



**Sudan University of Science & Technology**

**College of Graduate Studies**

**College of Languages**



**A Remedial Program Suggested for Handling  
Secondary -School Students Writing Deficiency**

برنامج مقترح لعلاجات حالات العجز في مهارة الكتابة لدى طلاب

الثانوية

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Linguistics

**By**

Afaf Abd Alrahim Jalal Aldinn

**supervised by:**

Dr. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed

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# **Chapter Three**

# Research Methodology

الآية

قال تعالى:



صدق الله العظيم  
سورة طه، الآية  
(114)

Holy Quran

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this *dissertation* to the soul of my husband, who passed away a few months before the accomplishment of this work, which he had patronized in its embryonic form. May Allah have mercy on him. He had accompanied me along the path of success. His enthusiasm and encouragement throughout have been of immeasurable importance.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to identify the writing problems that secondary school students face in writing in the area of sentence structure and paragraph development. It identifies the major errors that are made by those students. It also aims to show ways or techniques of how to build a paragraph. The study tries to find out the sources of these difficulties and suggests ways of how to overcome these problems.

The researcher has adopted the descriptive and analytical method. The researcher collected the data using a questionnaire for the teachers of secondary schools and a test for the students of the secondary level. The sample is 100 English language teachers of secondary schools. The researcher got them in the Sudanese Certificate Correction Center in Khartoum, among them were teachers of Eldammar Secondary School for Girls. Another sample is 100 students from the secondary level in River Nile state ( Eldammar Secondary School for Girls). The researcher used (SPSS) program to analyze the results of both the test and the questionnaire. The results revealed from the test that there was a great weakness in sentence structure and paragraph development, most of the students lack the ability to construct well-formed sentences, they are not able to perform good writing with correct spelling and good grammar, they are not able to use the punctuation and capitalization properly. Therefore, according to the study

findings, the researcher recommends that teaching writing must be the most important goal of teaching English and teachers should concentrate on paragraph writing and give especial care to students writing assessment, Students need more time to practice writing and teachers need much training before being teachers. In addition to some suggestions for further studies.

هدفت هذه الدراسة لتحديد المشاكل التي تواجه طلاب المدارس الثانوية في الكتابة ، خاصة في تركيب الجملة وبناء الفقرة . تحدد الدراسة الأخطاء الرئيسة التي يرتكبها الطلبة أثناء الكتابة . كما تهدف الدراسة لمعرفة مصادر هذه الصعوبات واقتراح الحلول لحلها .

لقد استخدمت الباحثة المنهج التحليلي في طريقة البحث وقد جمعت البيانات باستخدام أداة الاستبيان لمدرسي المرحلة الثانوية واختبار لطلبة الصف الثاني المرحلة الثانوية. قامت الباحثة بتوزيع الاستبيان علي 100 معلم من معلمي المرحلة الثانوية الذين تجمعوا من كل أنحاء السودان لتصحيح امتحانات الشهادة السودانية للعام 2017 وكان من ضمنهم معلمي مدرسة الدامر الثانوية بنات. وتوجد عينة أخرى من طلبة مدرسة الدامر الثانوية بنات وعددهم 100 طالب. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS وبعد التحليل توصلت الدراسة إلي نتائج أهمها : وجود ضعف كبير عند الطلبة لدي تركيبهم الجمل وبناء الفقرة ، عدم مقدرة الطلبة علي إنشاء جملة صحيحة لغويا ونحويا ولا تخلو الجمل من الأخطاء الإملائية والنحوية كما يفقدون المقدرة علي استخدام علامات الترقيم الاستخدام الصحيح. وعلي ضوء تلك النتائج أوصت الدراسة بضرورة جعل تدريس الكتابة من أولي أهداف تدريس اللغة الانجليزية ، علي معلمي اللغة الانجليزية الاهتمام بتقييم الطالب التقييم الذي يليق بأهمية المهارة باعتبارها مهارة أساسية في المساعدة علي تعلم اللغة و ضرورة تدريب معلمي اللغة الانجليزية التدريب الكافي قبل أن يشرعوا في التدريس. بالإضافة إلي بعض الاقتراحات لمزيد من الدراسات.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### Chapter One

### Introduction

#### **1.0 Background**

The writing skill has been with people for several thousand years. Nowadays, it is more important than ever. It has spread over the centuries from clay tablets to computer keyboards. Today, communication takes place in written form than in verbal mode. Writing not only provides opportunities to improve the past but is a critical skill for shaping the future (Coulmas 2003: 1).

The writing skill is one of the four skills that students have to learn to achieve many purposes. Its importance is not less than the other three skills. Students need to communicate through writing as well as through speaking; they need to write assignments and drills and write exams or research papers. Students should do these jobs clearly and fluently. The development of technology has given people from different cultures a chance to communicate and interact with each other through writing. The ability to speak and write a second

language is important not only for education but also for business and private purposes (Kroll, 1990).

According to Gordon (2008), writing is an aid and assistance for other skills; it concentrates on accuracy and communication of meaning.

Brown (2004) defined writing as a unique skill with its properties and characteristics. Writing clearly in a logical and well-developed organization is the main purpose of every writing treatment.

Many teachers have difficulty getting their students to write anything at all, especially if the students know their efforts will be graded. They may hesitate, write short drafts, write the minimum required, or even not write at all. Students need to have the writing culture to write fluently. To reach this level, students need teachers highly qualified and trained.

Every authorized job requires a period of training for new staff – except education. Instead of providing training, teachers are sent fresh to the classroom. Training during undergraduate study is not enough to give one the quality of a good teacher. All experts remember the initial years of distrust, hesitancy, and sometimes terror at facing students. A new teacher is responsible for their learning and well-being for at least four hours a day.

New teachers often face great difficulties. Some of them leave the profession within some years, and some leave within their first year.

However, educators are beginning to make significant work to improve the situation. There are induction programs for new teachers to help them gain the experience and confidence that they need to be successful in the classroom and remain in the profession (Sweeny, 2000).

## **1. 2 Statement of the Problem:**

It has been noticed by many researchers and experts in Sudanese secondary schools that learners of English language face many difficulties in paragraph development and sentence construction. Many learners confront serious rhetorical and linguistic problems when writing in English. Writers miss their meaning because of the misuse of correct sentences. They write paragraphs randomly without planning or steps. They do not know the procedures of writing a good paragraph.

The present study intends to identify the reasons for the difficulties in writing for secondary school students at the level of paragraph development and sentence structure. The researcher will attempt to suggest remedies for these deficiencies.

### **1. 2 Research Questions:**

In investigating the research problem, the following questions will be posed:

1. To what extent does the interference of the mother tongue cause problems in writing at the level of sentence structure?
2. To what extent do students follow the proper techniques of developing a paragraph?
3. What is the effect of writing assessments in improving student writing?
4. To what extent does time allowed for teaching English, in general, and writing in particular, affect the process of teaching and learning of writing?
5. What is the effect of teacher training on student writing ?

### **1.3 Hypothesis of the Research:**

1. Interference of the mother tongue affects the second language learning especially at the level of sentence structure.

2. Many students do not know the proper techniques of developing a paragraph.
3. Writing assessment plays an important role in improving students' writing skills.
4. The time allocated to teaching English in class is not enough to learn English (four lessons a week for 12 chapters, including other skills and grammar).
5. lack of teacher's experience and training affect student's writing performance.

#### **1. 4 Research Objectives:**

The general purpose of the study to know the actual causes of the weakness in writing skills among English-language learners in Sudanese Secondary Schools. The researcher will investigate this topic to:

1. Identify the major errors that are made by English learners.
2. Show ways or techniques for paragraph building.
3. Analyze the errors committed by students and provide corrections.
4. Incorporate a comprehensive set of recommendations and remedial work into writing courses and syllabus in secondary schools (Writing 1 and 2).
5. Identify ways of assessing writing skills.
6. Determine the level of interference of English learners' mother tongue with the learning.

#### **1. 5 Significance of the Study:**



The significance of this study comes from the fact that Sudanese learners of English in secondary schools face many difficulties in paragraph writing and sentence structure. The researcher will try to identify the problem and analyze the errors found in written paragraphs, the ways students build paragraphs, and the way they construct the sentences of the paragraph. The researcher will suggest ways to improve the process of teaching writing.

#### **1. 6 Research Methodology:**

The researcher is going to use two methods in this study, the descriptive and the analytical methods.

#### **1. 7 Population of the Study:**

The study will be performed on the following populations:

1. Second-year secondary school students
2. English language teachers at that level

#### **1. 8 Research Limits:**

The study is limited to the analysis of writing skills (paragraph building and sentence structure) in secondary schools, mainly second year.

#### **1. 9 Research Tools:**

1. A questionnaire will be administered to English language teachers
2. A test for students at secondary level.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Literature Review**

##### **2.0 Introduction:**

This chapter will handle the literature relevant to this study.

Opinions, arguments, and ideas of linguists will be discussed. The researcher has divided this chapter into two parts: Part one deals with some issues that

concern writing skills, the techniques that teachers use in teaching writing skills, and the factors that cause problems in writing. Part two will review various previous studies related to this topic.

Part one: Theoretical Background:

### **2.1 Writing Difficulties:**

Learning to read and write effectively is not an easy task; students need to exert their efforts to reach a satisfactory level of competence. This competence cannot be achieved only through the effort of the students but also with the help of trained and qualified teachers. Therefore, students may face many difficulties before reaching that level of competence.

Harrison (2009) states that difficulties are related to learning weaknesses students may face while learning any skill. These difficulties can be in syntax, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and other types of mistakes students present when learning a foreign language.

### **2.2 Teacher's Training:**

It is widely believed that teacher's training aims at providing the necessary background to help teachers become more effective and draws the attention to the growing need of skills. Thus, teachers should be given opportunities of recurrent education and training and be prepared to meet the effects of the social changes in the school. Besides the basic training or the initial training, it would be desirable for teachers to have frequent opportunities throughout their careers to review and extend their professional equipment, as well as to strengthen their education as people. Micheal (1995:15) explains this:

*"In- service training is taken to include all those courses and activities in which a servicing teacher is taken to participate for the purpose of extending*

*his professional knowledge, interest or skill. Preparation for a degree, diploma or other qualification subsequent to initial training is included within this definition."*

Brumfit (1979:3) argues that training can help a teacher and provide the basis for the development of skills, but these skills can only be developed by teachers while they are teaching. Many books are directed at teachers in training. These books cover most of the problems teachers face in their classes. They connect theory and practice and help teachers visualize what goes on in the classroom.

Griffith (1953:104) states that the idea of success is also dependent on the teacher's confidence and enthusiasm. Micheal (1995:15) views that for the average English teachers, it is essential that the program of their training should aim at equipping them with

1. a good working mastery of the phonological and grammatical structures of English;
2. an acquaintance with effective methods and techniques of teaching English as a foreign language, the variable teaching materials, and the official syllabuses;
3. a certain basic knowledge and understanding of modern linguistics; and some awareness of the life and culture of English-speaking countries.

### **2.3 The Importance of Trained and Experienced Teacher:**

It is so important that teachers should be trained or given at least some training in teaching the English language, mainly teaching writing. This training makes a teacher qualified enough to give the appropriate and

adequate knowledge that a student needs. The result of this training is an appraisal and feedback on their work from students.

Everyone remembers his or her teacher in the old days in school. Teachers played a significant role in our development and progress (Eugenio J. et al., 2012. p. 21).

Teachers should be qualified and well-trained and have many years of teaching experience. Teaching experience helps teachers achieve the process of teaching effectively. It gives the teachers the ability to manage the classroom and be confident and aware of the subject or the skill they teach. They give their students a variety of activities and exercises to test their comprehension of the subject and have a good relationship with their students.

Teachers need to be effective so as to provide their students with the appropriate skills or knowledge. An effective teacher enjoys teaching, has a caring attitude, relates to his or her students, is a good communicator, and understands the content that he or she teaches. He or she should know how to explain that content in a manner that the students understand. The new and untrained teacher needs self-confidence.

One can say that teachers' effect on students can be measured in percentages. "Teachers' practice inside the classroom has not only statistical but also practical significance of student learning" (Stronge 11).

Effective and experienced teachers are responsible for directing and designing the curriculum according to the needs of the students. Effective teachers are skilled at identifying and demonstrating properly contents that need more emphasis; they do not depend on the content provided by the textbook. Also, they are skilled at constructing different learning activities (Pickering, 2003, p. 4).

In Sudan, every teacher knows the famous university for training and preparing teachers (Bakht-Elrudha). Its purpose is to establish examinations and the curriculum and to guide teachers and supervisory programs.

Alkholi (1983) states that one main aim of training teachers is to familiarize them with effective methods of teaching. This aim is achieved through the following:

- 1- Teachers are guided how to teach the pronunciation of the FL.
- 2- They are guided how to teach the grammatical structures of the FL.
- 3- They are instructed on how to teach FL vocabulary.
- 4- They are instructed on how to teach FL reading.
- 5-They are advised on how to teach writing.
- 6-They are advised on how to test each language skill.
- 7- They are advised on what aids they can use.

#### **2.4 History of English Language Writing System:**

The history of writing is the development of expressing language through letters or other signs and also the study of how these marks signs developed (Bright and Daniels, 1996, p. 3).

When the representation of language through graphic means was developed by different human civilizations, numbers of complete writing systems were introduced by proto-writing, early systems of ideographs and/or symbols. With true writing, in which the content of a linguistic expression is encoded so the reader can reproduce, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, the exact utterance written down is a later development.

