

Dedication

,To my late parents

,To my family

,To my best Friends

Acknowledgements

I thank Allah who blessed me to accomplish this thesis. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed who willingly agreed to be my supervisor without hesitation. I warmly thank him for his precious and valuable advice, ideas and instructions throughout my research writing process. I would also like to acknowledge the administration of Sudan University of Science and Technology for offering me the chance to carry out my present study. I would also like to thank the University of Dalanj administration represented in the body of the Secretary of Academic Affairs for giving me the opportunity to upgrade and qualify myself academically. My great thanks are due to my colleagues Dr. Abulgasim Silwar the head of Business Administration, Faculty of Community Development, University of Dalanj and Dr. Azain Muas Azain the head of Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Kordofan University for distributing the copies of my questionnaire. I would also like to send my thanks to my colleagues Dr. Salih Musa Suleiman and Adam Torsheen Firin for their great help. I would like to send appreciation to the English-major students of batch 2012 of both Teachers' College and Faculty of Education at University of Dalanj for their cooperation in participating in the test. I am also very grateful to Amona Geidoom Musa and her son Abdulmoheimin Gamar Anour for their great help in inverting the tables to graphs. Finally, I am grateful for the support of everybody who helped in the study.

Assessing EFL University Students' Essay Writing

Kabashi Omer Saboon Shareef

College of Education

Sudan University of Science and Technology

Abstract

This study attempts at assessing EFL university students' essay writing. The purpose of this study is to measure students' ability in using correct grammar and mechanics in essay writing. It also aims to explore whether students can use thoughts systematically and logically or not. The study uses a test and a questionnaire for data collection. The test is administered to a sample of 89 of EFL third-year students in the Department of English, Teachers' College and Faculty of Education, University of Dalanj, batch 2012 at the academic year 2014-2015. The questionnaire was distributed to (15) English language lecturers at four different universities (Dalanj, Kordofan, West Kordofan and Asalam) in order to assess their responses to the main research questions. The study uses the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analyzing the data. Analysis showed that 95.5% of the participants failed to write well organized and legible essay. The findings also indicated that participants are unable to use correct punctuation and capitalization. Many spelling mistakes are dominant in students' written texts. The findings also revealed that students cannot use correct grammar and the texts lack cohesion and coherence. Moreover, participants could not evaluate, revise and correct their written texts to produce good written text. In the light of these findings, it is recommended that grammatical rules are required to be taught to students to help them write more communicatively and meaningfully and also to design courses in writing skill to encourage EFL students to write both free and controlled writings at university level.

Abstract

(Arabic version)

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تقويم أداء دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية بالمستوى الجامعي في كتابة المقال. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم أداء طلاب المستوى الثالث في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كتابة المقال. استخدمت الدراسة أدواتي الإختبار و الإستبانة لجمع المعلومات. طبقت أداة الإختبار على عينة الدراسة (89) طالباً و طالبة بالمستوى الثالث في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كليتي المعلمين والتربية، جامعة الدنج، دفعة 2012 في العام الدراسي 2014م – 2015م. وزعت الإستبانة على (15) محاضراً في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في أربع جامعات مختلفة (جامعة الدنج، جامعة كردفان، جامعة غرب كردفان و جامعة السلام) من أجل قياس ردودهم على الأسئلة البحثية الرئيسية. استخدم الباحث برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS)). وأظهر التحليل أن 95.5% من الطلاب فشلوا في كتابة مقال منظم تنظيماً جيداً ومقروءاً. وأشارت النتائج أيضاً إلى أن المشاركين لم يتمكنوا من استخدام علامات الترقيم بصورة صحيحة. كما أن هنالك العديد من الأخطاء الإملائية بارزة في نصوص الطلاب. أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن الطلاب لم يتمكنوا من استخدام القواعد النحوية الصحيحة، وتفتقر النصوص إلى التماسك والاتساق. وعلاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أن المشاركين لم تكن لهم القدرة على تقييم ومراجعة وتصحيح النص المكتوب لأجل كتابة النص بصورة نهائية. و قد أوصى الباحث على ضرورة تدريس القواعد النحوية في اللغة الإنجليزية للطلاب حتى يتسنى لهم تحسين مستواهم في كتابة المقال بصورة هادفة، وكذلك العمل على تصميم كورسات في مهارات الكتابة وذلك لتشجيع طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لكتابة المقالات بصورة جيدة على مستوى الجامعي.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	CONTENTS
i	Dedication
ii	Acknowledgements
5	Abstract
iv	Abstract (Arabic)
v	Table of Contents
ix	List of Tables
xi	List of Graphs
	CHAPTER ONE INTROUCTION
1	1.0 Background
6	1.1 Background of the Research
8	Statement of the Problem 1.2
11	Objectives of the Research 1.3
12	Questions of the Research 1.4
12	1.5 The Research Hypotheses
12	The Significance of the Research 1.6
13	Scope of the Research 1.7
13	1.8 Methodology
14	1.9 Summary of the Chapter
	CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE
16	2.0 Theoretical Background
18	Cohesion Devices 2.1
21	2.1.1 Sentence Adverbial (Linking Term)
21	2.1.2 Referring Expressions
22	2.1.3 Coordinating Structures
23	2.1.4 Vocabulary
26	2.1.5 Structure: Control and Support
26	2.2 Achieving Coherence
27	2.3 The Main Paragraph
28	2.3.1 A good Topic Statement
28	2.3.2 Develop a Clear Pattern of Organization
31	2.4 Transitional Words and Sentences
31	2.5 Unity
32	2.6 Modes of Writing
32	2.7 Discourse Production Strategies
33	2.8 The Writing Process

