task while unskilled writers spend little time planning the task of writing. In fact, planning is an essential first step in writing. Writing without planning, is like trying to find one's way around a new town without a map. As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, only 7.8% of students are aware of the importance of making a plan for writing a composition after gathering ideas (see table 1.7). The researcher attributes this serious lack of awareness of planning strategies to the absence of directed instruction on writing techniques by the teachers in the writing course, more specifically during the planning process. This researcher's own opinion is further confirmed by participant students who frankly reported that they were not exposed to any overt instruction on how to plan for writing.

Planning helps students to organize their ideas, focus on the subject, order the issues, and state the purpose of writing and the targeted audience (Abdulla, A.2007).

Finally, the researcher would like to advise students to make a plan for their writing, particularly when writing in an exam because if students ran out of time and did not finish writing, scorers might give marks for the ideas in the plan.

Drafting

Drafting is the process of writing down ideas, organizing them into sequence, and providing the reader with a frame for understanding these ideas. During this stage, good writers concentrate on getting the content right first and leave other details like correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar until later. As presented in table 1.8, 31.8% of students write their first draft of composition. Compared with the previous techniques, the researcher considers students' awareness of the importance of drafting is reasonable. According to Hedge (2005), teachers can support the drafting process in various ways. They can intervene quietly, question and advise students in order to help them get their ideas down. Hedge (2005) argued that, "Giving help during writing proves far more than giving it afterwards."

Organization

Organization, as defined by Hedge (2005) is, "the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure (p.81)". Cali (2003) believes that organization is important to effective writing as it provides readers with a framework to help them fulfill their expectations for the text. As the text structure is the framework of a text's beginning, middle and end, the present study considered these features to find out to what extent students are aware of the techniques. As presented in (table 1.9), 17.9% of students think that the main purpose of an introduction is to excite the reader. The researcher believes that the results show students' unsatisfactory awareness of the importance of having an interesting introduction for a piece of writing. To improve students' awareness of having an attractive introduction for their writing, the researcher encourages students to hook their readers by using effective techniques such as starting with a quotation or a rhetorical

question. Students can also start with a problem that needs a solution. The researcher would also like to remind teachers to draw their students' attention to the fact that as a good beginning can draw a reader into a piece of writing, a mediocre beginning can discourage a reader from reading further.

The second component of a text structure is the middle which mainly consists of well-developed paragraphs. The present study considered two components of a well-structured paragraph. The first element is the topic sentence. As presented by table (1.10), 57.9% of students are aware that the topic sentence is the first sentence to be used in a paragraph. The researcher believes that students had good practice in identifying the role of a topic sentence. In fact, and as argued by Gugin (2014) a well-organized paragraph can still be understood by the reader, even if the sentence-level grammar is not free of mistakes. On the other hand, an improperly or poorly organized paragraph can be quite difficult for the reader to understand, even if the sentence-level grammar is almost perfect.

In order to find out to what extent students are aware of the importance of having a conclusion for a piece of writing, the present study considered the role of a concluding sentence to end up writing. As presented in (table 1.11), 29.5% of students use a concluding sentence to end up their writing. The researcher believes that students lack enough awareness of the importance of ending up a paragraph or an essay with a good conclusion in which writers summarise the main points of a composition. According to Bailey (2011), the conclusion should provide a clear answer to any question asked in the title. Finally, and to have an effective conclusion, the researcher would like to encourage teachers to train their students on how to end up

their writing by giving the reader something to consider. Students can also conclude a composition by using a quotation or a rhetorical question.

Conventions: Mechanics

Conventions, as described by Cali (2003), are the surface features of writing. Mechanics are the conventions of print that do not exist in oral language. They include: spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing. According to Cali, conventions make writing easier to read by putting it in a form that the reader expects and is comfortable with. As presented in (table 1.12), 47.7% of students focus on the correct use of spelling and punctuation when they write a composition. Although the results show students' reasonable awareness of the importance of using conventions in writing, the researcher is conscious about the great concern that students give to conventions in comparison to other significant features of the writing process. Throughout experience of teaching writing, and observing students' writing closely, the researcher realized that many students attribute their weakness in writing due to their poor spelling competence. This own point of view is consistent with a result of study carried out by Isaacson (1997) who claimed that many students are frustrated in their attempts to engage in writing process because of difficulty with the mechanical aspects of writing. To overcome this problem, the researcher would like to encourage teachers to teach conventions at the end of the writing process, and that students have to focus on writing fluency, ideas and content while writing the first draft, and leave spelling correction to the editing process.

Conventions: Language Use

Grammar is the sound, structure, and meaning system of language. According to Chin (2000), being able to connect knowledge of oral language

to written language, students can write with greater competence and confidence. As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, the results state that only 32.6% of students focus on the correct use of grammar when they write a composition (see table 1.13). Throughout experience of teaching English writing, the researcher realized that grammar represents a big concern for most students and teachers. Until now, teachers believe that teaching grammar in the traditional method can help students improve their writing. However, Hillocks (1986), in his meta-analysis of twenty-five years of writing research concluded that "traditional grammar instruction was the most ineffective method of improving writing" (cited in Cali, 2007). While many teachers worry that throwing out all traditional instruction in grammar will produce a generation of students who might be unable to write an intelligible sentence, research strongly suggests that the most beneficial way of helping students improve their command of grammar in writing is to use students' writing as the basis for discussing grammatical concepts. Researchers agree that it is more effective to teach punctuation, sentence variety and usage in the context of writing than to approach the topic by teaching isolated skills (Harris, 1962; Calkins, 1980; Stefano & Killion, 1984, cited in Chin, 2000). Since writing is a complex and challenging activity for many students, the researcher encourages teachers to focus on the grammatical concepts that are essential for clear communication of meaning.

Finally, research conducted since the early 1960s shows that grammar instruction that is separate from writing instruction does not improve students' writing competence (Braddock, 1963; Hillocks, 1986; cited in Chin, 2000). Though research, since the early 1960s, proved that teaching students grammar separately does not help students to improve

their writing, until now, our students in the secondary schools in Sudan are taught grammar in the traditional way. The researcher believes that teachers gave students the sense that grammar is one of the most important elements of writing. That very misconception about grammar and its role in the writing process made students believe that writing is difficult, and as a result, many students feel demotivated to write in English.

Revising

Among the studies on the stages of the writing process, research on the role of revision is noticeable. In the process of writing, revision functions as a stage of representing and reformulating (Murray, 1974; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Hall, 1990; cited in Li, 1999). As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, the results state that about 26.4% of students revise for form and only 18.4% of students revise for content. The researcher believes that both results indicate students' little awareness of both techniques. From own point of view, the researcher attributes this little lack of awareness to the fact that most students ignore the importance and role of revision in improving writing. Not only so, but many students also lack training on when, how and what to revise. When revising a piece of writing, teachers should remind and train students to revise the form, content and organization. To revise the form of writing, students should make sure that they followed the correct form of writing, and that ideas are separated into paragraphs with clear topic sentences. In addition, students make sure that all points are discussed and developed to the same extent.

To revise content, teachers should train students on the strategies and ways of revising content. One strategy is that students should make sure that the information presented in the topic is accurate, complete and relevant. Through experience and practice, the researcher observed that, and

particularly during writing tests, many students address a different topic which is irrelevant to the question of writing. One more and important strategy of revising content is that students have to make sure the information presented is comprehensible to the reader and that ideas are well developed and organized.

Editing

Editing is checking a piece of writing for accuracy. It includes checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word choice and sentence structure.