It is distinguished from proto-writing, which typically avoids encoding grammatical words and affixes, making it more difficult or impossible to reconstruct the exact meaning intended by the writer unless a great deal of

context is already known in advance. One of the earliest forms of written expression is cuneiform (Adkins 2004).

Yule (2010) states that writing, to some extent, is a recent event. The earliest attempt at recording made by humans may be traced back to cave drawings at least 20,000 years ago or to clay signs from about 10,000 years ago. However, these artifacts are best described as ancient precursors of writing. The "cuneiform" is the earliest clear evidence marked on clay tablets about 5,000 years ago. An ancient script that has a clearer relation to the writing system in use today can be identified in inscriptions dated around 3,000 years ago.

Much of the evidence used in the reconstruction of ancient writing systems comes from engravings on stones or tablets. The engraving kept the ancient writing from being lost. However, the development of one writing tradition can be traced to when humans sought to create a more permanent record of what was going on.

(Powell, 2012: 40.) There are claims that logography writing and photography writing are two sections of lexigraphy writing. There is no phonetic value in logographic writing ("word-signs"). They represent the essential part of speech, but the phonographic writing, which has a phonetic value in the symbols, may or may not point to significant parts of speech.

He also adds that despite the idea that parts of speech are words obtained from their unity with written signs.

Logograms can in particular cases refer to phrases or parts of words that are alone meaningful.

People started to write to each other in the eighteenth century. They communicated through letters.

Mugglestone (2006:250.) states that the eighteenth century has been called the "great age of the personal letter." People began to communicate by letter in vast numbers. One indication of the increase in letter writing is the fact that by 1704, the post office was receiving 75 percent more money per year than in 1688.

## **2.5 Definition of Writing:**

Many writers concerned themselves with the definition of writing.

It is useful to review some of the definitions that have been provided by some writers who concerned themselves with the issue.

*"Writing is a process, in which revising and redrafting are valued as much as the finished product" (Piontek 33)*

David Nunan (2003) defines writing as a physical and mental act. At the most basic level, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium. On the other hand, writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader.

Carter (2003:101.) asks some questions about the beginning that will guide him when he explores what it means to write, teach writing, and the value of writing and teaching writing.

"More and more, I find myself reflecting on writing as languishing in language, a dance of oppositions, a labyrinthine journey, a game of Scrabble, a chorus of conflicting voices, an ontological enterprise, a whole and seamless web of textuality, confusion, disease, textual intercourse, dispersing dissemination/non-determinate destination, a germinating and gestating blank page, glossolalia, textual acrobatics, polyphony, ventriloquism, and a play" (Carter 101).



Coulmas (2003:2.) gives some definitions to writing taken from some writers like Aristotle, Lei Hsieh, and Plato. He states that Aristotle mentioned in his definition that there is a relationship between linguistic forms and their meaning, that is to say, he considered ideas and words as necessary tools to develop logical thinking. Words have two different forms, sounds and letters. He says words are symbols of affections and impressions of the soul.

Liu Hsieh's definition resembles Aristotle's in that he affirms that speech generates writing. He states that when the mind is at work, speech is uttered, and when speech is uttered, writing is produced.

People used to communicate with each other through signs and symbols. In most languages, writing is a complement to speech or spoken language. Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, and the recipient of the text is called a reader.

"Writing is the most important technology in the history of the human species, except as how to make a fire. Writing is the lens through which literate peoples see the world, feel the world, hate the world, love the world, defy the world, and imagine change. What is writing that, like the lens you never see, creates the world? The difficult topic is muddled and mixed up with other things that have their own life—religion, artistic expression, speech, and human thought." (Powell 11)

The researcher defines writing as a skill that is not easy to acquire. Students need a strong basis of linguistic competence that enables them to write efficiently and without mistakes. It is an important skill among the four skills in the language learning process; however, many students encounter difficulties when writing.

It is a specific ability that helps writers to put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message.

## **2.6 Purposes of Writing:**

The researcher states that there are many reasons for writing, such as persuading, informing, publication, storytelling, composition, describing, as well as arguing.

*"successfully setting on purpose requires defining, redefining, and continuing clarifying your goal. It is an ongoing process, and the act of writing can alter your original purpose."*(Mitchell Ivers, 1993 26)

A question may come to mind: Who writes and why?

The researcher can answer this question by taking into consideration some writing purposes. Secondary school or university students, businesspeople, researchers, and poets are those who write. If we considered secondary school and university students, they write because they are asked to write on a specific topic. Their writing can be either free (students should not care about the mistakes) or guided by certain rules to help them complete their job. They may describe, argue, write a report about an accident, or write about the natural phenomena around them. The businessman writes so as to take his annual report about the performance and achievement of his employees. Poets write to express their feelings. Therefore, many purposes for writing are set off according to the writer's intentions.

The process of writing is an important skill needed for all people. It is taught for the sake of developing individual learners. It may help them in their roles in society and improve their skills in work and study.

In some schools, some syllabuses are taught in English, so students need to master this skill so as to help them in their learning. Writing is one of those

skills that deeply require students to be motivated. If they are not involved in the writing task, in other words, if they do not have a reason to write, the task will not be an effective learning experience.

## **2.7 Importance of Learning Writing Skill:**

Ferris (2010) states that writing, as one of the four skills, has occupied a significant place in all language classes. It is present in almost every element of language courses at all stages of language learning from elementary schools to college, so a sufficient amount of time should be spent on practicing it. At the elementary stages, writing is viewed as the commonest way of examining students' performance in the target language. For more skilled learners, writing would be a means of recording, reformulating knowledge, and developing ideas or a means of discovery, creativity, and self-expression. It is a form of language production, which is part of communicative competence for many learners, which in turn can contribute to students' language learning.

However, despite the recognized importance of this skill and the excessive amount of effort made to improve it, no very competent results have been achieved on the part of learners (Amiramini, Ghanbari, and Shamsoddini) 2015.

This skill is considered as an important part since it is a priority to language teaching and learning; that is why teachers gave more importance to such skill during the past few years to improve the level of their students.

Because most exams often rely on the student's writing proficiency to measure their knowledge, strong writing skills may improve their chances of success (Alexander, 2008).

Students are likely to write research papers and reports, but their writing should be at a good level because if their writing is badly structured, there might be a misunderstanding and misinterpretation from the reader.

In a Boston Globe article, Professor Chall of Harvard reveals that over half of the adults in this country are unqualified for today's technical jobs because of their lack of reading and writing skills (Linden and Whimbey, 1990). At the same time, the Census Bureau reports that beginning with the 1990s, the nation has started to experience labor shortages. The pool of 18-24-year-old workers shrank from 30 million in 1980 to only 24 million in 1995 according to calculations.

This reveals the importance of learning writing skills for all nations. It is important to have laborers who know how to write and read, so this skill is important not only for students at school but also for those who work in factories and companies.

## **2.8 Approaches to the Teaching of Writing:**

Teachers know their students' level of English, their competencies, the types of text they need to write, and the problems that tend to occur. What is not so clear are the answers to the following questions: How can writing be taught? What methodology and approach should be used? How can teachers use the learning experience? How can they give effective feedback?

Hala Dabani (1992) wrote in her study, "on discussing the approaches to teaching, writing teachers need to take into consideration the four basic feathers of the communicative act: the writer, the reader, the context, and the text. However, these four categorizations are put only for clarification and do not mean that approaches to teaching writing always fall into clear-cut categories.

### **2.9.1 The controlled approach – text:**

The audio-lingual era in the teaching of languages was the outcome of the structuralist and behaviorist schools of thought. Such schools equate learning to habit formation processes that are learned by imitation. During that period, the emphasis was on the spoken word. Writing was considered as a secondary skill, and only a meant reinforcing the language learned through the other skills of speaking, listening, and reading.

One of the supporters of this approach to writing is Anita Pincans (1991). She maintains that free writing should be avoided because it will encourage the learner to rely on his mother tongue, which will result in many mistakes. The best way for teaching the language is to prevent the learner from any chance of using his native language habits and to drill him with exercises from the target language. The learner must not be allowed to create in the target language at all.

*"Since free composition relies on inventiveness, on reactiveness, it is in direct opposition to the expressed ideals of scientific habit-forming teaching methods which strive to prevent error from occurring" (1991:185)*

She adds that to be able to write well in English, a student must not only learn grammar and practice guided reading, he must also learn by imitation how to manipulate the patterns and how to choose variables from within such patterns. She proposes a method that is called "multiple substitutions." through which a learner is led from one stage to the next, from the simple to the more complex. Students have to substitute words in sentences first, then sentences in paragraphs, and then "literary devices" in whole essays and stories until we can fully write "a free composition."

To conclude, this approach is based on the idea that students are given guidelines to help them write tasks, and it focuses on grammatical correctness only, so it is criticized as being not enough for producing written discourse in which sentences are linked together.

### **2.7.2 Current-Rhetorical Writing Approach**

Current-traditional rhetoric, as Sharon Crowley reconstructs it, was "characterized by its emphasis on the formal features of the finished product of composing" (Encyclopedia 156). With the emphasis on product, rhetoric became the study of how to adapt one's discourse to one's audience. Rhetoric's province; therefore, was limited to the ability to convey knowledge to an audience.

One of the outcomes of current-traditional rhetoric was that composition was seen as a small service industry, carrying no academic weight of its own. With no clear subject matter or methodology, composition theory was not considered a good intellectual follow up. However, with the coming of this new rhetoric, composition saw itself as having new importance and new significance in academia.

As cited in Ilyas, (2010:13).

This approach is the outcome of the controlled approach that focuses on the composed products, the rhetorical approach contrast with the controlled approach; it calls for producing larger structures of the language rather than separated sentences.

The main units of this approach are the paragraph and the organizational conventions of the discourse forms. This approach has many characteristics, such as:

Current-rhetorical approach emphasis is on the composed products rather than in the composing process.

The discourse is analyzed into words, sentences, and paragraphs.

The discourse is classified into descriptive, narrative, expository, and argumentative.

The strong concern is the use of syntax, spelling, and punctuation.

The style is concerned with the economy, clarity, and emphasis of the paragraph.

The perception is connected with informal essay and research writing.

### **2.7.3 The Process Approach:**

Swales (1990, as cited in Dujsik, 2008) states that the process approach emphasizes "the cognitive relationship between the writer and the writer's internal world."

Writing can thus be seen as a dynamic and unpredictable process (Tribble, 1990, cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008). Writers try to reformulate their ideas and estimate the meaning of what they want to express in their work. During the writing process, teachers enable learners to explore their thoughts and develop their writing through different stages, i.e., prewriting, writing, and post-writing, to reach their final products. Among the stages of the writing process, prewriting has been the most important stage. This first step of the writing process is defined as work done before the first draft that stimulates thinking about the topic and its various aspects and encourages connections between concepts and developed organization (Avanaki and Rahimy, 2015).

It has been used in both first language and ESL writing classes. It evolved in reaction to dissatisfaction with controlled composition and the focus on product in writing classes. Process writing emphasizes "invention, revision,

and formative feedback" and allows for the recursive nature of writing to be experienced by students (Matsuda & Silva, 2001, p. xv).

Although as Campbell (1998, p. 10) points out, "there is no single writing process, there are three basic stages writers go through: prewriting, drafting, and revising. These stages also have techniques associated with them. For example, students may be encouraged in the prewriting stage to do some brainstorming, freewriting, clustering, etc. Drafting is the actual writing of the paragraph, essay, short story, etc. In this stage, students are encouraged to go through multiple drafts. Revising involves self, peer, and teacher editing. Formative feedback from a variety of sources is considered ideal in process writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998, Matsuda & Silva, 2001).

The process approach is being adopted in English language writing education, which is converse to the more traditional product-focused approach in educating learners. It has been adopted and used by teachers for the benefit of their classes in the subject of English writing (Sun & Fang, 2009). Process-focussed writing is seen as the means by which writers can improve their writing tasks from an immediate stage to the stage that sees their pre-cuts completed.

The concept of the process-based approach has been defined by O'Brien (2004) as an activity by which teachers encourage students to see writing, not regarding grammatical exercises, but regarding meaning and discovery of ideas. According to Tribble (1990), process writing can be considered as a means of teaching English in written form, impressing the importance of creativity upon the writer and focusing on the creation of positive writing for positive writing methods, as opposed to merely imitating a model by rote. Additionally, Silva and Matsuda (2001) argue that a process-based approach



is an approach that emphasizes the teaching of writing as a process; helping students to discover their own voice.

Throughout the writing process, it is difficult to follow the static sequence of writing stages; thus, to invent better concepts of writing, writers need to alternate between different techniques of writing. Therefore, in the process approach, writing could be perceived as a pragmatic and varying practice (Tribble, 1990).

### **2.7.3.1 The role of teacher feedback in Process Writing:**

The teacher takes on an active role in the editing process in process writing, but there has been considerable debate on what type of feedback should be given.

According to Radecki and Swales (1988), there is an emerging agreement among certain L1 and L2 writing researchers in that the teachers' time is better spent in caring about textual meaning rather than grammatical errors, as a means of aiding students in reshaping their writing.(p. 72).

Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) believe that such grammatical corrections are necessary but should not be given on first drafts of multiple draft essays. Comments on earlier drafts should, according to the authors, focus on organization and content rather than grammar. In contrast, Fathman and Whalley (1990) found that "grammar and content feedback, whether given alone or simultaneously, positively affect rewriting" (185). Radecki and Swales (1988) note that the student stated a preference for their instructors to edit grammatical and other mechanical errors as they found these comments to be the most helpful (p. 72).

The researcher believes that feedback should be given for grammar and organization of the paragraphs first because they are the decoration of the

piece of writing. They give the first impression on the writer's or the learner's competence.