35	2.9 Previous Studies
43	2.10 Summary of the Chapter
	CHAPTER THREE THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH
45	3.0 Methodology
45	3.1 The Population of the Research
45	3.2 The Sample of the Research
64	3.3 The Research Instrument
64	3.3.1 Constructing the Students' Test
47	3.3.2 Method of scoring
48	3.3.3 The questionnaire
48	3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools
48	3.5 Statistical Means
48	3.6 Data Analysis
49	3.7 Summary of the Chapter
	CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
50	4.0 Introduction.
50	4.1 Data Analysis
51	4.2 Lecturers' Questionnaire.
51	4.2.1 Students' Ability in Using Mechanics and Grammatical rules.
55	4.2.2 Students' Abilities in Expressing Thoughts Systematically and Logically.
58	4.2.3 Students' Abilities in Keeping Rich Source of Cognitive Processes and Strategies that Constitute a Good Written Text.
61	4.3 The Students' Test
61	4.3.1 Correct Use of Capitalization and Punctuations
63	4.3.2 Misspelling
64	4.3.3 Appropriate Use of Grammatical Rules
66	4.3.4 Maintenance of Cohesion, Coherence and a Mode of Developing Paragraph.
67	4.3.5 Capability of Stating Only One Idea in a Paragraph.
68	4.3.6 Organization and Development of Information into Progressive Logical Patterns of Arrangements.
69	4.3.7 Ability of Stating Thoughts into Forms of Expressions.
71	4.3.8 Keeping Logical Relationships Among Ideas.
72	4.3.9 Good Textual Planning of Written Discourse.
73	4.3.10 Evaluation of Linguistic Efficacy and Comprehensibility Before Final Production.

74	4.3.11 Ability to Revise the Correctness of Linguistic Structures.
75	4.3.12. Transcription of Ideas into Correctly ties Forms of Sentences.
76	(4.3.13) Students' Total Marks of the Test.
78	4.4 Results
82	4.5 Discussion
82	4.6 Summary of the Chapter
	CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
87	5.0 Summary
88	5.1 Conclusions
88	5.2 Recommendations
89	5.3 Suggestion for Further Studies
89	5.5 Summary of the Chapter
91	5.6 References
102	5.7 Appendices
102	Appendix A
103	Appendix B
105	Appendix C
106	Appendix D

List of Tables

page

Table (4.1) lecturers' responses to students' ability in using mechanics and grammatical rules	51
Table (4.2) lecturers' responses to students' abilities in expressing thoughts systematically and logically.....	55
Table (4.3) lecturers' responses to students' abilities in keeping rich source of cognitive processes and strategies that constitute a good written text.....	58
Table (4.4) correct use of capitalization and punctuations.....	61
Table (4.5) Misspelling.....	63
Table (4.6) Appropriate use of grammatical rules.....	64
Table (4.7) Maintenance of cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraph.....	66
Table (4.8) Capability of stating only one idea in a paragraph.....	67
Table (4.9) Organizing and developing information into progressive logical patterns of arrangements.....	68
Table (4.10) Ability of stating thoughts into pertinent forms of expressions.....	69
Table (4.11) Keeping logical relationships between ideas.....	71
Table (4.12) Good textual planning of written discourse.....	72
Table (4.13) Evaluation of linguistic efficacy and comprehensibility before final production.....	73
Table (4.14) Ability to revise the correctness and precision of linguistic structures.....	74

Table (4.15) Transcription of ideas into correctly ties forms of sentences.....	75
Table (4.16) shows students' total marks and their percentages in the test.....	77

LIST of Graphs

page

Graph (1) lecturers' opinions on students' use of correct capitalization and punctuations.....	52
Graph (2) lecturers' opinions on students' written texts with incorrect spelling.....	53
Graph (3) lecturers' opinions on students' ability of applying grammatical rules while writing their essays.....	54
Graph (4) lecturers' opinions on students maintaining good cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraphs.....	54
Graph (5) lecturers' opinions on students' capability of stating only one idea clearly in each paragraph.....	56
Graph (6) lecturers' opinions on students' ability of organizing their information	56
Graph (7) lecturers' opinions on students' ability of stating their thinking into pertinent forms and expressions.....	57
Graph (8) lecturers' opinions if students can maintain logical relationships among ideas clearly.....	57
Graph (9) lecturers' opinions on students' textual planning of the written text.....	59
Graph (10) lecturers' opinions on students' capability of evaluating the linguistic efficacy before making final production.....	59
Graph (11) lecturers' opinions on students' ability of revising the correctness and precision of linguistic structure of their written text...	60
Graph (12) lecturers' opinions on students' ability of transcribing ideas into correctly ties forms of sentences to produce final written text....	61