As shown by the answers of students' questionnaire, the results state that only 9.6% of students edit their composition (see table 1.16). The researcher believes that the results clearly show students' lack of awareness of this important technique. Not only so, but this very little awareness of using editing indicates that most students ignore the role of editing in improving students' writing. This researcher's point of view is consistent with Hedge (2005) who argued that, "poor writers tend not to engage in editing but assume that their writing is clear to others because it is clear to them (p.54)". The researcher would like to remind teachers to train their students on when and how to do editing and what items students should consider to edit a composition effectively. Through experience and observation, the researcher noticed that most students concentrate on the accuracy in grammar throughout the whole writing process without considering whether or not the overall structure is clear. The researcher believes that it is the teachers' role to remind students to check grammar and other conventions at the end of the writing process to avoid writing blocks and distraction. Moreover, the researcher would like to remind teachers not to focus only on minor problems but ask students to edit other items such as sentence structure and

word choice. Finally, the researcher would like to encourage teachers to help their students become good editors through peer editing by assigning different editing tasks to specific individuals. Through experience and practice, the researcher found that peer editing helps students improve their writing, promotes confidence and saves teachers' time.

Feedback:

Feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process. Hedge (2005) claims that feedback has become part of the process of writing. As shown by the results of students' questionnaire, only 20.2% of students review their mistakes after getting feedback on their writing (see table 1.17). The researcher believes that mistakes that occur in students' writing are useful because they reveal to teachers the problem areas and help teachers to design remedial exercises and focus more attention on how to correct them. Teachers have to admit students' errors and believe that it is teachers' responsibility to help students develop strategies for self-correction. According to Williams (2003), the goal of feedback is to teach skills that help students improve their writing proficiency. The results presented in table. 1 clearly show students' lack of awareness of the importance of feedback in improving writing. The researcher attributes this lack of awareness to lack of practice and training students get from teachers. Throughout experience and observation, the researcher noticed that the written feedback and comments given to students were vague, contradictory, unsystematic and inconsistent. The researcher argues that such feedback leads to various reactions by students including confusion, frustration and neglect. As a result, students may not read the comments at all, or read them but not understand them, or may understand them but not know how to respond to them. Therefore, the researcher believes that teachers' comments

will be of little use if students do not know what they mean or how to use them productively to improve their skills as writers. Thus, this researcher's own point of view is consistent with(Cohen &Cavalcanti, 1990 and Kroll, 2001) who stated that “ without training in how to use the comments to better their writing, students are likely to either ignore the comments, misunderstand them, or fail to use them constructively, cited in Williams, J.2003)”.

To lessen student confusion and frustration, the researcher encourages teachers to follow a systematic method of correcting mistakes by using a standard set of symbols or markings to indicate place and type of error, and train students in what kind of corrections to make based on each symbol. Moreover, and as many students find understanding written feedback problematic, the researcher recommends that teachers can follow student-teacher conferencing. This method allows both students and teachers a chance to trace the causes of the problems arising from student writing and feedback, and can develop strategies for improvement.

Factors Affecting Students' Writing Efficiency

As discussed earlier, third year secondary students in Sudan use different effective academic writing techniques in spite of not being fully aware of most of these techniques. However, the results of students' questionnaire showed that there are some individual factors that seriously affect their writing proficiency. Among these factors:

Writing Apprehension

Writing anxiety was defined as a fear of the writing process which outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write (Thompson, 1980). Numerous researchers in the area of English writing instruction highlighted that writing apprehension is an important factor that affects the quality as

well as perception of writing amongst students. Research studies on writing apprehension among both L1 and L2 learners have been carried out extensively for the last three decades, investigating its causes and effects as well as ways to reduce it (AL-Sawalha& Chow,2012; Atay& Kurt,2007; Clark,2005; Cheng, 2004; Erkan&Saban, 2011;), cited in Pimsarn, 2013).

The results of students' questionnaire for the current study, shows that 33.4% of third year secondary students in Sudan suffer from writing anxiety (see table 1.7). The researcher believes that writing apprehension has become a critical issue, not only for third year secondary students in Sudan, but also worldwide. Early studies reported that nearly 80% of American students fear their composition courses (Eulert, 1976), and an estimation of 25.0% of American students suffer from severe writing anxiety (Bloom, 1980), cited in Al-Asmari, 2013). According to Ozcan (2012), writing anxiety is one of the most important factors affecting writing proficiency.

A number of causes of writing apprehension have been identified. According to Daly (1978), the causes of writing apprehension range from the kind of writing activities assigned, insufficient writing skills, teachers' negative comments, and negative perceptions of the writers themselves. Brown (2006) argued that students avoid writing due to their worries about self-evaluation, teacher evaluation and peer evaluation. Clark (2005) added three more causes of writing apprehension apart from the fear of writing evaluation: (1) students' negative perceptions about themselves not being good writers; (2) not knowing or understanding clearly how to do something, or not understanding the subject they were writing about; and (3) the anticipation that writing is a hard task. According to Takahashi (2011), students' low motivation and low proficiency were main causes of writing apprehension.

In the current case of third year secondary students in Sudan, the researcher considers all the causes mentioned above about causes of writing apprehension are relevant and existent in our schools. The researcher would like to add that using the Arabic language in an attempt to explain while teaching in the English writing class, is one more reason of writing apprehension. Throughout experience and practice, the researcher noticed that it is common practice for many teachers of English to use Arabic in the English writing classroom, which results in giving students very little exposure to English inside the class. On top of that, the researcher considers using the traditional classroom instruction which focuses on product rather than process of writing plays a great role in students' writing apprehension.

Research studies have suggested several treatments of writing anxiety. As students with high levels of writing anxiety tend to be less successful in writing, teachers should actively teach students to gain control over their attitudes towards writing (Bloom, 1980). Walsh (1992) found that attitude is a key component in effective writing. That is, if students feel more open toward writing, they will more likely improve themselves. There are suggested strategies to reduce writing anxiety from Clark's study (2005) beginning with developing students' confidence in their writing ability by having a positive attitude and making positive self-statements. The study also suggests that students should get positive feedback from teachers and other students. Finally, the study suggests that students should be advised to get help and feedback when they feel stuck or unclear about something (cited in Pimsarn, 2013). On comment about the stated suggestions of reducing writing anxiety, and particularly, with third year secondary students in Sudan, the researcher believes that scaffolding students during the first stages of writing will be more practical and beneficial for students. In

addition, and to reduce students' writing apprehension, the researcher would like to encourage teachers to get students involved in pre-writing activities, particularly in collaborative writing where low achievers would benefit from high achievers. Finally, the researcher encourages teachers to use different teaching techniques, free writing, peer feedback, as well as teaching writing as a process, explaining feedback, and holding face-to-face conferences with students.

Lack of Confidence

Riffe and Stacks (1992) reveal that students' lack of confidence about writing results in poor writing. Not only so, but lack of confidence can lead writers to give up before they have even begun, or to fret for hours over a very simple task of writing. As shown by the results of students' questionnaire for this study, 28.0% of students lack confidence about writing. Due to a number of academic factors and situations that students experience in schools, the researcher believes that this percentage of lack of confidence is justifiable. First, students' insufficient writing skills do not encourage students to approach writing. Throughout experience and practice of teaching English writing, the researcher observed that many students do not know where to start from. Some students do not even try to read the writing prompt. Some students simply answer with "I do not know!" Second, the researcher believes that the traditional teaching methods of writing that are still used in our schools cause students to lack confidence. Instead of giving and training students on effective methods of writing such as brainstorming, group work and drafting, teachers still write the title of the writing topic and ask students to begin writing. Third, the researcher believes that students' practice of writing in class is insufficient.

To help students build up and increase their writing confidence, the researcher encourages teachers to ask students to practice writing regularly. To achieve this end, the researcher recommends training students on freewriting. The researcher would also like teachers to convince students that writing is a complex skill, and to become good writers, they need to give writing enough time, exert much effort and over all, be patient. Finally, and to increase students' lack of confidence, teachers are asked to get students work in groups to benefit and help each other. By doing so, less confident students will find themselves engaged into writing and gradually will build more confidence.