Demean (1990) reports that fifty years of research about teaching writing show that learning the parts of speech and identifying them in sentences have no benefits in teaching writing. Evidence shows that grammar instruction has not been useful.

The terminology involved, such as interrogative and indefinite pronouns, is often more complex than the actual sentences it is supposed to help clarify. If the number of syllables in a random sample of words in a book or any other typical text is counted, most words would have one or two syllables. A few have three. However, interrogative has five. Antecedent, infinitive, preposition, and adverbial each have four. Grammatical terms have many syllables. Large dosages of polysyllabic terminology in teaching any subject produces cognitive overload and prevents learning. Another problem is limited usage. The terminology of football can be confusing, but using it over and over again in each game makes it familiar to players. In contrast, the terms interrogative and indefinite pronoun are not encountered over and over again in the normal use of language, so the terms have no opportunity to take root in memory. The lesson on indefinite pronouns requires memorizing. Definitions of grammatical terms invariably involve other complexities and abstract concepts.

#### **2.7.4 The Product Approach:**

The middle of the 1960s witnessed the introduction of a new approach to the process of writing known as the current traditional approach. It was introduced due to the increasing awareness of second language learners' needs concerning the production of written language. This approach was concerned with the logical construction and argument of discourse forms.

Emphasis was placed on the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, the use of transition words, and methods of development. It is argued that these components are intellectual and logical skills rather than linguistic ones.

The product-based writing approach is a well-established means of education by which the learners are persuaded to follow a sample text, often given to them in the first stages of learning the language (Gabrielatos, 2002). In an ordinary product-centered class, learners are given an ordinary example of writing, which they are then required to follow and adapt to create an original text.

### **2.7.5 Writing for Academic Purpose Approach:**

Writing for academic purpose approach

Silva (1990) identifies this approach as 'English for academic purposes.' At the heart of this approach are academic discourse classes and academic writing tasks, which aim at socializing the learner into the academic context and ensuring that he operates within the range of acceptable writing behaviors that are dictated by the academic community (Horowitz: 1986b).

Silva (1990) states that the goals of this writing classroom are to:

Recreate the conditions under which actual university writing tasks take place

Examine and analyze academic discourse formats and writing task specifications.

Select and study source materials that are appropriate for a given topic.

Evaluate and organize relevant data from these sources.

Present such data in acceptable academic English form.

Academic writing in English at advanced levels is difficult even for most native English speakers. However, it is particularly difficult for English as

second language (ESL) students who study in institutions that demand from them to write their academic subject in English

Academic writing is a mental and cognitive activity since it is a product of the mind. The image of an individual working alone in a quiet environment has promoted the view of writing as a mental and cognitive activity. However, as has been pointed out,

"writing can be understood only from the perspective of society rather than a single individual" (Burke, 2010, p. 40-41).

### **2.7.5.1 Basics of Academic Writing:**

Bristol Business School (2006, p. 3) states that academic writing is expected to address an intellectual community in which the students engage in active learning. Some basics or rules must be established. Using the information to one's advantage is a key part of learning. Success at the postgraduate level depends on the students' ability to access, evaluate, and synthesize the words, ideas, and opinions of others to develop their academic voice. When students present what they have learned, it is important to show clearly what they have drawn from others and what is their own.

A student must be honest about how much ownership he or she can claim over the ideas formed, the answers found, and the opinions expressed.

As cited by Fadda (2012), the student must follow certain rules to ensure good academic writing, including punctuation guidelines.

### **2.7.6 Direct writing:**

Another approach directed by Elbow is called direct writing. It is very simple. One does need to think of the audience and purposes of writing.

According to Elbow (1981), the direct writing process is the most useful if students do not have much time or if they have plenty to say about their topic.

It is suitable for memos, reports, difficult letters, or essays that don't need much new thinking and is good for unskilled and nervous people.

The time has to be divided into two. The first one is for fast writing without worrying about organization, language, correctness, or precision. The second one is for revising.

The student should write down everything he thinks might belong to his writing task. He should write fast and without wasting time or energy on the organization or other matters related to correctness.

Students can leave blanks for the words that they cannot find. Alternatively, they can draw lines under the incorrect bits so that they remember to fix them.

One can say that this process is, to some extent, similar to the free writing process. The similarity consists of not taking care of mistakes and organization in the written piece.

Elbow (1981: 26) summarizes this approach by saying there is no need to pause while writing and that sometimes, it is fruitful to pause and return to some productive feeling or idea. He advises not to stop, worry, criticize, or correct what has already been written.

The students should not allow too much repetition. Once they realize they have written the same thing before, they must stop and move on to something else.

When students try to put down everything quickly, it often happens that a new or related thought comes to mind while they are in the middle of writing. According to Elbow (1981), direct writing and quick revising are probably good processes to start with if students have a hard time writing.

The direct writing process is a way to allow a limited amount of confusion to occur in a very controlled fashion.

Main Steps in the Direct Writing Process:

If students have a deadline, they should divide their total available time: half for raw writing, half for revising.

They should bring to mind their audience and purpose in writing, but then go on to ignore them if that helps students' raw writing.

They should write down as quickly as they can everything they can think of that relates to their topic.

The direct writing process is most helpful when students do not have difficulty coming up with material or when they are working under a tight deadline.

### **2.7.7 Plain English:**

Plain English (layman's terms) is a general term for plain language communication in English that emphasizes clarity, conciseness, and the avoidance of technical language particularly concerning official government or business communication.

The goal is to write in a way that is easily understood by the target audience: clear and straightforward, appropriate to their reading skills and knowledge, free of wordiness.

Bailey Jr (1996) describes plain English as a way of expressing the ideas clearly in writing and speaking. He thinks it has two parts:

**Style:** This means having the ability to write clear and readable sentences.

**Organization:** It means starting with the main point almost all the time. That does not mean it has the first sentence (though it can be)--just that it should come early and be extremely easy to find.

#### **2.7.7.1 Advantages of Plain English:**

Plain English has two significant advantages over the other way of writing:

It is far easier for the reader to read.

It is far easier for the students to write.

Psycholinguists show clearly that plain English is easier for all people to read, no matter how smart they are and how much experience readers have.

### **2.7.7.2 Organizations legalizing plain English:**

Many people still write business using plain English, and organizations today are endorsing plain English:

Private business: Many successful companies require plain English. Major improvement in writing has occurred in the fields of insurance, computers, banking, and health care.

Federal agencies: Many (perhaps most) federal agencies are training their people to write in plain English.

U.S. military: Each military service strongly urges plain English by regulation (and those regulations are in plain English, too).

Scientific. Moreover, many engineering organizations have to be able to express their ideas to lay people.

Lawyers: Too many lawyers still depend on the language of the Magna Carta, but even this "iceberg" is starting to slide into the sea. There are, for example, sample wills and other standard documents available to lawyers in plain English.

In Sudan, people who are working in the medical field widely use plain English. Moreover, big companies use it to write their reports.

### **2.7.8 Free writing:**

Another type of writing is free writing. Teachers ask students to write freely. They have to write anything that comes to them without worrying about grammar, spelling, and other writing rules. It can help the student become a more fluent writer.

Peter (1981) states that free writing is the easiest way to get words on paper. To do this, a student should force himself to write without stopping for 10 minutes. His product may be good or rubbish; he may keep on one topic or repeatedly flip from one to another, but that is not the goal. Neither speed nor quality is the goal. The goal of free writing lies in the process, not the product. The only point is to keep composing.

When the student produces an exciting piece of writing, it does not mean he did better than the time before when he wrote one sentence over and over for ten minutes.

### **2.7.8.1 The Benefits of Free Writing:**

Peter (1981:13) mentioned many benefits of free writing. He says:

Free writing makes writing easier by helping to overcome the rooted psychological difficulty in writing, such as finding words, having so much writing time and energy, wondering, worrying, crossing out, as well as having second, third, and fourth thoughts.

Frequent free writing exercises help students learn simply to get on with it and not be held back by worries about whether these words are good or bad. Thus, free writing is the best way to learn in practice, not just in theory, as well as to separate the producing process from the revising process.

Free writing for 10 minutes is the best way to help them write without struggling to find words when turning to the real writing task.

It also helps students write when there is no desire to write.



In free writing, students do not need to think about writing. It is an outlet for good and bad feelings. Free writing prevents these feelings from coming across the mind of a student while writing another thing.

It clears the mind after putting everything in the paper.

It opens the stream of words and thoughts that come down not by the conscious self. There may be mistakes, incorrectness, and foolishness in writing. However, that is not the goal.

One can say that doubting and worrying about the correctness of the sentence are major problems that hinder the students' writing.

#### 2.15 Methods of Teaching Writing:

Broughton et al. (1980: 118) think it suitable to structure a writing course into three main stages:

- (i) Controlled writing
- (ii) Guided writing
- (iii) Free writing

Teachers use these stages broadly. An example of controlled composition is a paragraph with blanks to be filled. A composition for which the teacher provides the topic and helps the class to prepare the written work, either through written or verbal assistance, is a guided composition because each piece of work is different in the language used, even if the content and organization are the same throughout the class. A free composition usually means a composition for which only the title or topic is provided.

The researcher comments that the stages mentioned above are widely used as methods of teaching composition in Sudanese schools, especially in primary and intermediate school. Teachers give topics and ask the students to write a paragraph about them. They also ask them to fill the gaps with words either from a given list or guessed by the students.

Teachers in Sudan apply the free writing method in secondary schools. Students read some paragraphs about a topic; then the teacher asks them to choose a topic from a list of items so as to write about it.

Students have to write nearly like what they have read in the paragraphs. Teachers assess their writing by taking care of the grammatical mistakes and the organization of the paragraphs, and then they look for the topic sentence and the details of the topic.

There was a remarkable development of several methodologies of teaching writing. The direct and the audio-lingual are two methods that regard writing as a support of what had been already learned in the speaking part of lessons. The Audio-lingual activities emphasize on the entire correctness rather than communication.

The widespread adoption of communicative language led to the realization of the real importance of teaching writing as a skill. Teaching writing using this approach focuses on some strategies (Mauk and Met 2010), which include the following:

### **2.15.1 Planning:**

Before starting to write, the students should set the purpose behind this writing and the audience they are writing for since the prior planning makes the work easier. The teacher may play the role of the guide in which he can help his students by providing them with some ideas on how their planning should be and what should be included.

Brainstorming is one of the numerous ways that help the students planning their writing. They may work in pairs or groups because this strategy will help them come up with many different ideas through discussion.

### **2.15.2 Drafting and Revising:**

In this step, it is better to start with the body. The students should develop the general ideas that have been gathered by writing a paragraph about each main idea since each paragraph should contain a topic statement that helps the reader to understand what this paragraph is talking about. The teacher should explain to them the way to write a draft by giving some piece of advice, like telling them "Don't worry about style or the spelling while writing your draft just let the ideas flow."

Then the student needs to write a conclusion which he will summarize the content of the body and an introduction to say what his composition will be about. When finishing drafting, the teacher should explain to his students the next step, "revise what they have collected and examine the content of their writing." All this process is for the sake of clarifying and considering changes that would improve the piece of writing.

Writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning when students view writing as a process. Writing allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible and readable; writing motivates communication and makes thoughts available for reflection (Gaith, 2002). To create a text that represents the writer's thoughts, one has to go through a series of steps, usually called the writing process. When students start to write, they might have difficulties in putting down the ideas and organizing them. They should understand that writing is not a matter of writing down letters, but a process. There are four main stages of the writing process: prewriting, planning, writing, and revising the draft and writing the final copy. Although this process is considered the ideal method, it is not always used. Nevertheless, it serves the students well, particularly for stand-alone paragraphs (Kelly, 2000).

## **2.8 Responding to Students' Writing:**

The teacher may help his/her students by reading their drafts and making written suggestions about how the text could be reordered (Harmer, 2004).

He/she can help them by writing out a report on how a section of text might look better. However, he can ask students to have a look at their colleagues' work and comment or respond in their own way.

## **2.9 Teaching the Features of Effective Writing:**

Graves states that children want to write and read if given a chance. "We teach children how to read books, but not how to read their own writing... Unless we show children how to read their own writing, their work will not improve" (Graves, 1994:8).

Many teachers will admit to being uncomfortable or unwilling to teach writing. Teachers of early stages at school spend hours upon hours on teaching reading and spend far less time on teaching writing. Secondary teachers may have no preparation for this work at all. At the same time, students easily grow frustrated as they are asked to write more and are evaluated more precisely on their writing without having a reward for their work.

Part of the difficulty in teaching and learning writing is that few tasks involve so many stumbling blocks as writing. Composing a piece of written communication demands an understanding of the content, knowledge of the readers and the setting, and the ability to use appropriate conventions for that audience and context.

Teaching writing, learning to write, and editing our own writing is easier when we break apart these blocks.

The University of North Carolina bases its writing assessments on Five Features of Effective Writing. By focusing on what is most important in a piece of written communication, these features not only provide teachers with a more objective set of criteria for assessing writing; they also provide students with a framework for reading and improving their own writing.

"Becoming an effective writer involves developing a constellation of skills and knowledge including organizing information and ideas, using established writing conventions (e.g., grammar, punctuation); writing legibly; identifying and implementing rhetorical structures and writing in a way that engages a specific audience" (Baker, Ketterlin-Geller, Chard, Apichatabutra, and Doabler).