Demotivation

Dornyei defines demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action.” (2001.). According to Dornyei, a demotivated learner is the one who is originally motivated and lost his/her motivation because of negative external factors. As high motivation is one of the most significant factors in improving students' writing, demotivation, on the other hand, is a main cause of poor writing. In the present study, and as shown by the results of students' questionnaire, it is found that 23.1% of students suffer from demotivation (see table.7). The researcher believes that there are a number of reasons that cause students' demotivation among third secondary students in Sudan. The researcher considers teachers as the most common factors of students' demotivation. This researcher's own point of view coincides with most previous studies conducted in the field of motivation and demotivation which revealed that the teacher's personality, commitment, competence, enthusiasm and teaching method play an important role in students' demotivation (Gorham & Christophei, 1992; Dornyei, 2001; Keblawi, 2005,

cited in Qashoa, 2006). In our schools today, and as the researcher observed, many teachers show less enthusiasm towards teaching. Not only so, but some teachers are not committed to work, and even if they are at school, they often join classes late. The researcher strongly argues that when teachers are excited and enthusiastic about teaching, students will be much more excited and enthusiastic about learning. Another reason that demotivates our students is the teaching methods implemented in schools. Despite the shift from the traditional writing methods to the current writing process, most teachers of English in secondary schools in Sudan still help students to memorize texts instead of teaching and helping them how to write. In other words, our English writing classes continue to be places to memorize compositions rather than practice writing texts.

In addition, the researcher believes that students' attitude toward English writing plays a vital role in students' demotivation. As a result of long experience in the teaching field, the researcher realized that many students have passive attitudes toward writing due to the previous experiences that English, and particularly writing is hard. Consequently, many students have poor concentration and lack of belief in own abilities. Because of these negative attitudes, many students make no effort to learn, distract other students, produce little or no homework and above all, many of them attend classes only to pass the compulsory exams. Finally, other factors such as inadequate school facilities, shortage of teachers, frequent change of teachers, class size as well as students' seating have their own role on students' demotivation.

To overcome the problem of students' demotivation, the researcher recommends that teachers have to change their attitude toward teaching English, and particularly writing. Instead of using the traditional teaching

methods of writing, teachers are encouraged to use the current methods of teaching writing which consider the student as the centre of learning. Also, teachers have to show more enthusiasm about teaching writing, so their students will be much more enthusiastic about writing. Not only so, but teachers are also advised to be aware of the possible factors that may be affecting their students' motivation and try to develop strategies to help solve the problems that arise relating to students' demotivation.

Motivation

Motivation is one of the most significant factors that affect students' writing. Many studies (Krusdenier, 1985; Dornyei, 2001) revealed that measures of proficiency in writing are related to motivational characteristics of students. Corria (1999) claims that a full understanding of students' motivation is necessary to improve and maximize students' writing. Regarding the present study and by analysing students' answers to the questionnaire, it is found that only 15.5% of students are motivated to write in English (see table.7). The researcher believes that there are a number of factors that affect and reduce motivation of third year secondary students in Sudan. In one place, the researcher considers students' attitude toward English writing is one of the most significant factors of students' lack of motivation. As the researcher mentioned earlier, many students believe that English writing is hard due to experiences of having insufficient writing skills in the early stages of education. Another factor that causes students' lack of motivation is teachers' use of traditional writing strategies which only focus on the product rather than teaching students how to write. In our schools today, the teacher's performance is no longer assessed by how well he/she teaches students how to write, but by to what extent he/she is helping students to memorize compositions for the final exams. Some students'

verbal and written comments in the writing test, administered for this study, show clearly that students do not practice writing but only given titles and being asked to write a composition. In addition to using teacher-centred approach in teaching, the researcher considers teachers' behavior in the classroom is one of the factors that reduce students' motivation. The researcher thinks that teachers should present a good behavior example, make sure that the class atmosphere is pleasant, present tasks properly to students, ensure that students have a clear purpose of writing and have good teacher-student relationships. Those researcher's ideas are consistent with the results of research in L2 motivation conducted by (Dornyei, 1990, 1994, 2001; Williams, 1994, Burden, 2004, Oxford, 1996) which resulted in different commandments for motivating students' writing: teachers should set a personal behavior example, create pleasant class atmosphere, present tasks of interest, increase learners' goals and use student-centered approach (cited in Bahous. et al.2011).

To improve students' motivation in writing, the researcher would like to encourage teachers to vary their teaching writing strategies. Instead of having students only as recipients, teachers should get students involved in all different stages of writing, particularly in the prewriting activities. The researcher would also encourage teachers to give students responsibility by assigning classroom jobs and leading writing activities which would definitely promote students' confidence. In addition, teachers should allow students to work in groups and motivate and benefit from each other. By doing so, less motivated students will be willing to take part in writing and feel a sense of achievement.

4.3.4. Discussion of the Results of Question Three

Relationship between Awareness of Academic Writing Processes and Writing Outcomes

“Is there any relationship between students’ awareness of the main academic writing processes and the writing outcomes?”

Before discussing the answers to this question, it is worth to comment on the poor writing achievement in the students’ writing test designed for this study. Due to long experience in teaching English writing, the researcher was not really shocked by the drastic and dreadful writing outcomes achieved by third year secondary students in Sudan. In fact, the decline in students’ writing performance is not only confined to Sudanese secondary students. It has become a common problem almost everywhere. Many studies conducted in this field revealed significant decline of students’ writing level.

For example, a study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2002 in America showed that 21.0% of grade 12 students scored at or above proficient levels, and that only 2.0% wrote at an advanced level (cited in Roland & Bascom, 2011). In another study conducted by Al.gomoul (2011), teachers of English in Jordan claimed that 5.0% to 10.0% of students can write legibly, and that almost English Language teachers expressed their deep concern with the low level of achievement of their students at the writing skill (cited in Al.gomoul, 2011).

As the current study is concerned with third year secondary students in Sudan, and as one of the most important questions it tries to answer is related to students’ writing outcomes, the researcher believes that students’ low achievement at writing is understandable and justifiable for a number of factors. First, teaches’ lack of professional knowledge, in addition to lack of

training courses, accompanied by low English proficiency among some teachers all resulted in practitioners who are ill-equipped to deliver the material in the way expected by course designers. Second, students' passive attitudes toward English and who many of them still consider English as a subject to pass in exams rather than a means of communication played a negative role in students' achievement at English writing. The researcher attributes students' low motivation to the learning and teaching situation practices, class sizes and classroom environment. Third, the researcher considers students' course book, which has been the main text book for nearly three decades, as one of the factors of students' low achievement at the writing skill as it completely ignores the writing process. Finally, the secondary school certificate examination writing test has its own role in the decline of students' writing as it includes nearly 50% of the words needed in the composition. By doing so, students are mainly tested in writing correct sentences regardless to their ability to plan, organize and produce well-structured paragraphs. A result of a study conducted by Zakaria&Mugaddam (2013) about assessment of written performance of the Sudanese EFL university learners strongly supports the results of the present study. The study conducted by Zakaria&Mugaddam revealed that 82.5% of university students could not produce coherent and well organized texts (available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v3n4p1>). In fact, the researcher believes that the results of such a study strongly emphasizes the importance of the present study as it has been reported that "most writing problems students face at a university level seem to be associated with certain deficits in the preparation process at the secondary level with regards to both curriculum and instruction." (Al-Hammadi&Sidek, 2015, p.59). Finally, in the

recommendations of a research paper delivered by O'Brien (2013) about English Language in Sudanese schools, the researcher concluded that:

No one factor could be isolated as singularly responsible for the decline in English Language standards in Sudanese schools. A multitude of issues from psychological to pedagogical to economic to social and linguistic were concluded to be contributors to the observed decline.(p.13)

To discuss the results of question three, the researcher considers this question as one of the most important questions the current study attempted to answer. By analysing students' questionnaire which represent students' awareness of the academic writing processes, and analysing the results of the students' writing test which represent students' writing outcomes, the study has revealed no significant relationship between awareness of academic writing processes and writing outcomes (see table.11). And since Oxford (1993) thought of strategies and techniques as tools, the researcher thinks that these tools could be used by both good and poor writers, and the writing outcomes would vary according to the extent they are effectively or ineffectively implemented. This researcher's own idea is enhanced by Skehan's (1989) assumption that there is always the possibility that the good or effective strategies are also used by poor writers, but other reasons cause them to be ineffective. The researcher thinks that students' good awareness of the academic writing techniques does not necessarily result in good writing outcomes. On the other hand, the researcher believes that lack of academic writing awareness does not always result in poor writing achievement. The researcher justifies this assumption to the fact that some students might have good awareness of academic writing techniques, but when they come to implementation of these strategies or techniques they might implement them negatively. Consequently, their writing achievement will be poor. Comparatively, some students who have little awareness of

academic writing techniques might utilize this very little awareness effectively, and as a result obtain good writing outcomes. These personal points of view would be discussed in detail by presenting and comparing the results of both students' awareness of the academic writing processes and the results of the students' writing test to find out whether there is relationship between each technique using correlational analysis.