### **2.10 The Five Features of Effective Writing:**

For many years, the emphasis was just on the oral approach rather than on the written one. People neglected the written approach because of the influence of many linguists, from De Saussure to Chomsky, who considered that the spoken language is at the first position whereas the written one was at the second position regarding importance (Brookes & Grundy, 1998). So, teachers have a duty to explain to and tell their students the effective way to write successfully through the selection of excellent resources and ideal materials that may provide the necessary help to succeed.

- a. focus: - it is the topic/subject established by the writer in response to the writing task. The writer must establish a focus as he or she fulfills an assignment. If the writer retreats from the subject matter or writes it too broadly, the focus is weakened. The writer may use a method of development that does not identify the theme at the beginning and may not accurately identify the subject matter at all. The presence, therefore, of a focus must be determined in light of the method of

development chosen by the writer. If the reader is confused about the subject matter, the writer has not effectively set a focus. If the reader is interested and not confused, the writer probably has been effective in establishing a focus.

The researcher emphasizes that the accuracy of the focus will be assessed by the reader, so the writer has to choose a plan that identifies his topic accurately

- b. Organization - This is the sequence, relatedness, and completeness of ideas. The writer establishes for the reader a well-organized composition, which shows the stability of purpose through the development of elements forming an effective beginning, middle, and end. The response shows a clear sequence of related ideas and events and is unified and complete.
- c. Support and Elaboration - These are the continuation and development of the topic/subject. The writer provides satisfactory elaboration to present the ideas and events clearly. Two important concepts in determining whether details are supportive are the concepts of relatedness and sufficiency. Relatedness has to do with the directness of the relationship that the writer establishes between the information and the subject matter. Supporting details should be relevant and clear. The writer must present his/her ideas with enough power and clarity to cause the support to be sufficient. Effective use of concrete, specific details strengthens the power of the response. Insufficiency is often characterized by undeveloped details, redundancy, and the repetitive paraphrasing of the same point. Sufficiency has less to do with the amount and more with the weight or power of the information provided.

- d. Style is the control of language that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and setting of the writing task. The writer's style is evident through word choice and sentence fluency. The skillful use of precise, purposeful vocabulary enhances the effectiveness of the composition through the use of appropriate words, phrases, and descriptions that engage the audience. Sentence fluency involves using a variety of sentence styles to establish effective relationships between and among ideas, causes, and statements appropriate to the task.
- e. Conventions - These involve correctness in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. The writer has control of grammatical rules that are appropriate to the writing task. Errors, if present, do not hinder the reader's understanding of the ideas conveyed.

Integrating the Features of Effective Writing into the planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing phases of the writing process help teachers improve their writing instruction by:

- a. Providing objective criteria for assessing student writing. When faced with a pile of papers to grade, teachers often slip into focusing on surface details or aspects of writing that are easy to grade. The Features help teachers to focus their comments, conferences, and direct instruction on the most critical features of effective writing.
- b. Focusing direct writing instruction and conferences on the right feature at the right time. Rather than teaching a strict sequence of composition and grammar lessons throughout the year, teachers can provide students with flexible instruction in the appropriate feature when they need it most during the writing process. Teachers can teach lessons on focus and organization when students are planning their writing. During revision, teachers can provide lessons on support and

elaboration or style or, if necessary, review focus or organization. Lessons on conventions can be reserved for the editing phase of the writing process, as students prepare their work for sharing or publication.

- c. Giving equal weight (and equal instructional priority) to each feature. Focus and style are often neglected in writing lessons, while conventions and organization are widely taught, sometimes in excess. By giving equal weight to the five features, teachers can ensure that students receive the instruction they need to improve all aspects of their writing.

The features of effective writing can help students to become better writers by:

- ) Allowing students to focus their attention on one feature at a time. By reducing the cognitive demands of writing, students can focus on the aspect of writing that is most important at each step of the writing process.
- ) Providing students with more opportunities to succeed by focusing on areas of strength as well as weakness. Evaluating student writing with five distinct scores helps students to see themselves as multidimensional writers, with weaknesses and strengths. Students who are poor spellers can be recognized for the quality of their ideas, while perfect spellers may realize that correct writing is not necessarily interesting writing. Students can learn to recognize their strengths and work to improve their areas of weakness.
- ) Making expectations visible to students. When students know the criteria by which they will be evaluated, they no longer have to rely on



the teacher to make judgments about the quality of their writing. They can instead use the Features to revise their writing continually.

) Teaching students to become critical readers of their writing. Students who are taught to diagnose and correct their writing problems are on their way to becoming self-regulated, independent writers. By providing instructional support, including demonstrations of writing strategies, writing "think-aloud," guided practice in small-group settings, conferences with teacher and peers, and opportunities to transfer strategies to new contexts and genres of writing, teachers can move students toward independence.

) Teaching students to become critical readers of others' writing. Students can use the Features to evaluate their peers' writing to give constructive feedback during conferences. Students can also learn to read critically and evaluate the writing of professional authors and to appropriate their techniques.

To become an effective writer, students need to acquire knowledge about the characteristics of good writing, as well as the different purposes and forms of writing.

Therefore, both teachers and students have benefited a lot from the features of effective writing.

Ackert (1986) gives some guidance to writing composition. This guidance is so important for writing a good composition. She put this guidance in steps; if followed by the student, he or she would write an effective composition.

The steps are:

1. Write a title. Use capital letters correctly.
2. Leave a margin on each side of the paper.
3. Indent the first line of each paragraph.

4. Skip lines.
5. Don't use contractions or abbreviations. (Negative contractions are all right.)
6. Spell correctly. Use your dictionary.
7. Do not divide the word at the end of a line.
8. Start each sentence with a capital letter and finish it with a period.
9. Use capital letters correctly.
10. Pay attention to the correct verb form.
11. Write an introductory sentence and a concluding sentence.
12. Write a subject and a verb in every sentence (except imperatives).
13. Don't connect two sentences with a comma.
14. Combine some short sentences to make long sentences.
15. Don't add an "s" to adjectives.
16. Start some sentences with a prepositional phrase.
17. Don't begin a sentence with "and," "but," or "because."
18. Organize the sentences in the right order.

## **2.11 Improvement of Writing Skills:**

Improvement of writing can be realized when the students have the desire to improve their writing skills. To begin with, the students should listen and read a lot. Finally, they can practice writing short sentences and then a paragraph.

According to Deneen (1990), the effective methods for improving writing skills have been developed into workable form for classroom application only within the past twenty years. They are not yet widely applied because of the inertia encountered with any large-scale institutional change. Other activities

occupying language arts classes, supported by the availability of textbooks representing huge financial investments, have slowed their acceptance.

The common problem in writing is the amusing mistakes done by the student when using the regular past simple instead of the irregular past simple with verbs like eat and go. There are no grammatical principles for going from "eat" to "ate" and from "go" to "went." It is one of the many irregular verbs that form a mountain of common usage confusion for anyone trying to learn English through formal grammar.

The researcher says students first should know the alphabet, the relationship between sound and written symbols, spelling, punctuation, indentation, and the sentence structure and grammar.

Many studies over the past 20 years show that sentence combining (SC) exercises are effective for improving writing (Myra J. Linden; Art Whimbey 1990.13). It teaches students how to combine simple sentences into more complex ones, like the

use of the word "before" to unite these two sentences into one:

- ) The pool was drained.
- ) The bottom was repaired.

Possible Answers:

- a. The pool was drained before the bottom was repaired.
- b. Before the bottom was repaired, the pool had been drained.

Research shows that SC can improve a student's ability to write completely correct sentences and reduce grammatical errors. It also tends to raise the overall quality of any student paragraph or essay. In short, SC can build reading skills and strengthen many aspects of a student's capacity to handle written material.

Its exercises are, in a sense, the opposite of traditional grammar exercises. In traditional grammar, students take sentences apart, whereas in SC, they put sentences together.

Why should these exercises be so much more successful than traditional analysis? It seems reasonable to assume that it is at least in part because they are exercises in the production of language, specifically in the production of written language, so they feed much more directly into the child's growing repertoire of productive skills than exercises in the grammatical analysis do. In short, they are more closely integrated into the teaching of writing, so the skills acquired in isolation are more likely to transfer directly into a usable skill.

Linden and Whimbey (14) explain that if students want to develop their writing skill, they can develop it by writing itself, not by analyzing essays, studying grammar, or even reading books. Their writing will improve as they learn to express themselves in different ways and then choose the most effective option.

In addition to these approaches and techniques, there are other ways that students can use to improve their writing.

## **2.12 The Prewriting Process:**

As cited in Yunus, Salehi, and Nordin (2012), many ESL learners find it extremely difficult to put their thoughts on paper because, often, they have not fully mastered linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. Indeed, writing in a second language is a complex process that calls for educators all around the world to continuously develop and improve instructions in the teaching of writing to motivate and develop the writing skills of ESL learners. A typical writing lesson consists of three stages: prewriting, while-writing, and post-writing. While all three are essential to

the writing process, the prewriting stage is seen as the most crucial as it helps to jumpstart and support writing by allowing students to generate and organize their ideas before starting their writing task. Previous studies have found that prewriting activities help activate students' prior schemata or create new schematics for vocabulary, syntax, and cultural content associated with the writing task (Kroll, 1990; Swaffar, 1988). Through prewriting, writers can also be guided to produce work of higher quality through the review of necessary vocabulary and the discovery of possible ways of interpreting the writing prompt (Byrd, 2011).

Some of the more commonly used techniques for facilitating the prewriting process are:

1. The brainstorming process, which can be done in small groups or involving the entire class (Williams, 2005).
2. Clustering, which is almost similar to graphic organizers, where students begin by writing a keyword associated with their topic on a piece of paper, enclosing the topic with a geometrical shape, and adding ideas to the keyword.
3. Free writing, which is more suited for more proficient learners and should be carried out for at least five minutes at any one time (Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, 2010). In this activity, students are required to generate ideas and put aside grammatical or spelling mistakes. When the activity is done, students can re-examine what they wrote to identify possible main ideas and put aside grammatical or spelling mistakes. When the activity is done, students can re-examine what they wrote to identify possible main ideas and supporting details.

## **2.14 Paragraph:**

Students in the Sudanese secondary schools have problems in writing a paragraph. The lack of the knowledge of how to develop a paragraph is one of their problems. Writing a paragraph is not the main goal of teaching English. In each chapter of the book, there is writing section, but there are no techniques or steps on how to write a paragraph. So the syllabus and unqualified, untrained teachers could also be the cause of the problem. To write a good paragraph, students have to know what is a paragraph and the main features of a good paragraph. Before writing, the student should have understood how paragraphs are formed, how to develop stronger paragraphs, and how to express their ideas clearly. Arnaudet (1990:1) defines a paragraph as a group of sentences that develop one central idea. The central idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. Every sentence in the paragraph must help the development of the topic sentence. The paragraph is the basic unit of composition. It distinguishes one main idea from another main idea. The paragraph is defined by Lunsford and Connors (1998.116) as: "A group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit."

### **2.13 Punctuation:**

Punctuation marks are essential for writing. They show the reader where sentences start and finish, and if they are used properly, they make the writing easy to understand.

Palmer (1993) states that punctuation arranges the words in the way that a composer of the music orchestrates his notes: the student assists his/her reader by varying the pauses and making that variety part of a pleasing overall structure that makes satisfying sense.

The aim of punctuation is to use the most appropriate device for the task of the moment.

The Columbia Encyclopedia (6th Ed. 2014. Questia.) defines punctuation as the use of certain signs in writing to illustrate how words are used; the term also refers to the signs themselves. In every language, the sounds of the words are tied together, and tone, accent, and pauses are important. Stresses, pauses, and tonal changes overlap in a set of patterns often called intonations. Such features are represented by punctuation, indicated by signs usually inserted between words and often following the feature they mark.

The intonations of the declaration are classified into three types, symbolized by the following:

The comma (,), which is used to separate words or phrases for clarity

The semicolon (;), which is used to mark the separation between elements in a series of related phrases, generally in a long sentence

Full stop, or period (.), Used to mark the end of a sentence.

Exclamation point (!).

The interrogation point, or question mark (?).

The parenthesis [( )], used to set off a word or phrase from a sentence that is complete without it.

The colon (:), typically used to introduce material that elaborates on what has already been said.

Quotation marks (" "), used to indicate direct quotation or some borrowing and usually demand special intonation.

The ellipsis (...) are used to indicate the place in a passage where material has been omitted, or thought has trailed off.

The long dash (—) is especially used in handwriting in incomplete intonation patterns.

Drake (1971) states that there are some types of punctuation which are intended to be read silently rather than aloud, like:

- ) Brackets ([ ])
- ) Secondary parenthesis
- ) Capital letters
- ) Paragraphing
- ) Indentation.

The apostrophe ('), marking an omission of one or two letters, or a possessive case. g The hyphen (-), marking a line division, as in compound words.

These last two are practically extra letters, and their use, belonging with spelling rather than with punctuation, is highly arbitrary.

Each written language has its tradition of punctuation, often very different from that used in English; thus, in German, nouns are capitalized, and in Spanish, the beginnings of exclamations and questions are marked with inverted signs.

The researcher states that the Arabic language has many punctuation marks as there are in the English language minus capitalization.

Angelillo (2002) explained that punctuation markers make for one of the basic components of writing mechanics. These markers are divided into internal marks that refer to the punctuation marks in a sentence, and end marks that are used at the end of sentences or quotations. Some of these marks can be used within words like apostrophes and others between words like hyphens. Capital letters are forms of punctuation so that their use helps readers to understand a written passage.



It can be said that punctuation is a crucial element in the better construction of any paragraph. This is because it helps to attract the reader's attention. As such, incorrect punctuation may negatively affect writing quality.

Stillman states that the word "punctuation" derives from the Latin punctus, which means "point" (70). Such marks within a sentence point to the various meanings of its words; it therefore makes sense of what might in some cases be confusing.

The marks serve two functions:

Define how the various elements of a sentence relate to each other, thereby ensuring clear and unambiguous communication,

Help to establish the tone. The first function is largely mechanical and, hence, more easily learned; the second is subtle. Sometimes the reason for selecting one mark over another has more to do with achieving a certain nuance than with major differences in meaning.

#### 2.14.1 Indentation:

Many students start their paragraph from the beginning of the first sentence; they do not leave any space. Arnaudet (1990:1) said:

*"The first sentence of the paragraph is always indented so that the reader will know that a new subject –or a different aspect of the same subject – is being dealt with. The writer does this by leaving a blank space at the beginning of the paragraph. The student should think of indentation as a simply another kind of punctuation. Just as a sentence ends with a period (.), so each new paragraph begins with an indentation."*

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### **2.14.2 Paragraph Length:**

Students think that a paragraph is just a group of sentences linked together, but it could be a half-page long. The paragraph is constituted by the unity and coherence of ideas between sentences.

There are no special features for the length of a paragraph. A paragraph can be one sentence long. Conclusively, a paragraph is a sentence or group of sentences that support one main idea that controls what happens in the rest of the paragraph.

### **2.14.3 Paragraph Development:**

Before a student begins to write, he/she must decide the most important idea that he is trying to convey to his/her reader.

The information in each paragraph must be related to that idea. The paragraphs should remind the readers that there is a repeated relationship between the main idea and the information in each paragraph.

(Rosen and Behrens 2010, 119.), state that Brainstorming is a stage of paragraph development. If students have done some brainstorming to develop their main idea, they should keep in mind that every paragraph in a paper should be:

- a. Unified: - All of the sentences in a single paragraph should be related to a single controlling idea. The sentences should all refer to the topic sentence of the paragraph.

- b. Coherent: - The sentences should be arranged logically and should follow a definite plan for development
- c. Well-developed: - Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported with supporting materials to explain the paragraph's controlling idea

Paragraph development progresses with the expression of some support or evidence for the idea and the explanation that came before it. The example serves as a sign or representation of the relationship established in the idea and explanation portions of the paragraph.

The next movement in paragraph development is an explanation of each example and its relevance to the topic sentence. This explanation shows readers why the writers chose to use these particular examples as evidence to support the major claim, or focus, in the paragraph.

Continue the pattern of giving examples and explaining them until all points/examples that the writer thinks necessary have been covered in full. All the examples should be explained. A student might be able to explain the relationship between the example and the topic sentence in the same sentence that introduced the example.

The final movement in paragraph development involves tying up the loose ends of the paragraph and reminding the reader of the relevance of the information in this paragraph to the main or controlling idea of the paper. At this point, the writer can remind the reader about the relevance of the information just discussed in the paragraph.

Once students have mastered the use of topic sentences, they may decide that the topic sentence of a particular paragraph really should not be the first sentence of the paragraph. The topic sentence can go at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph.

## **2.15 Topic Sentence:**

As cited by Souzanzan and Zamaniyan (2014), most scholars define the topic sentence as a sentence that states the main idea of a paragraph (Nuttall, Chaplen, 1970; Arnaudet and Mary, 1981). It is a sentence that has the duty of controlling and determining the unity of the paragraph. It makes a declaration about the topic of the subject. The topic sentence has two main parts: the subject indicates the topic of the paragraph, and the focus refers to what the paragraph is going to say about the subject. To create an effective topic sentence, the following must be taken into account:

- a. It should always be a complete sentence.
- b. (2) It should not merely state a single fact.
- c. It should be a general statement but not too broad or too vague.

English paragraphs usually consist of three main parts:

- a. Topic sentence
- b. Supporting materials
- c. Concluding sentence

The topic sentence is the most important for the writer of the paragraph. It makes a declaration. Other sentences of the paragraph try to support and prove this declaration. Also, the unity and clarity of the paragraph are dependent on a good, effective topic sentence. Without a good topic sentence, a paragraph is nothing but a group of scrambled sentences (Chaplen, 1970; Baily and Powel, 1989).

## **2.16 Basic sentence structure:**

### **2.16.1 Main Sentence Elements:**

Hill (1972) declares that the main sentence elements are:

- a. Subject

b. Predicator

c. Complement

The subject must occur in a sentence where it is a verb. No simple sentence element can be identified except in terms of its relation to other sentence elements so that the simple sentence like (John!) or even good boys do not contain identifiable elements and will be called element less sentences. The second main sentence element is the predicator; it is the verb or verbal construction. The predicator can be identified by as the sentence element whose form can be selected by the subject, so there is no difficulty in recognizing the predicator in the following pair of sentences:

Man makes law. Men make law.

A predicator may be made up of more than one phrase. An atypical example is:

John hates and despises algebra.

The third sentence element is the complement. It is the final noun construction which is not the subject and which has its normal position immediately after the predicator.

Teachers in secondary schools know that many students suffer from poor linguistic competence. When they correct compositions, they found many grammatical mistakes. Students do not know how to construct sentences correctly. They do not know the basics of sentence structure.

Grammatical errors not only hide meaning but also distract the reader. A written text or a piece of composition must be meaningful and well-constructed. From an early age, a student should know the basic components of a sentence.

Stilman (2010:72) states that a grammatically complete sentence includes, at a minimum, two things: a subject and a predicate. The subject is any entity—

a person, a place, an object, an abstract concept, a pronoun that refers to some entity identified elsewhere, or an action functioning as a noun. The predicate gives some information about the subject, either to describe a characteristic it possesses or to identify an action that it performs. If there is something in the predicate that is affected by the subject's actions, that is called the object. Together, a subject and a predicate constitute a clause.

### **2.16.2 Spelling:**

No one is expected to know the spelling of every word, but it is important to be aware when something does not look quite right. Students need the basic spelling skills that help them write the correct word. They need to know how to spell in English. They must not trust their memory or judgment.

### **2.17 Assessment of Writing:**

The assessment identifies strong and weak points in student performance. It is a complete process that evaluates student development including its psychological aspects.

According to Huot (2003), writing assessment was recognized as a better technology for assessing student knowledge. The use of essay placement exams at Harvard and other prestigious institutions in the nineteenth century was declared in response to the awareness that students had not prepared enough to study at the university. This idea of assessing recent national assessment programs for public schools in America was advocated by the George W. Bush Administration and was adopted by Congress.

### **2.18. Types of Writing Assessment:**

Irene et al. (2003) have classified many types of assessments.

#### **2.18.1 Objective Testing:**

The assessment was given in pre-college writing courses and then changed to the field of composition.

Writing ability could be measured by having students answer a question about grammar, usage, and punctuation in multiple-choice tests.

The objective test made it easy to "control" variables. However, it did not measure or achieve its goal. It could not determine the ability of students to write.

### **2.18.2 Essay Tests:**

These were considered to be better than objective tests because they measured what they intended to assess. The advantage of a writing test is that it measures writing proficiency more than grammar proficiency.

### **2.18.3 Portfolio Assessment:**

Portfolio assessment affected the students' achievement in their overall writing as well as their achievement regarding focus, elaboration, organization, and vocabulary.

A portfolio assessment helps students foster their English writing ability since they receive useful comments from the teacher and have an active involvement in the process of assessment by themselves. Writing portfolios can be utilized in EFL classes as a technique whereby learning, teaching and assessing are connected. Portfolios can be used to increase the development of writing ability among EFL students and help them to progress their writing goals. (Khodashenas, Farahani, and Amouzegar, 2013)

This test takes into account the need for the generating of ideas and thoughtful revision over time. The portfolios were valid because they achieved their goal of testing a student's ability to write and revise in a

rhetorical setting. However, the method has been criticized by many teachers because its reliability is low.

#### **2.18.4 Program Assessment:**

It measures the program, as a whole, and the outcome of the student at the end of the program. Although this program is useful, it does not give much information about individual learners.

Kathleen Yancy (1999) has challenged compositions to think about how programmatic assessment could be used to help individuals, such as a challenge that is to read more over the next several years.

#### **2.18.5 Direct and Indirect Assessment:**

The indirect assessment has been criticized by the national council teachers of English. However, it is popular with the administrator, as it is easy and inexpensive. The direct performance assessment measures students' writing ability by having students write. In this way, the student should demonstrate writing competence rather than knowing the correct answer. Lee Odell (1981), as cited in Lippman (202), has argued that direct writing assessment defines competence too narrowly. Students should be able to demonstrate "the ability to discover what one wishes to say and to convey one's message through language, syntax, and content that are appropriate for one's audience and purpose" (p. 103).

Despite the number of assessments, many schools apply it. Their topics should be as Wolcott cited in Lippman (202):

- ) Accessible
- ) Stated clearly
- ) Broad-based

Engaging, but not so emotional that students lose control of their writing



Allen (2008) states that the direct assessment is based on an analysis of student products, in which they demonstrate how well they have mastered learning outcomes. Indirect assessment is based on an analysis of reported views about students' mastery of learning outcomes.

Cooper (1984) also believes that direct assessment requires the examinees to write one or more essays, typically on pre-selected topics, and indirect assessment requires them to answer multiple-choice items. He also states that direct assessment is sometimes referred to as a "production" measure and indirect assessment as a "recognition" measure. According to Fraidan (2005), while the direct approach of assessing writing has been criticized for its subjectivity, an indirect approach is popular for being objective and producing the same result in the future.

#### **2.18.6 Internal Assessment and External Assessment:**

Internal assessment has concentrated on individual learners. Given that, it will be tied to the curriculum for the class. It has two main advantages. First, the teacher helps the learners to comprehend the instruction that they do not understand and can give them more time if they have not finished. The evaluation is given to students and their parents directly (Wolcott, 1998).

One can say that this kind of assessment is applied to the systems of many countries nowadays. External assessment is considered a top-down approach because it occurs outside the classroom.

#### **2.18.7 Summative Assessment:**

Aims are to measure the success of a particular effort after it is over when there is no opportunity for revision. The purpose of such an assessment is to judge how well students have accomplished the writing task.

### **2.18.8 Outcome Assessment:**

William Spady (1994), as cited in Irene, defines outcome assessment in the following way:

*“Outcomes are high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context”(p. 18).*

### **2.18.9 Programmatic Assessment:**

Its concern is an individual learner. It provides a report on how students are doing as a result of a particular program. Irene et al. (2003) claim that the teacher does not care about the school-wide writing assessment but about finishing this set of compositions before dawn.

### **2.19 Measurement:**

Mac Namarac (2000, 56-58) defines measurement as investigating the qualities of the process of assessment by looking at the scores. There are two types of measurements:

) Qualification:

This assigns the number of scores to the various outcomes of assessments. The set of scores available for the analysis when the data is gathered from some tests is known as the data matrix.

) Checking:

This means to find out the various mathematical and statistical patterning within the matrix to investigate the extent to which the properties such as, for example, the consistency of the student's performance are present. The aim of these procedures is to achieve quality control, which improves the meaning of the fullness and fairness of the conclusions reached by students. In

addition to that, Thorndike (1996, 9) pointed out that measurement always involved three common steps:

Identifying and defining the quality that is to be measured.

Determining a set of operations by which the attribute may be made manifest and perceivable.

) Evaluation:

Evaluation can be defined in various ways according to Badman (1992, 3).

*"Evaluation is a process of systematically collecting and organizing information to form valuable judgments based on firm evidence."* These judgments are concerned with extending to which particular targets are done or achieved. Therefore, they must guide decision-makers toward prosperity and development.

Torndike (1969, 30) defined evaluation as "a term closely related to measurement"; this definition to some extent is more inclusive including an informal and intuitive judgment of a candidate's progress. Also, it includes the aspects of valuing what is desirable and good. Effective techniques of measurement provide a solid foundation for evaluation whether for a single student or to all. Moreover, evaluation of students' progress is a major aspect of a teacher's job and a good view of where the students are and how they are progressing.

Orlish (1998, 333) defines evaluation as "a process of making judgments and supporting one's point of view with specific facts and values." It also determines the effectiveness of a lesson or a unit concerning students' outcomes.

The process of evaluation is fundamentally descriptive in a degree to which certain traits are processed by certain students. However, an assessment is the process that assigns numbers to the results of an assessment. It is a qualitative

description that makes no statement about the quality of the students' performance.

## **2.20 Characteristics of Good and Bad Writing:**

Shows the characteristics of good writing as follows:-

1. It should be free of errors in grammar and punctuation
2. It should convey a clear sense of the writer's purpose
3. It should carry out an effective strategy regarding the development of thoughts and argumentations
4. It should demonstrate good style, engaging the reader with its use of style and punctuation

### **2.21.1 The basic qualities of good writing:**

Most academics will probably agree on the fundamental qualities of good writing. Teachers may broadly agree that basic errors of grammar and mechanics must be avoided. Well-written paragraphs should be free of grammatical and mechanical errors; they should conform to the conventions of standard academic English; they should avoid traces of inappropriate dialect or colloquialisms, and they should be sensitive to the level of formality called for by an assignment.

Good writing should convey a clear sense of the writer's purpose. It should be accurate and communicate a content that is unified and significant. A written paragraph should have two qualities pointful and grammatically perfect because it is probably possible for writing to avoid the errors of grammar and mechanics mentioned above and still be poorly written. An excellent student might write in a way that is both conceptually pointless and grammatically perfect.