1. Planning

Planning is one of the most important stages of the writing process. In this stage, writers plan and organize their writing using an outline. Lapp (1990) indicated that skilled writers spend time planning the task (cited in Al.gomoul 2011). Yet, in our secondary schools, it seems that not only students who ignore the importance of planning, but even teachers of English. By analysing students' questionnaire, it is found that only 11.1% of students think they can make a plan for writing. This little awareness of the importance of planning in the writing process resulted in only 2.8% of planning achievement in students' writing test (see table.10). The researcher believes that both results of students' awareness and outcomes are understandable due to complete lack of practice and training, and both results show negative relationship between students' awareness of the importance of planning and the writing achievement. As mentioned earlier, sometimes being aware or unaware of a strategy might not always give the expected result. An excellent example of this assumption is sample (283) of students' writing test which shows the writer's none awareness of the importance of planning in writing, yet he/she was able to produce a master piece of writing (see appendix 14). This result shows clearly that there is no significant relationship between awareness of academic writing techniques and writing outcomes. The researcher thinks that this sample could be much

better and more organized if the writer used a plan for his composition. The researcher considers this writer's behavior as concrete evidence of lack of training and practice. Another example is sample(496) in which the write made a good plan, yet he/she was not able to use his/her plan to write a composition (see appendix 15). The researcher would like teachers to teach and train their students on how to plan for their writing, and explain to students how good planning can improve their writing. But before doing that, the researcher would like teachers to be familiar with different types of prewriting strategies and their role in the writing process because the results of the teacher's' questionnaire showed clearly that teachers themselves are not aware enough of the importance of prewriting techniques (see table.16). Thus, the results of this study coincide with the results of a study conducted by Zakaria and Mugaddam (2013) to investigate the written performance of the Sudanese EFL students at tertiary level which revealed that 78.4% of students lack the ability to plan their writing (available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v3n4p1>).

Finally, the researcher would like to comment on sample (189) of students' writing test. In this sample, the student writer expressed clearly his/her complete lack of awareness of the importance of planning in the writing process. Not only so, but the writer has also mentioned that a composition should only contain three paragraphs (see appendix 16). The researcher considers the student's written comments on the test paper as concrete evidence of lack of practice and training on the stages of the writing process. On the other hand, this sample shows clearly how students can make use of instructions given as this writer was able to produce five-organized paragraphs with a good introduction and conclusion. On top of that, this sample reflects clearly that third year secondary students in Sudan

practice academic writing without being aware of its features and components. To conclude discussing the result of the first feature of academic writing, the researcher would like to emphasize that in order to improve our students' writing skill, teachers should teach students the basics of the writing process and give them enough training and practice on how to write a good composition rather than helping them to memorize texts.

2. Content

The content of writing is one of the main features that both audience and scorers consider. The content of writing shows students' knowledge of the topic of writing. It also shows whether students are able to present a clear point of view about the writing topic. On top of that, the content of writing shows whether the writing product is relevant to the writing question and that the ideas are organized and supported with examples and details. As for the present study and by analysing students' questionnaire, it is found that 26.7% of students are aware of the main features of the content of writing. This insufficient awareness of the content of writing resulted in 31.4% of the writing outcome (see table.10). The figures and percentages show no significant relationship between awareness of writing processes and writing achievement. The researcher justifies students' low achievement to lack of training on how to present a clear point of view in writing. Another reason is that students should be encouraged to read different genres of writing to improve their knowledge of different topics. Finally, the researcher encourages teachers to ask students to stick to the writing topic and make sure what they write is relevant to the question of writing.

With regard to the results of the writing outcomes, and compared with other features of writing tested in the writing test, the researcher believes that 31.4% achievement is somewhat reasonable due to common low

standard of students' achievement in general. To justify this relatively advanced achievement in content, the researcher believes that students' general knowledge about the topic of writing; the Internet helped them to say something about the topic. Yet, students' poor range of vocabulary did not enable most of them to express their point of view about the question of writing. The researcher would also like to point out that students at this stage should read different genres of writing to widen their general knowledge about different topics, as it is argued that good readers are good writers.

To help students produce good content of writing, the researcher recommends that students should practice more writing in different types of writing. Also, the researcher advises students to build a wide range of vocabulary which would enable them to write what they want to say about a topic. Finally, the researcher draws students' attention of having a plan for writing in order to avoid writing blocks.

3. Organization

Organization is one of the most important components of academic writing as it provides readers with a framework to help them fulfil their expectations for the text. A well-organized piece of writing is easier for the readers to follow. As presented in (table.10), 45.1% of students are aware of the most common features of organization. Though students' awareness of the elements and techniques of organization is relatively high, compared with other techniques, it only resulted in 17.4% of writing achievement in the writing test. The results show no significant relationship between awareness of writing techniques and writing outcomes. The researcher justifies this big gap between awareness and outcomes to a number of reasons. First, most students already know that a piece of writing should include an introduction, body and conclusion. However, when they come to put this awareness into

practice, most students failed to do it in the right way. The researcher believes that most students are not familiar with the purposes of both introduction and conclusion. Second, through reading students' responses in the writing test, the researcher observed that many students lack awareness of using transition words to show the relationship between sentences and ideas. As a result, most of students' ideas are not related and missed logical relationship between words, sentences and paragraphs due to lack of cohesion . The results of a study conducted by Zakaria and Muggadam (2013) about an assessment of the written performance of the Sudanese EFL University learners revealed that 70.7% of students were found not able to develop a particular topic into a unified text due to poor linguistic knowledge. The researcher believes that the results of this study strongly support the results of the present study. Finally, the researcher believes that students' ability to form well-organized paragraphs needs more practice. Through assessing students' answers to the writing question, the researcher noticed that many students find it difficult to form a complete paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence to end up a paragraph.

In order to help students develop organization skills, Hedge (2005) recommends that teachers should encourage students to read more in English to identify and make use of different writing structures. According to Hedge, the most effective way of helping students to produce coherent and cohesive writing is to offer students practice at the text level writing.

The researcher strongly supports Hedge's recommendation that students should read more in English because through reading students can experience different writing techniques which should definitely help them to improve their organization skills. Moreover, the researcher would like to

remind teachers to train their students on how to write an interesting introduction as it excites the reader, as well as a strong conclusion to sum up their writing. Finally, the researcher would recommend that teachers have to point out to students that the body of writing is to be composed of separate paragraphs, and that each new idea should be in a separate paragraph as well.

To end up discussing the relationship between awareness of organization techniques and writing achievement, it is worth mentioning that through assessing students' writing test, the researcher realized that some students have benefited from the instructions given for writing and produced good quality of writing with good elements of organization. For example, some students were able to express their point of view in the introductions. Other students provided examples and statistics to support their point of view. Finally, some students were able to end up their writing with a strong conclusion in which they restated their point of view. The researcher would like to emphasize that, through practice, and only practice that students can improve their academic writing skills, and that if third year secondary students in Sudan were directly taught how to organize a composition, they would definitely be able to improve their writing competence.

4. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is central to English writing because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot express their own ideas. Wilkins (1972) wrote that "... while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (pp. 111-112, cited in Brynildseen, 2000). Lewis (1993) went further to argue, "Lexis is the core or heart of language" (p.89, cited in Brynildseen, 2000). By looking at (table.10), it is found that 25.0% of third year secondary students in Sudan think they can

use the correct word to express their opinion. This little awareness of the importance of vocabulary to writing resulted in 18.8% of writing outcomes in the writing test which clearly enforces the findings of this study that there are no significant relationship between awareness of academic writing techniques and writing outcomes. The researcher attributes students' little awareness of this important feature of writing to a number of factors. First, students' little awareness of what vocabulary is. According to Nation (2001), students should be aware and focus on three aspects of vocabulary: form, meaning and use. Second, students' pre-knowledge that vocabulary addresses only single lexical items prevents them to acquire more productive vocabulary knowledge.

Regarding students' poor achievement in using vocabulary, the researcher attributes this to different reasons. First, students' limited vocabulary, particularly vocabulary related to technology, did not enable students to express their opinion about the topic of the writing test. Thus, as English vocabulary is challenging and growing, the researcher confirms that students need to expand their vocabulary knowledge in different fields. Ur (2012) stated, unlike grammar, "lexical items ... are an open set, constantly being added to and lost , as archaic words gradually go out of use" (p.3). Second, the researcher believes that many students are demotivated to read different genres of writing to identify, acquire, build and use different words to expand their English vocabulary. Finally, the researcher thinks that students should contextualize the new vocabulary they have learned and incorporate the new terms into more writing and presentations.

In order to develop students' knowledge and awareness of vocabulary the researcher recommends that teachers should offer direct instruction of techniques for developing a broad and varied vocabulary.

Second, the researcher promotes using practice and repetition methods to make students familiar with the new words and how they are used. In addition, students should be frequently exposed to the same words through practice exercises, classroom use, and testing.

5. Language Use

Grammar is important in the English language, and particularly writing. It is considered as the glue that holds the language together. It is undeniable that an understanding of a language grammar is essential and as it is said vocabulary is the flesh of the language and grammar is the skeleton (Hourani, 2008). Thus, with the use of incorrect grammar, sentences can become meaningless. Moreover, wrong use of grammar often confuses the reader and affects the meaning of the message the writer wants to convey.

By looking at (table. 10), it is found that 32.9% of students consider the correct use of grammar when they write a composition. This little awareness of the correct use of language resulted in only 19.5% of language use outcome in the writing test. Both results show no significant relationship between awareness of academic writing techniques and writing outcomes. The researcher attributes this lack of awareness of language use to students' narrow understanding of what grammar is. To many students, grammar refers to memorizing the rules of use of tenses. This very limited and narrow understanding of the concept of grammar is rooted by the type of language questions that third secondary students face in the secondary school certificate. Moreover, many students ignore the role of grammar in the writing process. According to Andrews, R. et al (2006), grammar includes the study of syntax (word order), clause and phrase structure, and the classification of parts of speech.

As for third secondary students' low achievement at language use, the researcher believes that the traditional approach of teaching grammar, which is still used in our schools today, is the main cause of students' low achievement. Based on the results of previous studies in the field, the researcher argues that traditional grammar instruction seems boring and unrelated to writing because it is taught in isolation, and students often do not apply the rules and theory to their composition process. The findings of studies conducted by Andrews et al (2006), Sipe, (2006) and Sherwin et al (1970) support the researcher's own assumption as all studies found the traditional approach to grammar instruction "appears to have no influence on the accuracy of written language" (Andrews et al, 2006, p.51). Wyse (2001) explicitly states that the collective findings from studies conducted in English speaking countries "clearly indicate that the teaching of grammar (using a range of models) has negligible positive effects on improving secondary pupils' writing" (p.422, cited in Jaeger, 2011).

6. Mechanics

Mechanics are the technical aspects of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing. It is important that students are to be aware of the importance and role of mechanics in writing as they aid in communication, make writing easy to read and show how much effort the writer puts into his/her work.

By looking at (table. 10), it is found that 48.7% of students are aware of the importance of mechanics. However, this relatively high awareness of mechanics resulted in only 25.6% of writing achievement in the writing test. The results strongly show that there is no significant relationship between awareness of the writing techniques and writing outcomes.

Though, mechanics have a great role in writing, many specialists in the field of academic writing grade mechanics as the last feature of writing to consider. Cali (2007) argues that focusing on the mechanics while writing might disturb the writer's flow of ideas. So, he recommends that conventions are to be edited at the end of the writing process.

With regard to third secondary students' awareness of writing conventions which seems relatively high compared to other techniques of academic writing, the researcher observed that third secondary students pay more attention to spelling than to other aspects of mechanics. Through assessing students' writing test, the researcher noticed that many students have difficulties with paragraphing and are not aware enough of the fact that each new idea is to be in a separate paragraph. Not only so, but many students still have problems of using capitalization and punctuation marks, particularly the full stop and comma.

The researcher attributes students' little achievement at mechanics to two main factors. First, teaching mechanics in isolation does not enable students to use them correctly and appropriately in the writing process. The researcher believes that teaching mechanics through students' writing will be more effective. Second, teachers' feedback on use of mechanics focuses mainly on spelling mistakes ignoring other main features of conventions. The researcher recommends that teachers have to consider all different aspects of mechanics when they check students' writing. The researcher would also like to remind teachers of using a systematic standard and symbols for correcting mistakes, and that students are to be made aware of that scoring system in order to make use of feedback and review their mistakes.

Finally, the researcher would like to comment on the way that many teachers check students' compositions. Through own experience and observation, the researcher noticed that many teachers focus mainly on conventions first and ideas last. By doing so, many students feel demotivated to write, particularly when they get back their notebooks almost red with each word almost underlined. Not only so, but even parents at home feel disappointed and frustrated about their kids' writing. As a result, many students feel less self-confident when they write.

4.3.5. Discussion of the Results of Question Four

Gender Differences

“Are there any differences between male and female students in awareness of academic writing processes and writing outcomes?”

Regarding the first part of the question which deals with differences between male and female third secondary students in terms of awareness of academic writing processes, and by looking at table (12) and by using Mann-Whitney's Test (Table 13), it was found that there are no significant differences between male and female students' awareness of academic writing processes. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that third year secondary students in Sudan share the most general characteristics such as age, educational background, academic capability, social class and socioeconomic status. Moreover, teachers who teach these students whether they are male or female, share the same work circumstances. They almost suffer from poor work facilities and lack of training which resulted in unsatisfactory performance which on its part caused students' little awareness of most academic writing techniques.

However, the results of analysis showed some significant differences in three techniques; freewriting, editing and revising content.

Though, most male and female students showed little awareness of academic writing processes, particularly prewriting techniques, yet freewriting represented an area of difference. By looking at table (12), it was found that 23.6% of male students are aware of the importance of freewriting compared with 28.3% of female students' awareness of the importance of freewriting in improving their writing skill. The researcher believes that both male and female students' awareness is insufficient. It is clear that students are not well trained to use freewriting in class. The researcher believes that female students are more patient than male students and that is why they appeared to have more awareness of freewriting than male students. The researcher would like to remind teachers to the importance of freewriting as a prewriting technique which helps students to improve their writing fluency. Moreover, freewriting can reduce students' writing apprehension as it makes writing a habit.

As for editing, both male and female students show very little awareness of the importance of editing and its role in the writing process. By looking at table (12), it was found that only 7.6% of male students are aware of editing, whereas female students showed 11.5% of awareness of the editing skill. The researcher would find no concrete justification of the difference between male and female students in terms of awareness of editing apart from the belief that female students are considered to be more committed and care for their work. One of the results of a study conducted by Morgan (2013) in e-Vision Journal about peer editing enforces the researcher's point of view. The study revealed that females appear to give more input than males when peer editing.