Experiences at school leave some people with the impression that good writing simply means writing that contains no bad mistakes--that is, no errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling. In fact, good writing is much more than just correct writing. It is writing that responds to the interests and needs of our readers. This website (<http://grammar.about.com/od/yourwriting/a/characteristics.htm>) states that the basic characteristics of good and effective writing should be as follows:

- ) Good writing has a clearly defined purpose.
- ) It makes a definite point.
- ) It supports that point with specific information.
- ) The information is clearly connected and arranged.
- ) The words are appropriate, and the sentences are concise, coherent, and correct.

Good writing is the result of much practice and hard work. It means that the ability to write well is not a gift that some people are born with. If students are willing to work, they can improve their writing.

### **2.21.2 Good and Poor Writers:**

The most professional writers produce draft after draft. They attack what they write, erasing, adding, altering, and moving words around. They rarely write on just one piece of paper at a time, and they do more planning as they write than before they write.

According to Smith (1994, 209), there are significant differences between good and poor writers of all ages and degrees of experience in that the good ones very often look back and reread during their writing as well as at the end (p. 209) Meanwhile, poor writers often do not read their work at all. Poor writers are also much more likely to be satisfied with the work they have

done without really knowing what they have written. Good writers, on the other hand, are frequently dissatisfied with what they have done, even after many revisions. Their problem is deciding on when to stop writing because every rewrite seems to offer the possibility of more improvement.

There are differences in re-reading too. Poor writers reread, perhaps rewrite a bit, and then write on. In contrast, good writers reread, rework, reflect, and reread again before writing on. The second (or final) re-reading may be executed less for the sake of revising what has already been written and more for gaining an impulse and persistence in what is to be written next. Such writing is not performed by stringing one idea after another, but instead, one idea is flowing out of and into another without consistency among words, sentences, and paragraphs. Everything that is written or rewritten is basic work for the development of what has already been done and what is still to be done.

## **2.22 Cognitive Writing:**

Writing as a cognitive process has been the focus of much recent theoretical and empirical exploration. Cognitive models of composing describe conscious, intellectual acts by which writers determine what they want to accomplish and how they want to accomplish it. A psychology of writing should include an account of an emotional experience.

The researcher can say that emotion has a strong influence on completing the process of writing.

Bleich (1976) has noted that feelings have a great deal to do with what one teaches and what one learns.

Apart from creative writing or the emotional interests linked to the formal argument, classroom practices have ignored emotion. Research examining the role of feeling in writing is practically missing. Many have viewed it as

an intellectual act, one that can be planned, tracked, and predicted (Daly & Miller, 1975; Rose, 1984b; M. W. Smith, 1984).

Mandel (1978) sees writing as a process done by the collaboration of muscles in the fingers, hand, arm, neck, shoulder, back, and eyes.

According to Flower and Hayes (1981a), what makes the whole process work is the goals and subgoals, all of this without one mention of emotion.

Brand (199) is trying to broaden the knowledge of how human minds operate regarding written language.

"Emotion mobilizes people for writing, accompanies it, supports us through active revisions, helps us find a conclusion, and colors the way we approach writing the next time. It is appropriate to appeal to emotion theory and research to obtain a full picture of writers' mental lives when composing. Epistemologists thus thank the contribution of emotion to language. Psychologists involve emotion in mental activity. Composition specialist Murray maintains that writing is a logical act in an emotional setting. Personal experience suggests it." (Brand 4)

The researcher wants to indicate that although many have different views about the effect of feeling on writing, it is clear that feelings and minds play important roles in completing the process of writing.

A lack of interest, enjoyment, anger, anxiety, and boredom can affect writing. They may slow thinking, decrease attentiveness, prevent concentration, and reduce what students can do in a short time.

### **2.23 Common Mistakes:**

Common errors take place during the student writing due to lack of linguistic competence. Randy (2011) on his website identified them as follow:

1. Sentence fragments
2. Comma splices

3. Mixed construction
4. Lack of subject/verb agreement
5. Pronoun errors
6. Apostrophe/Possessive errors
7. Misplaced/Dangling modifiers
8. Inaccurate word choice

Spelling errors, including the following mistakes:

1. Interchanging endings, particularly -ant/-ent and -ance/-ence:  
Calendar, cemetery, separate The sounds are the same, but the spelling is different (some words, in fact, may go either way: for example, dependant or dependent; descendent or descendant)
2. Interchanging able / audible endings Accessible, compatible, Like -ant and -ent, these sounds are indistinguishable to the ear. The more common ending is -able, so writers are more likely to err when the ending should be -able. (Some words can go either way: for example, extendable and extendible both appear in some dictionaries.)
3. Interchanging soft c and s, and soft g and j  
consensus, concise, ecstasy, idiosyncrasy, congested  
Watch out for these identical-sounding letters. (A few words can go either way: for example, supercede or supersede, offence or offense, defence or defense, jibe or gibe.)
4. Misapplying Double Consonants:  
accommodate, commitment, embarrassment, jackknifed, millennium, necessary, threshold.  
Words with double consonants are often troublesome. Errors include doubling the wrong letter, wrongly doubling more than one, and doubling just one letter when the word contains two sets of doubles.



5. Spelling words the way they are (mis) pronounced:

Asterisk, auxiliary, barbiturate, boundary, diphtheria, government, hierarchical, infinitesimal, miniature, mischievous, ophthalmologist, paraphernalia, pejorative, prerogative, temperamental - it must be admitted that some of these words, if not precisely tongue-twisters, do not trip off the tongue. Errors in speech can range from minor slips in enunciation to outright gaffes. Writers may then spell these words the way they say them, not realizing that both are wrong.

Spelling a derivative the same as its root word:

Disastrous, explanation, maintenance, pronunciation. When one word is derived from another, it is often the case that the spelling of the root word still holds—but not always. Be aware of the exceptions. (Incidentally, ever notice how many speakers mispronounce the word pronunciation?)

6. Keeping—or not keeping—the final -e of a root word:

Desirable, forgivable, knowledgeable, loathsome, noticeable

For some words, the final -e is kept, and for some, it is not—and writers often guess wrong.

7. **Giving an unfamiliar word the spelling of a more familiar one:**

Bellwether, guttural, pastime, playwright, sacrilegious, simpatico  
When a relatively uncommon word sounds like a better-known one (weather, gutter, pass, write, religious, sympathy), the spelling of the most familiar word may be mistakenly adopted.

## **2.24 examples of Student Writing Mistakes:**

### **1. Spelling Mistakes**

Spelling means to put some letters of the alphabet together to form words. Every letter is a phonetic symbol that represents one sound, and each

sound has its own appropriate symbol. However, that is not the case in English. English spelling is a problem because there is no consistency in the sounds and letters. This inconsistency seems to be one of the students' problems in spelling.

Many spelling mistakes occur when incorrect homophones (words with the same pronunciation such as "right," "rite," and "write") are used in a sentence.

Incorrect: "Watch you're words!" "Spell-check may not see words that are misused because they are spelled rite!"

Correct: "Watch your words!" "Spell check may not see words that are misused because they are spelled right!"

Examples of spelling mistakes:

## 2. **Run-on sentences** (no comma before a coordinating conjunction)

A coordinating conjunction connects two clauses. Students can use the acronym FANBOYS to remember the most common coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. Unless the clauses are very short and closely related, you need a comma before the conjunction. If you forget to put a comma before the conjunction, the sentence becomes a runon.

Incorrect: "My dog barks at the mailman \*but she is too lazy to chase him."

Solution: Check to see if the clauses before and after the conjunction could be sentenced on their own. If so, insert a comma before the conjunction

Correct: "My dog barks at the mailman, but she is too lazy to chase him."

## 3. **Sentence fragments:**

A sentence fragment is a sentence that is missing a subject (the thing doing the action) or a verb (the action).

Incorrect: "An epic all-nighter!"

Solution: Add a subject or verb to the fragment, as needed.

Correct: "I pulled an epic all-nighter!"

#### **4. No comma after an introductory phrase**

An introductory phrase provides some background information. It is usually followed by a comma. The comma is optional when the phrase is very short.

Incorrect: "While a Thanksgiving commercial played on the TV she was at the library trying to study for her final exams."

Correct: "While a Thanksgiving commercial played on the TV, she was at the library trying to study for her final exams."

Correct: "At long last, I made it home."

#### **5. Wordiness:**

A sentence is wordy if it uses more words than necessary to convey meaning. Wordiness often makes writing unclear.

Incorrect: "Jessica ended up having to walk all the way home because she missed the last train leaving Central Station."

Solution: Identify long phrases that can be replaced with a single word. Eliminate words that have the same meaning. Eliminate weak words, such as "basically" and "sort of." Eliminate nonessential information.

Correct: "Jessica walked home because she missed the last train."

#### **6. Comma splicing:**

A comma splice occurs when you use a comma to connect two clauses that could be sentences on their own.

Incorrect: He bought back-to-school clothes, his mom bought a scarf.

Solution: Add a coordinating conjunction (remember: FANBOYS) after the comma, or change the comma to a period, semicolon, or colon.

Correct: He bought back-to-school clothes, and his mom bought a scarf.

OR: He bought back-to-school clothes. His mom bought a scarf.

7. **Comma misuse** (inside a compound subject):

A compound subject uses a conjunction to connect more than one noun phrase.

Incorrect: My roommate, and his brother, went to see a movie.

Correct: My roommate and his brother went to see a movie.

Interrupters are phrases that break the flow of a sentence to provide additional detail. Put commas around interrupters.

Incorrect: It was unfortunately\* the end of winter vacation.

Correct: It was, unfortunately, the end of winter vacation.

8. **Subject-verb agreement:**

Singular subjects take singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs.

Incorrect: Michael study at the library every day.

Correct: Michael studies at the library every day.

**2.25 Errors in English:**

There have been many investigations on the process of the first language (L1) acquisitions and second language (L2) learning. It has been found that L1 acquisition and L2 learning are working similarly. Because of the complexities about the L1 acquisition and L2 learning, several linguists and language researchers have been greatly interested in studying errors made by L2 learners. They believe that learners' errors hold an important role in improving language teaching-learning process.

Errors in English are essential. They are a proven that the process of learning is going on. The product of these errors is a language between the first language and the target language, interlanguage. It is defined by (Larsen, et. Al., 1992) as:

"Interlanguage is a continuum between the first language and the target language along which all learners traverse. The term interlanguage was firstly used by John Reinecke in 1935. He always used interlanguage to refer to a nonstandard variety of a first or second language, used as a means of intergroup communication. "(Larsen, et. Al 60).

The learners' errors are displayed in the four linguistic tasks. Compared to speaking, reading and listening, writing is the most skill that shows many errors. It is the most difficult of the language abilities to acquire (Allen & Corder, 1974). Its level of difficulty varies between native speakers (NS) who think in the language used (in this case it is English) and non-native speakers (NNS) who think in their own LI.

## **2.26. Types of Errors:**

James (1998), claims that there are four major categories of errors:

1. Interlingual errors.
2. Intralingual errors.
3. Communication strategies based errors
4. Induced Errors

### **2.26.1 Interlingual errors:** (mother- tongue influence)

Corder, (1973:22) suggested that transfer or interlingual interference carries two concepts, concerning first language habits, first, the concept of positive transfer which transferring from L1 to L2 positively or without committing errors.

The second concept is the negative transfer, which is, the transfer that results in difficulties and errors.

### **2.26.2 Interlingual errors:** (target language courses)

According to Richards, (1970)

“They are items produced by the learner, which reflects not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalization based on partial exposing to the target language. The learner tries to derive rules behind the data to which he has learned; He may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor the target language " (Richard, 1970:6)

Corder (1980: 10), made a distinction between two types of intralingual errors:

Systematic and non-systematic errors, or the errors of competence and the errors of performance.

### **2.26.3 Systematic errors:**

According to Corder (1981), systematic errors are errors of competence. They are regular in their occurrence and reflect the linguistic system stored in the learner's brain. Corder maintains that systematic errors can be divided into two main categories.

### **2.26.4 Overgeneralization Errors:**

They are caused by generalizing the applicability of rules to all cases, e.g., "He goed to the market yesterday." In this example, the speaker tried to generalize the rules of regular past tense inflection across all English verbs. The learner assumes that the lexical item behaves like those to which he has been exposed before or past tense rules are universal like -s inflection for the third person in the present tense.

Example: He rides his bicycle.

### **2.26.5 Simplification errors:**

The learner tends to reduce the components of sentences to make them simple. It is the opposite of overgeneralization.

#### **2.26.6 Non-Systematic Errors:**

These errors occur randomly. The learner is uncertain about the grammar in these cases.

*"it is the stage of random errors, a stage which Corder calls 'pre-systematic' in which the learner is only vaguely aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of items. The incorrect sentence "the different city is is another city in the another two" surely comes out of making wild guesses at what to write on consistencies like "John cans sing " and John can to sing "Keshavaraz (1993:53)*

Corder (1973) maintains that non-systematic errors can be set as follows:

##### **2.26.6.1 Communication strategy-based errors consist of two types:**

- ) Holistic strategies: They refer to the learner's assumption that if the learner says A in l2, then he can say B; the most general item is the approximation.
- ) Analytic strategy: The concept is expressed indirectly by allusion rather than by direct reference.

#### **2.26.7 Induced Errors:**

Certain factors may cause some types of errors. These factors may be inside or outside the classroom.

James (1998) says that Stenson is the first one who used the term "induced errors." They are the result of definition and explanation that is given by the teacher.