The third area which showed significant difference between male and female students in terms of awareness of academic writing techniques is

revising content. As for editing, both male and female students show very little awareness of the importance of revising content and its role in the writing process. Table (12) shows that 18.3% of male students are aware of revising content, whereas 21.2% of female students are aware of the technique. The researcher believes that both male and female students are to be trained on how to revise the content of their writing and to raise their awareness of the importance of revising content. In order to find reasons that why female students show better awareness than male students, the researcher believes that females generally consider details and care for what they present.

With regard to the second part of the question which deals with gender writing differences, the researcher believes that this topic has remained a controversial issue as whether it influences students' academic writing or not. Though some studies have shown no significance in the performance of males and females in essay writing (Radin,1991; Balarabe, 1994 and Bodunde, 2001), the present study revealed significant differences between male and female third secondary students in Sudan in writing outcomes as female students performed better in writing than male students (see table 15). Thus, the results of this study are consistent with Hutt (2001) who claimed that girls are better in writing essays and in language than boys.

Also, the results of this study coincided with a study conducted by King (2004) who pointed that females perform better in writing than boys (cited in Fidelia, 2015). Finally, a study conducted by Chambers and Schreibes (2004) revealed that a gap between the achievement of boys and girls has been found, with girls showing better performance than boys (cited in

Farooq,M. et al (2011).

The researcher attributes the significant differences in writing achievement between male and female third secondary students in Sudan to a number of social, traditional and economic factors which would be discussed below.

Regarding the social factor, the researcher believes that many Sudanese families do not allow young girls to leave home alone, or to hang out with their friends. As a result, adolescent girls spend most of their time at home doing their homework, read stories or watch some educational programs on television.

As for the economic factor, and due to the current financial circumstances, the researcher believes that many young people who want to marry prefer a working lady with a good job in order to share the daily life expenses which increase rapidly. So, having a qualification nowadays appears to be one of marriage requirements. Thus, female students study harder to obtain good grades, get a degree and widen their getting married opportunities.

Finally, and on top of that the researcher believes that female students' attitude and motivation play an important role in writing achievement differences. In the classroom, female students appear to be more disciplined, more confident and more responsible than male students.

4.3.6. Discussion of the Results of Question Five

Teachers' Awareness of Academic Writing Processes

“To what extent are teachers of English of third year secondary schools in Sudan aware of the most common academic writing processes?”

Over the past two decades Sudanese secondary students' achievement in English language, particularly writing has dropped drastically. It is known that the single most effective factor in learners' achievement is excellent teaching. Thus, this question of study tries to find out to what extent are

teachers of English in Sudan are aware of writing techniques that can enable them help students improve their writing performance.

By analysing teachers' questionnaire , it is found that most teachers who teach English writing at third secondary level have low awareness of the most common academic writing processes, particularly prewriting techniques, revising , editing and feedback (see table 16).

Before discussing the results of teachers' questionnaire, the researcher would like to comment on the main factors behind teachers' lack of awareness of the academic writing techniques. First, not all English language teachers are recruited according to their qualifications, as it is observed that some English teachers are not specialized and not qualified enough to teach English. Second, almost English teachers lack training courses and professional development workshops that can enable them cope with the most current teaching techniques and methods. Third, the English language main textbook, SPINE 6, does not provide teachers or students with the main features of the writing process. Moreover, the textbook does not have a teacher's guide to help teachers deal with the writing material. Four, most secondary schools do not have libraries where teachers of English can find references on academic writing techniques. Five, most secondary schools do not have local internet network so that teachers can get access to the internet and find relevant teaching material.

To discuss and comment on the results of teachers' questionnaire, and as it was stated earlier, most teachers of English who teach third secondary students in the Sudanese schools appeared to have low awareness of the most common academic writing techniques (see table. 16). The researcher would discuss the results of teachers' awareness of the academic writing techniques as they appeared in the teachers' questionnaire.

Rating Academic Writing Techniques Based on Importance:

By looking at table (16), it was found that only 20.2% of teachers are aware of the importance of academic writing techniques. The researcher believes that teachers' little knowledge of the main components of writing does not enable them to identify or rank writing techniques according to their importance in the writing process. The writer attributes this to a number of factors. First, scarcity of English writing reference books at schools makes it difficult for teachers to develop their English writing techniques. Second, teaching the writing material in the text book without having a teacher's guide at hand does not enable teachers to be familiar with the writing steps to be followed. Third, teachers of English lack training courses and professional development programmes which provide teachers with the current writing techniques and methods.

In order to raise teachers' awareness of academic writing techniques, the researcher recommends that ongoing and in-service training courses are to be held periodically for teachers of English to familiarize them with the most current teaching techniques. As a teacher of English for a long time in Oman and Qatar, the researcher would like to share personal experience regarding professional development. The researcher believes that teachers' professional development is not only the responsibility of the government. The researcher thinks that teachers themselves should look for ways to improve their professional development. Teachers can organize internal training workshops. They can also attend observation lessons with experienced teachers to exchange information. Teachers can also surf the internet as there are different educational websites. The researcher's own ideas are therefore agreed with Alfaki (2014) who stated that:

To meet the changing needs of learners in the modern world, teachers have to pursue professional development. They have to do this by assessing and reexamining their teaching beliefs and practices. They also need to take the responsibility of their professional development in their teaching.(p.32)

Pre-writing Techniques:

Pre-writing is the first stage of the writing process and the point at which we discover and explore our initial ideas about a subject. It is considered by many authorities and researchers as the most important stage of writing (Ede, L.2001, Dawson, M.2005, Hedge, P.2005, Wing, R. 2009). Graham and Perin (2007) believe that pre-writing, “engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition” (p.18). By looking at table (16), it is found that only 18.2% of teachers of English in secondary schools in Sudan are aware of activities that students can do to gather information about a composition. The results of teachers’ answers show clearly that most teachers are not aware enough of what to ask students to do before beginning to write a piece of composition. Hedge (2005) argues that teachers play a support role during the early stages of the composition process by helping students to get their ideas together. The researcher doubts the idea that teachers of English can play that role as teachers themselves appear not to know or be familiar with the different pre-writing techniques students can use to gather and plan ideas for their writing.

In order to raise teachers’ awareness of pre-writing techniques, the researcher would like to remind teachers of the most common brainstorming techniques that students can use to gather and plan ideas about a piece of writing. Students can use outlining, listing, mapping or clustering, freewriting, questioning and graphic organizers. To make use of these techniques, teachers have to read about them and find out how they can help their students use these techniques.

Being closed to what actually goes in classrooms; the researcher observed and realized that teachers of English do not really teach students how to write a composition. They actually help them to memorize texts rather than helping them how to produce a composition. As a result, teachers of English do not feel the need to know about pre-writing techniques as students do not ask about how to write a composition.

Collaborative Writing:

Group writing, as argued by Hedge (2005), is a good example of an activity in which the classroom becomes a workshop as students work in pairs or groups. She points out that the group interaction contributes in useful ways to the writing process. Hedge also mentioned that brainstorming a topic in group discussion produces lots of ideas. Moreover, group discussions and writing help students in the choice of words, the best way to link ideas and organizing their texts. Most importantly, Hedge stated that:

Group composition has the added advantage of enabling students to learn from each other's strengths. It is an activity where weaker writers can learn from stronger ones.

It also enables the teacher to move from group to group monitoring the work and helping with the process of composition (2005.14).

Ferdouse (2015) points out that all studies and researches conducted on group work and its role in students' learning, reveal that collaborative learning is a beneficial tool to engage, involve and motivate the learners in the class.

By looking at table (16), 54.6% of teachers of English in Sudan are found to be aware of the activities students can practice in collaborative writing. The researcher believes that teachers' awareness of group writing is satisfactory compared to other writing techniques which show teachers' little awareness.