*"They result from the classroom situation than from either the student's incomplete competence in English grammar (intralingual error) or first language interference (interlingual errors)."*  
(Stenson 1983:256)

## **2.27 Description of Errors**

Common errors appear in student writing due to a lack of linguistic competence. Randy (2011) identified them in order as follows on his website:

- 1) Sentence Fragments
- 2) Run-on Sentences
- 3) Comma Splices
- 4) Mixed Construction
- 5) Faulty Parallelism
- 6) Lack of Subject/Verb Agreement
- 7) Pronoun Errors
- 8) Apostrophe/
- 9) Possessive Errors
- 10) Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers
- 11) Inaccurate Word Choice
- 12) Semicolon Errors
- 13) Spelling Errors

Randy (2011) gave a short definition for each type of error and explained how students make them.



1. **Sentence fragment:** He defines a sentence fragment (or incomplete sentence) as a sentence that lacks a subject, a finite verb, or a complete thought. A sentence fragment is one of the three serious "sentence-boundary" errors. Students should avoid writing "sentences" that begin with "That," "Because," or an "-ing" verb as well as "sentences" that lack a complete thought.

Examples:

Working on his homework all afternoon.\*

That the dog would have to be put outside while the house was fumigated.\*

Correction: A sentence can be corrected by supplying one or more of the missing elements: the subject, the finite verb, or the complete thought. Also, a sentence fragment often can be corrected by using a comma instead of a period to separate the incomplete sentence from the sentence that comes before or after it.

The corrections are as follow:

He worked on his homework all afternoon.

The dog would have to be put outside while the house was fumigated.

2. **A run-on sentence** occurs when two or more sentences are brought together with no punctuation between the sentences. Run-on sentences are one of the three serious "sentence-boundary" errors. It does not refer to a long sentence.

Examples:

We listened to music all night my favorite song was "Boogie Fever."\*

Correction: Separate the complete sentences with one of the following:

- (1) a period,
- (2) a semicolon, or
- (3) a comma followed by a conjunction (such as "but," "and," or "so").

The correction is as follows:

We listened to music all night. My favorite song was "Boogie Fever."

3. **Comma splice:** This occurs when a comma separates two complete sentences. Comma splices are one of the three serious "sentence-boundary" errors.

Examples:

) He could not stand the long hours, he quit his job.\*

) We all watched Titanic, it was a great movie!\*

) Susan was overwhelmed with work, however she was able to complete her work before she left the office.\*

The correction is:

Comma splices can be corrected in several different ways, including the following:

) using a period instead of the comma,

) using a semicolon instead of the comma, and

) adding a conjunction (such as "or," "but," and "if") immediately after the comma.

The correction is:

- 1) He could not stand the long hours, so he quit his job.

- 2) We all watched Titanic. It was a great movie!
- 3) Susan was overwhelmed with work; however, she was able to complete her work before she left the office.
- 4) Mixed construction occurs when one part of a sentence does not logically or grammatically follow another part of the sentence.

Examples:

In Alice Walker's "To Hell with Dying" is about the love the narrator shares with Mr. Sweet.\*

Because of pollution is one reason so many animals are endangered.\*

Correction: Most often, mixed construction can be corrected if the student considers the subject and the verb of the sentence in which mixed construction occurs. For instance, in the first example above, the subject of "is about" is "Alice Walker's 'To Hell with Dying,'" not "In Alice Walker's 'To Hell with Dying.'" Mixed construction can often be corrected simply with the deletion of a word or two.

The correction is:

- 1) Alice Walker's "To Hell with Dying" is about the love the narrator shares with Mr. Sweet.
- 2) Pollution is one reason so many animals are endangered.

5. **Faulty parallelism** occurs when parts of a sentence that are either in balance or part of a series are not presented with the same (or parallel) grammatical structure.

Examples:

- 1) He likes to listen to music, to watch movies, and going swimming.\*

- 2) She understood how to change the oil and replacing the air filter.\*
- 3) The assignment required students to identify an important character in the novel, to describe this character's actions, and explaining how the character's actions influence the plot.\*

The correction is as follows:

To correct faulty parallelism, the student first must recognize that he is balancing items in his sentence or presenting two or more items in a series. Separating the different parts of his sentence should help, as in the example below:

The assignment required students:

- ) To identify an important character in the novel.
- ) To describe this character's actions.
- ) Explaining how the character's actions influence the plot.

Now, the item causing the "faulty parallelism" becomes clear. To correct faulty parallelism, rewrite the sentence so that all of the different items are presented in the same way. In the example above, "explaining" should be changed to "to explain."

- ) He likes to listen to music, to watch movies, and to swim.
- ) She understood how to change the oil and how to replace the air filter.
- ) The assignment required students to identify an important character in the novel, to describe this character's actions, and to explain how the character's actions influence the plot.

6. **Lack of subject/verb agreement** occurs when a verb does not agree with the number with its subject.

Examples:

- ) One of my teachers are in the office.\*
- ) Neither Frank nor Elizabeth are here today.\*
- ) No one in the crowd of 10,000 spectators watching the football game seem to understand why the player was penalized.\*

Correction: To correct a lack of subject/verb agreement, the student must identify the subject of the verb and then change the verb to agree with the subject. Do not be fooled by words that may come between the subject and the verb. For instance, in the last example above the subject of "seem to understand" is "no one"; "in the crowd of 10,000 spectators watching the football game" is simply clarifying the identity of "no one."

The correction is:

- ) One of my teachers is in the office.
- ) Neither Frank nor Elizabeth is here today.
- ) No one in the crowd of 10,000 spectators watching the football game seems to understand why the player was penalized.

7. **Pronoun errors** (such as "he," "they," "their," and "it") are used to replace nouns, and pronouns must agree in number and person with the noun they are replacing (the words that pronouns replace are called "antecedents"). In other words, "he" must refer to one male, and "they" must refer to two or more people or things. Lack of pronoun agreement occurs when the pronoun does not agree in number or person with its antecedent. Pronoun errors also occur when the writer uses a pronoun whose antecedent is missing, is ambiguous, or is too far removed from its antecedent.

Examples:

- ) When a student gets behind in the course, they have a difficult time completing all of the assignments.\*
- ) Judy asked Marie if the instructor wanted to see her.\*
- ) When one debates an issue, he must have thorough knowledge of both sides of the issue.\*

The correction is:

To correct a problem with pronoun agreement, the student must identify the antecedent of the pronoun. He must change the pronoun or the antecedent so that each agrees in number and person with the other. If the antecedent may be unclear to readers, the student can replace the pronoun with its antecedent or might have to rewrite the sentence to clarify his meaning.

- ) When a student gets behind in the course, he or she has a difficult time completing all of the assignments. Alternative: When students get behind in the course, they have a difficult time completing all of the assignments.
- ) Judy asked Marie if the instructor wanted to see Marie.
- ) When one debates an issue, one must have a thorough knowledge of both sides of the issue.

Note: A common error is the use of a plural pronoun ("they" or "their") to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun (anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone, nobody, no one, one, somebody, and someone). Each of these indefinite pronouns is singular, meaning a singular pronoun must be used to refer to it. Also, phrases beginning with "every" and "each" is singular, never plural. The

following sentences contain errors because of a lack of pronoun agreement:

- ) Everyone is expected to bring their books to class.\*
- ) No one can be blamed for his or her lack of experience.\*

To avoid gendre language, "he or she" or "her or his" should be used instead of "he" or "his," but such phrasing is awkward and wordy. Often, a better alternative is to change the antecedent to a plural noun and to use a plural pronoun to refer to it.

The correction is:

Everyone is expected to bring his or her books to class.

Students are expected to bring their books to class.

8. **Apostrophe/Possessive Errors:** There are a few different kinds of possessive and apostrophe errors:

- ) use of a possessive form where one is not needed.
- ) lack of a possessive form where one is needed, a misplaced apostrophe, and confusion over "its" and "it is."

Examples:

- ) All of the student's\* were prepared for the exam.\*
- ) I waited an hour in the doctors\* office!\*
- ) Marys' dream is to begin a new life with Frank.\*
- ) Its not that I dislike the story; I just do not understand it's\* meaning.\*

Correction: Correcting possessive and apostrophe errors is largely a matter of understanding when "possession" is shown. If the student is unsure, he tries reversing the words in question and then places the word "of" between them; if it makes sense, he needs an apostrophe to

show possession. For example, do I need an apostrophe for "doctors office"? Is my meaning "[the] office [of] the doctor"? Yes, so I need to write "doctor's office." The student must not use an apostrophe if he is not showing possession. Doctor's office means the office of one doctor; "doctors' office" means that more than one doctor share the same office "[the] office [of] the doctors."

The correction is:

- ) All of the students were prepared for the exam.
- ) I waited an hour in the doctor's office!
- ) Mary's dream is to begin a new life with Frank.
- ) It's not that I dislike the story; I just do not understand its meaning.

A common error is the confusion over "its" and "it's." However, knowing which word to use is simple, if one remembers that "it is" always means "it is" or "it has." "Its" is used to show possession; "it's" is never used to show possession. Also, students will sometimes use its', with the apostrophe after the "s," but this form does not exist.

9. **Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers:** - A "modifier" is a word or phrase that "modifies" or changes another word or phrase. A modifier is misplaced if it modifies the wrong word or phrase. A modifier is "dangling" if the word or phrase that is supposed to be modified does not appear in the sentence.

Examples:

- ) Looking out the window, the snow continued to fall.\*
- ) After biting two children, the police took away our German Shepherd.\*



) Although expensive and well planned, she was disappointed by her vacation to Hawaii.\*

Correction: If a sentence begins with a modifier followed by a comma, whatever word or phrase is being modified must immediately follow the comma. If the modifier is "dangling," the writer needs to supply the word or phrase that is being modified.

) Looking out the window, he saw that the snow continued to fall.

) After biting two children, our German Shepherd was taken away by the police.

) Although expensive and well planned, her vacation to Hawaii was disappointing.

Note: Misplaced modifiers usually will convey a meaning that the writer did not intend. For example, the sentence "After biting two children, the police took away our German Shepherd" means that the police bit two children and then took a dog away. In the third example, "she" is being described as "expensive and well planned"!

Another modifier problem is the "squinting modifier." In this case, the modifier could refer to two different elements in a sentence, causing possible confusion for readers. An example is "This student only turned in the extra credit assignment. The sentence can convey two different meanings: "Only this student turned in the extra credit assignment" (no other student turned in the extra credit assignment) or "This student turned in only the extra credit assignment" (the student did not turn in any other assignments). The placement of the word "only" in the original sentence causes it to be a squinting modifier. Note how the confusion is cleared up when the word "only" is moved closer to the word or phrase it is modifying.

10. **"Inaccurate Word Choice"**: - This indicates errors in word choice, usually errors involving words in English that are commonly confused with each other. A few of these commonly confused words are listed below. If students have problems with inaccurate word choice, they should use a dictionary to figure out the meanings of the words that are giving them trouble.

### **2.28 Commonly Confused Words:**

Randy (2011) states that students are often distracted in their writing by many commonly confused words, as they do not know which one to choose.

Some of these words are:-

Accept/except

Advice/advise

Affect/effect

Allude/elude

Among/between

Are/our

Further/farther

Illusion/allusion

Infer/imply

In turn/intern

It's/its

Lay/lie    Led/lead

Lose/lose

Past/passed

Precede/proceed

Sight/site

Their/there/they are

Then/thanTo/too/two

Weather/whether

Were/where

Who/whom

Who's/whose

You are/you're

One of the most common problems involving inaccurate word choice is the use of the word "of" where "have" is needed, as in "I would of done that." The correct phrase should be "I would have done that."

Inaccurate word choice may also refer to the use of:

- ) "Nonwords" (such as "no one," "each other," "himself," or "theirselves"),
- ) Informal spellings of words that have more formal spellings (such as "alright," which should be spelled "all right," or "alot," which should be written as "a lot"),
- ) Words that are misused because the writer does not understand the meaning of the words (the words "unique" or "ignorant" are common examples), and
- ) Adjectives where adverbs are needed and vice versa (bad/badly, different/differently, good/well,).

11. **Semicolons Errors:** - There is one main situation in which semicolons (;) are used, and that is to separate two complete sentences that are closely related in meaning. To some extent, periods and semicolons are interchangeable; in some situations, the student can use one or the other. Semicolons and commas are

not interchangeable. If the student can replace the semicolon with a comma, he has used the semicolon incorrectly.

Semicolons should never be used to create a "pause" longer than that created by a comma.

12. "Spelling Errors" is self-explanatory. Use a dictionary.

13. Other errors that might come up in a paragraph include the following:

- ) Inaccurate spacing
- ) Missing words
- ) Missing quotation marks
- ) Incorrectly used colons
- ) Incorrectly used brackets

### **2.29 The Correction of Errors:**

Teachers in secondary schools evaluate their students by the final product of writing done by their students in the class. From the first lines, they know if their students are professional in writing or not, they evaluate the writing as well as the students. Errors are the means of evaluation. Teachers know from the number of errors caused by the student the ability of the student in writing or in knowing the English language.

### **2.30 Hyper Correction vs. Typo Correction:**

Mistakes in written English for non-native speakers are a natural phenomenon. The same mistakes can be found in the writing of the native speaker. When standard Arabic is written, one can find expressions like

توجد في الغرفة خزانة.

رايت اربعة عشرة رجلا.

Mistakes here are unacceptable to the teacher although they never seem to be able to root them out completely. These errors, whether the spelling of the Hamza or the linguistics mistakes, come as a result of the interference of the mother tongue, which reflects the production of the standard English.

Some mistakes' source is hypercorrection, which is a mistake caused as a result of trying to write correctly.

According to Versteegh (2005:3), hypercorrection is distinguished from hypercorrection. Hypercorrections are then defined as standard forms that are applied incorrectly, while hypercorrections are half-way correct, in other words, forms that occur neither in the dialect nor the standard language.