Being of such significance and importance, the researcher strongly emphasizes that teachers' awareness of collaborative writing is to be implemented in classroom as it plays a great role in improving low achievers' progress. By looking at table (6), it was found that only 4.3% of third year secondary students in Sudan practice collaborative writing in class. The results of students' questionnaire show clearly that teachers do not train students on group work. In the current situation of our schools in Sudan, collaborative writing might be faced by major problems represented in class size and seating. Yet, the researcher believes that teachers should find suitable ways of doing collaborative writing as it is a technique that most students desperately need.

The researcher believes that collaborative writing enables the teacher to observe students' writing closely, interfere and give help immediately where and when it is needed, and particularly for weaker students.

Organization:

Organization, as defined by Hedge (2005) is, "the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure (p.81)". Cali (2003) believes that organization is important to effective writing as it provides readers with a framework to help them fulfill their expectations for the text.

By looking at table (16), it was found that only 32.2% of teachers are aware of effective organization techniques. The researcher believes that in order to help students produce a well-organized composition, teachers themselves should be familiar with organization techniques. By looking at table (9), it was found that students' writing achievement in organization was 17.4% which clearly show students' little practice of organization in their writing.

In order to help students develop organization skills, Hedge (2005) recommends that teachers should encourage students to read more in English to identify and make use of different writing structures. According to Hedge, the most effective way of helping students to produce coherent and cohesive writing is to offer students practice at the text level writing.

The researcher strongly supports Hedge's recommendation that students should read more in English because through reading students can experience different writing techniques which should definitely help them to improve their organization skills. Moreover, the researcher would like to remind teachers to train their students on how to write an interesting introduction as it excites the reader, as well as a strong conclusion to sum up their writing.

Paragraph Structure Techniques:

A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. Good paragraph writing makes a composition easy to follow and understand. Moreover, paragraphing guides the reader as the writer introduces, elaborates and then draws his arguments to a conclusion.

The results of teachers' questionnaire showed that 42.5% of teachers of English in secondary schools in Sudan are aware of paragraph structure techniques. However, through assessing students' answers to the writing question, the researcher noticed that many students find it difficult to form a complete paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence to end up a paragraph. Not only so, but most students' writing lack unity, coherence and idea development. The results of a study conducted by Zakaria and Mugaddam (2013) about assessment of the written performance of the Sudanese EFL University learners strongly

support the results of the present study as the former study revealed that 70.7%% of students were found unable to develop a particular topic into a unified and coherent text. The results of both studies show clearly that teachers should train students on how to build unified, coherent and developed paragraphs.

The researcher believes that students' ability to form well-organized paragraphs needs more practice. Students should be trained on how to use transitions that show how each sentence is related to the preceding sentence. The researcher recommends that teachers should teach and train students on how a well-organized paragraph is formed. Teachers should first explain to students that each paragraph should be unified which means that all sentences in the paragraph stick to the main point of the paragraph presented in the topic sentence. Second, teachers should point out to students that each body paragraph should be coherent, meaning that sentences should be presented in logical order so that the reader can easily follow the main points in a paragraph. Third, teachers should make it clear to students that each paragraph should be developed, meaning that each point should be supported and explained with details and examples. The results of this study strongly agreed with the results of a study conducted by Zakaria and Mugaddam (2013) about assessment of the written performance of the Sudanese EFL University learners which revealed that 69.3% of Sudanese writing teachers do not focus on discourse features which contribute to the production of unified and coherent texts.

Drafting:

Drafting is the process of writing down ideas, organizing them into sequence, and providing the reader with a frame for understanding these ideas. During this stage, good writers concentrate on getting the content right first and leave other details like correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar until later.

By looking at the results of teachers' questionnaire, it was found that 52.0% of teachers of English in secondary schools in Sudan appear to be familiar of drafting techniques (see table. 16). The researcher believes that teachers' awareness of drafting technique is reasonable compared to other aspects of writing. Most teachers think that students should write their first draft in class. However, many teachers failed to provide good reasons for their answers. Oshima and Houge (2006) argue that students should write their first drafts in class as the teacher is available for immediate support and consultation. In addition, the teacher can check to ensure that everyone is on the right track.

According to Hedge (2005), teachers can support the drafting process in various ways. They can intervene quietly, question and advise students in order to help them get their ideas down.

However, as a teacher of English for nearly thirty years, the researcher noticed that teachers of English at secondary schools in Sudan particularly third year, do not give students the opportunity to practice writing in class as most teachers use traditional ways of teaching. Therefore, most of students' written work is done at home. By doing so, students miss the opportunity of getting teachers' help and guidance particularly in the early stages of writing in which students need support to get ideas, put them together and compose their writing. Hedge (2005) stated that, "Giving help during writing proves far more than giving it afterwards."(p.55). The results of the study conducted

by Zakaria and Mugaddam (2013) about assessment of the written performance of the Sudanese EFL University learners reinforce the results of the present study as 87.7% of participants admitted that most of students' writing is done at home.

Revising:

Among the studies on the stages of the writing process, research on the role of revision is noticeable. In the process of writing, revision functions as a stage of representing and reformulating (Murray, 1974; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Hall, 1990; cited in Li, 1999).

By looking at table (16), it was found that only 24.8% of teachers of English in Sudan are aware of revising techniques. The researcher attributes this little lack of awareness to the fact that most teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools ignore the importance and role of revision in improving writing. Not only so, but many teachers also lack knowledge of when, how and what to revise. When revising a piece of writing, teachers should remind and train students to revise the form, content and organization. To revise the form of writing, teachers should ask students to check the correct form of writing, and that ideas are separated into paragraphs with clear topic sentences. In addition, teachers should ask students to make sure that all points are discussed and developed to the same extent.

To revise content, teachers should train students on the strategies and ways of revising content. One strategy is that students should make sure that the information presented in the topic is accurate, complete and relevant. Through experience and practice, the researcher observed that, and particularly during writing tests, many students address a different topic which is irrelevant to the question of writing. One more and important

strategy of revising content is that students have to make sure the information presented is comprehensible to the reader and that ideas are well developed and organized.

While analysing the answers of the teachers' questionnaire, the researcher noticed that most teachers mix up revising techniques with editing techniques. The researcher attributes teachers' inability to distinguish between revising and editing to lack of awareness of the main aspects of the writing process. The researcher recommends that teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools, and particularly those who teach third secondary should join professional development workshops in order to raise their awareness of the components of the writing process.

Editing:

Editing is checking a piece of writing for accuracy. It includes checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word choice and sentence structure. As revising focuses mainly on making content clear, editing focuses on making the piece of writing meets the conventions of standard written English.

As shown by the answers of teachers' questionnaire, the results state that only 19.6% of teachers are aware of editing techniques (see table. 16). The researcher believes that the results clearly show teachers' lack of awareness of this important technique. Not only so, but this very little awareness of editing indicates that most teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools ignore the role of editing in improving students' writing.

While checking teachers' answers regarding editing techniques, the researcher noticed that most teachers focus on surface errors of writing such as spelling and handwriting, regardless to sentence structure and word choice. The researcher would like to remind teachers not to focus only on

such minor issues, but ask students to edit other items such as sentence structure and word choice. The researcher would also like to remind teachers to train their students on when and how to do editing and what items students should consider to edit a composition.

Peer Editing:

According to Rumisek&Zemach (2005), peer editing is showing another student your writing to help you improve the content and organization. A peer editor's job, according to Oshima&Houge (2007), is to read, ask questions, and comment on what is good and on what might be changed or made clearer. A peer editor should not check grammar or punctuation as this job is to be done by teachers.

By analysing the answers of teachers' questionnaire, it was found that only 24.0% of teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools are aware of peer editing techniques. The results clearly show teachers' little awareness of the importance and role of peer editing in improving students' writing.

As stated by Rumisek&Zemach (2005), there are two reasons for peer editing. The first is to get a reader's opinion about your writing. The second reason is to share writing with others is for you to read more examples of writing. "Other people will have had more experiences that you haven't. They may show you fresh ways of writing about experiences. Reading their paragraphs and essays can give you good ideas to use yourself in the future" (Rumisek&Zemach, 2005.22).

With his long experience of teaching English writing , the researcher would like to encourage teachers to use peer editing as it has a lot of advantages to both students and teachers. As for students, peer editing gives low achievers more confidence and engages them in writing. That is because low achievers

often avoid being corrected by teachers and most students feel relaxed when they practice peer editing. Second, peer editing gives students a sense of responsibility and achievement as they feel that they are helping the teacher. Finally, peer editing allows students the opportunity to interact with each other and ask for clarification. As for teachers, peer editing saves teachers' time and effort.

Feedback:

Feedback is considered as a crucial aspect in the process of teaching writing skills. Many researchers (Paulus, 1999; Hedge, 2005; Min, 2006; Zhang, 2008 and Chiu, 2008) have proved that feedback fosters the improvement of writing (cited in Ghani et al, 2012).

According to Williams (2003), written feedback is an essential aspect of any English Language writing course. The goal of feedback is to teach skills that help students improve their writing proficiency to the point where they are cognizant of what is expected of them as writers and are able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity.

The results of teachers' questionnaire revealed that only 16.4% of teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools are aware of feedback techniques (see table. 16). The results of this question strongly emphasize that most teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools lack awareness of the role of feedback as a part of the process of writing and a genuine source of students' learning (Hedge, 2005).

While correcting the answers of the teachers' questionnaire, the researcher noticed that the majority of participants confined elements of feedback to grammar, punctuation and handwriting, regardless to form and content. The researcher believes that teachers' little knowledge about different features of feedback will not help teachers to provide students with effective feedback.

Thus, the results of the present study agree with the results of a study conducted by Zakaria and Mugaddam (2013) about assessment of the written performance of the Sudanese EFL University learners which revealed that 78.4% of teachers agreed that the feedback provided for students on writing focus on grammar rather than idea development, clarity and coherence (retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v3n4p1>).

As a teacher of English for a long time, and based on personal experience, the researcher observed that most teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools still follow traditional methods of correcting grammatical errors which was found to be inconsistent, unclear and overemphasizes the negative (Fregeau, 1999; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990). Moreover, when this type of feedback is given, students for the most part simply copy the corrections into their drafts or their final writing. The vast majority of students does not record nor study the mistakes noted in the feedback. Having students merely copy teacher corrections into rewrites is a passive action that does not teach students how to recognize or correct errors on their own. Fregeau argued that the method of teachers indicating the presence of or types of errors without correction is also ineffective. Students often do not understand why the errors were indicated and simply guess the corrections as they rewrite.

Williams (2003) believed that teachers have to come up with an effective method that takes into account the shortcomings of common and traditional methods of feedback, the positive aspects and the desires of students.

To lessen student confusion on grammar feedback, the researcher suggests that teachers should consistently use a standard set of symbols or

markings to indicate place and type of error and train the students in what kinds of corrections to make based on each symbol.

In order to provide students with effective feedback on their writing first, the researcher would like to remind teachers that their feedback is to be comprehensive and includes all different aspects of writing, particularly form and content. Second, the researcher would like to remind teachers to avoid overusing negative comments and pointing out problems more than telling students what they are doing right. The researcher, and out of experience, believes that negative comments often demotivate students. Third, the researcher recommends that teachers should only indicate the place of errors and ask students to correct the mistakes. The researcher believes that getting students correct their own mistakes would help them improve their writing skills. Four, as many students find understanding written feedback problematic, the researcher recommends student-teacher conferencing. The researcher promotes this technique as it allows both students and teachers a chance to trace the causes of the problems arising from student writing and feedback, and to develop strategies for improvements. Finally, the researcher promotes peer feedback as it motivates students towards writing, reduces students' writing apprehension and reinforces collaborative writing.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for

Further Studies

5.1. Introduction:

The present study which attempted to evaluate academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools was set on two main hypotheses. The first hypothesis assumed that third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools use both effective and ineffective writing techniques. The second assumption was that the majority of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools seem to use ineffective writing techniques. On the basis of these two hypotheses, the researcher formed five questions to survey third year secondary students' awareness of academic writing processes in general, effective writing techniques, the relationship between awareness of writing techniques and writing outcomes, gender differences and English teachers' awareness of academic writing techniques.

To achieve this goal, the researcher formed three types of instruments which included a questionnaire for third year secondary students in Sudan and a questionnaire for teachers of English in the Sudanese secondary schools, in addition to a writing test for third year students (see figure. 1). For reliability, all three instruments were piloted by a highly qualified team of experts in the field of ELT. All instruments were implemented and data collected was analysed using SPSS programme and below is the summary of the main findings.

5.2. Summary of the Main Findings:

After analysing the data collected through the instruments, the study has come to a number of findings. The most important conclusions were that:

1. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools rarely use effective writing techniques with very little awareness of the strategies (see table. 6).
2. The study revealed no significant relationship between awareness of the academic writing techniques and writing outcomes (see table. 11 and figure. 2).
3. The study revealed no significant gender differences in terms of awareness of academic writing processes (see table. 13 and figure. 3). However, the study revealed significant gender differences in terms of writing outcomes, and that female students performed better than male students (see table 15 and figure. 4).
4. The study revealed English teachers' low awareness of academic writing processes and their role in the writing process.

5.3. Conclusion of Study

This study aimed to analyse and evaluate English language academic writing processes of third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools. The study sets to find out ways that help students raise their awareness of academic writing techniques and how to use them effectively to improve their writing skill. The target group of this study was third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools represented by Omdurman Locality secondary schools for the school year 2013/2014. To achieve the aims of this study and to find answers to the questions of study, the researcher used the descriptive, analytical method to analyse data collected from respondents.

The data for this study was collected by using three instruments. These instruments are questionnaires for students and teachers and a writing test for students. After analysis of data, the results revealed that third year secondary students in Sudan rarely use effective academic writing techniques with very little awareness of the strategies. The study also revealed no significant relationship between awareness of the academic writing techniques and writing outcomes. The study recommended that third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools are to be made aware of the academic writing techniques to be used *before*, *during* and *after* the writing process.

5.4. Recommendations of Study:

In the light of the results of this study within its limits, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

1. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools are to be made aware of the basic stages of the writing process.
2. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools are to be made aware of the academic writing techniques to be used *before*, *during* and *after* the writing process.
3. Third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools are recommended to practice more pre-writing techniques which are considered by most authorities as the most important stage of the writing process.
4. Teachers of English of third year in the Sudanese secondary schools are recommended to work directly and closely with students and support them during the early stages of the composition process by helping them to get their ideas together.

5. Teachers of English of third year in the Sudanese in secondary schools are recommended to get their students involved in writing by using the process approach.

6. Organizing in-service training courses and workshops for teachers of English in general, and particularly third year secondary teachers to improve their professional development to cope with the most current teaching writing strategies.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies:

As the scope of the present study was confined to academic writing techniques, and third year students in the Sudanese secondary schools, and for extreme benefit, the researcher suggests the following:

1. Further research and studies are to be conducted on the issue of academic writing processes at the early grades in the Sudanese secondary schools to improve students' writing skill.

2. Further research and studies on academic writing can be conducted on secondary level on particular stages of the writing process such as pre-writing and editing.

Finally, the researcher hopes that this piece of research will help students in the Sudanese secondary schools, particularly third year students to improve their writing skill and be familiar with different writing strategies that they can use *before, during* and *after* the composition process. The researcher also hopes that English teachers in the Sudanese secondary schools will find that this little piece of experience is stimulating and helpful in training their students to practice different writing techniques which are necessary for improving their writing achievement.

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