### **2.31 The Correction of the Composition:**

The reading and the correction of the composition are often very unsatisfactory for everyone concerned. The teacher feels he spends hours correcting mistakes and that his students take little notice of his corrections. On the other hand, students feel that the teacher is only concerned with finding mistakes and that he does not appreciate their hard work.

When their work is returned covered with red ink, they feel a sense of failure, which does not encourage them to learn from their mistakes.

The role of the teacher is to help students avoid mistakes, not spend time correcting them afterward. Students need to do careful practice and preparation before they start writing their compositions. The process of reading and correcting should start when the student reads his composition to his group. He should be encouraged to feel that the reaction of his fellows is just as important as the reaction of the teacher. Also, he and the other members of his group will notice some minor errors that they can correct themselves; the teacher can collect the compositions to read and correct himself.

According to Jupp (1970:10), an attitude of sympathy and respect is required in reading a student's composition because each composition represents the student's work and achievement, however weak it may be. The teacher should praise, not criticize. Whenever possible, the teacher should write a short comment at the end of each composition. The comment should draw attention to what the teacher has found good in the composition rather than to what he has found wrong. The teacher must also mark mistakes in the composition, but he can do this without defacing the work. This positive approach to reading and marking composition, particularly, the giving of ticks, will greatly encourage the students and make them much readier to learn from the teacher corrections.

Jupp (1970) answered the question of what teachers should do to mistakes; he said that teachers must attempt to cure serious and persistent errors. The first necessity is to make a careful study of his students' work to find out what the serious errors are that are common to a large number of the members of the class. When he has done this, he should try to cure all the mistakes at once, not try to cure them simply by giving some explanation. Only one type of error should be taken at a time, and its cure requires carefully planned remedial teaching, consisting of exercises and practice.

### **2.32 Remedial Work for Errors:**

Errors occur despite good teaching and effective learning. Time must also be set aside for correcting student work because no one is perfect.

Every student needs remedial teaching after some lessons on certain skills or subjects.

### **2.33 Some Possible Reasons for Errors:**

According to Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, and Pincas (1980: 133), poor teaching is one culprit. However, the cause of poor teaching, which creates a remedial situation, is beyond the teacher's control. The syllabus, for example, is usually not within the control of most ordinary teachers. Some older courses follow a 'linear' change from one teaching point to the next. First, for instance, the simple present tense is taught quite exhaustively. When that topic is done, the class moves on, without a backward glance, to the past simple tense, and so on. In this way, over the years, the syllabus covers in some depth all the major structural points. The difficulty is that students are negatively affected by doing too much of one thing.

Another important factor that can produce poor learning and a potential remedial situation is the many choices of materials that teachers use as a syllabus. They must be suitable for the age groups of the students and suitable for the part of the world they are to be used in.

Another source of trouble is the learner himself. Even with optimal conditions, there will still be room for remedial work, as there is no such thing as perfect learning. It is inevitable that learners make errors. Is this a good or a bad thing? At first sight, it appears evident that errors are bad things and signal a breakdown in the teaching and learning situation.

However, more recently, the Mentalists have put forward a different view of errors, which has gained wide acceptance. The argument in its strongest form runs that a learner must make errors as an unavoidable and necessary part of the learning process. Errors are not the worst thing, as was once thought, but visible proof that learning is taking place. As the student learns a new language, very often, he does not know how to express what he wants to say. So he makes a guess using his knowledge of his mother tongue and what he knows of the foreign language. The process is one of hypothesis formulation

and refinement; as the student develops a growing competence in the language, he slowly learns. He moves from ignorance to mastery of the language through the transitional stages, and the errors he makes are to be seen as a sign that learning is taking place.

Errors will always be made, and they have direct implications for remedial work because, through their systematic nature, they are infringements of the normal rules of the language. The teacher needs to plan his or her remedial treatment of them into the syllabus for the coming weeks and months. Quite different are the minor errors of speech or writing, which everybody makes—native speakers as much as non-natives.

The insight that errors are a natural and important part of the learning process itself and do not all come from mother tongue interference is very important. It has long been known that learners from very diverse linguistic backgrounds almost always have difficulty with certain things, whether they exist or not in their mother tongue. For instance, nearly all second language learners—like children learning their mother tongue—produce forms like ‘he musted do it yesterday’, ‘he throwed the ball’, ‘five womans’, etc. at some stage. The problem here is that they generalize a rule they know (the past tense is formed by adding -ed; plural forms have an -s at the end) and apply to all cases. The restrictions on the application of the rule have not been learned.

Recent experimental evidence suggests that even in adult learners whose mother tongue system is deeply entrenched, and transfer errors are at their peak, only a minority of errors are attributable to mother tongue interference. In the case of children, errors attributable solely to interference represent a tiny percentage of all errors committed.

The role of the teacher is to find the best approaches to error correction.



### **2.34 Practical Approaches to Dealing with Errors:**

The first stage is to establish what the error is. The most basic question is whether what the learner intended to state is the same as the common understanding of what he said or wrote. He may have wanted to communicate the idea that John entered the room, but his actual words were "John came to the room." The sentence is superficially well-formed. It would, however, give the listener a slightly different impression than the speaker intended, since to come to somewhere need not necessarily imply that the person entered a place. He may have, but he may not have either. The speaker's intention was to convey the meaning that the person entered the room. The imprecise use of prepositions, although giving a probable interpretation, caused the speaker to misrepresent his actual meaning. Very often, the teacher in a case like this senses something is wrong. It is of course much easier where there is an erroneous sentence, such as "John entered into the room." In either circumstance, the teacher can ask questions directly in an attempt to discover the learner's original intention.

The second stage is to establish the possible sources of the error in order to explain why it happened. It is important to do this, as the full knowledge of the causes of an error enables the teacher to work out a more effective teaching strategy to deal with it.

It is not enough simply to have located the error and analyzed its cause.

The third step is to decide how serious the mistake is. The more serious the mistake, the higher priority it should have in remedial work. An obvious approach is to look at the error in linguistic terms and see what rules are broken. Errors in the overall structure of sentences are more important than errors affecting parts of sentences, though there is no general agreement on a scale of error importance. As a rough guide, it has recently been suggested

that the error-types considered most serious are transformations, tense, concord, case, negation, articles, order, lexical errors.

There is the further possibility of looking at a mistake in terms of its tolerability in the eyes of native speakers rather than its linguistic correctness. It is very probable that native speakers will tolerate lexical errors far more than grammatical ones. However, even within the area of the grammatical, there is some uncertainty about what is acceptable and what is not.

It is better to relate the error to the system of English and its use and to connect it to a level of the linguistic system (spelling, morphology, syntax, or Lexis) or deciding if the problem is unsuitable for a correct linguistic form in a communicative situation.

The researcher advises teachers to be more sensible and careful when correcting students' mistakes.

When dealing with the errors of the whole class, it is better to present the remedial point to class as a part of the normal teaching plan. The teacher should consider it as a new item and not something that has been taught unsuccessfully before.

### **2.35 Attitudes Towards Error Correction**

Some researchers investigate whether written corrective feedback facilitates the acquisition of particular linguistic features. In contrast, others emphasize the question of whether written corrective feedback helps student writers improve the overall effectiveness of their texts. Understanding these differences in starting points is important because it provides a possible explanation for the different methodologies and conclusions of various reviews on this topic (e.g., Ferris, 2003, 2004; Truscott, 19%, 2007). (Amiramini, Ghanbari, and Shamsoddini)

Ellis (2009) sees that in both behaviorist and cognitive theories of foreign language learning, feedback contributes to language learning. In both structural and communicative approaches to language teaching, feedback is viewed as a means of fostering learner motivation and ensuring linguistic accuracy.

The literature of second/foreign language writing error correction is full of controversial ideas as well as arguments about the importance of error correction.

More than two decades ago, Zamel (1985) argued against error correction and warned teachers to "Hold in abeyance their reflex-like reactions to surface level concerns and give priority to meaning." There have also been many attempts to investigate the error correction issue from the students' and teachers' points of view. The majority of these studies have targeted accuracy in writing. In fact, written accuracy is important in many contexts, and students themselves want and expect feedback on their written errors from their teachers. They value their teachers' practice in error correction very much (Ferris, Chaney, Komuras, Roberts & Mckee, 2000; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Ieki, 1991; Truscott, 1996). (Amiramini, Ghanbari, and Shamsoddini) (2015).

Attitudes to error correction vary not only among teachers but also among students. A teacher may be influenced by:

- ) The fact that English is their second language and great emphasis was placed on correctness at their teacher training college.
- ) The fact that as a native speaker, he or she has never had to worry about his or her English.

A particular methodology/approach. In the 1960s, a teacher using audio-lingualism would have adopted a behaviorist approach to error. More

recently, teachers following the natural approach (influenced by the second-language acquisition theory) would adopt a wholly different method. Other methodologies, such as Suggestopaedia and total physical response, highlight the psychological effects of error correction on students.

Teachers have to consider not only their students' age but also their approach to learning. Some students are risk-takers, while others will only say something if they are sure it is correct. While being a risk-taker is a positive trait as it leads to greater fluency, some students only seem to be concerned with fluency at the expense of accuracy. The same can be true when it comes to writing. Some students take an eternity to produce a piece of writing as they are constantly rubbing out what they have written, while, at the opposite extreme, the writing is done as fast as possible without any planning or editing.

James (1998: 236-40) disputes EC as he applies the term in three ways:

Informing the learners that there is an error and leaving them to discover and repair it themselves

Providing treatment or information that leads to the revision and correction of the specific instance of errors without aiming to prevent the same error from recurring later.

Providing learners with information that allows them to revise or reject the wrong rule they were operating with when they produced the error token. The result will be to encourage learners to revise their mental representation of the rule so that this error type does not recur. While errors are necessarily part of language-learning processes, the rule must affect the decision about the treatment of errors.

Error analysis (EA) is a branch of applied linguistics (AL) and has two functions. The first function is theoretical; it has its place in methodology and

describes the learner's knowledge of the target language. It also helps the researcher to find the relationship between the knowledge and teaching the learner has been receiving. The practical area of EA is overcoming the mismatch between the knowledge of the learner and the demands of the situation.

"agushultanudin." <<https://agushultan.wordpress.com/>>.

### **2.36 Competence**

Competence is the quality or state of being competent enough to perform a particular task.

Elliot and Dweck (2005) gave the following definition of the term competence:

"Based on Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary, 'competence' may be defined as a condition or quality of effectiveness, ability, sufficiency, or success." (Elliot & Dweck, 5).

It is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use, or lose. The challenge for foreign or second language teaching is whether the teacher can arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence. The lack of competence in pragmatics deprives the students of good placement for a bright future. (Latha & Rajan, 2012)

Another definition by Abuanja and Mohdirage (as cited by Adhabaa), concerns the acquired capacity that includes knowledge, skills, and interweaved attitudes that permit the learners to use general frameworks in learning similar functions.

### **2.37 Performance:**

According to Wibowo (2009), performance covers not only the work output but also how the work is processed. Performance is the function of ability, motivation, and opportunity. (Robbins, 2006).

Prawirosentono (1999) suggests that work performance may be achieved by a person or a group of people by reaching an intended goal without breaking the rule. Mangkunegara (2005) proposes that student performance is the work output. Both quality and quantity are required, as well as efficiency and effectiveness in performing the duties, along with the responsibilities charged to them. Assessment of student performance refers to work quality, working rapidity/accuracy, work initiative, workability, and communication. Another explanation of performance is proposed by Rivai (2005), in that performance is the actual work output that can be observed and measured based on its quantity, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency (Arifin January 2015)

### **2.38 Contrastive and Error Analysis**

Contrastive Analysis emerged in the 1950s as a strategy for comparing specific languages and predicting the difficulties students would experience in learning them.

As cited by Abushihab (2014), contrastive analysis (CA) is based on structuralism and behaviorism, which gained a great reputation in the 1950s and 1960s. Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) have formulated and developed CA. They propose that CA deals with the comparison of the structures of two languages or more and with the attempt to find out the points of differences that are the main sources of difficulty for language learners. The main aim of CA is to compare phonological systems, morphological systems,

syntax, and lexical meanings of two or more languages. The development of CA is the result of the need to teach L2 in the most effective way.

Lado (in Ellis) makes clear that "the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide efficient methods for teaching them" (1985:23).

According to Ellis (1996), L2 errors are the result of differences between L1 and L2. The strong version of CA claims that these differences can be used to predict the errors that will occur. The weak version of CA presupposes that these differences can be used only to identify some of the total errors that usually arise.

There have been different definitions of CA. Di Pietro (1971) says that CA is "the method whereby the differences between two (or more rarely, among more than two) languages are made explicit."

According to Di Pietro's definition, contrastive analysis is described as a method that explains why some features of a target language were harder to acquire than others. According to the behaviorist theories prevailing at the time, language learning was a question of habit formation, and this could be reinforced or impeded by the existing one. Therefore, the difficulty in mastering certain structures in a second language (L2) depends on the difference between the learners' mother language (L1) and the language they are trying to learn. Fisiak (1981:1) said that contrastive linguistics might be roughly "defined as a contrastive analysis that was used extensively in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 1960s and early 1970s as a method of explaining why some features of a target language were more difficult to acquire than others." According to the behaviorist theories prevailing at the time, language learning was a question of habit formation, and this could be reinforced or impeded by the already existing habits. Therefore, the difficulty in mastering certain structures in a second language

(L2) depended on the difference between the learners' mother language (L1) and the language they were trying to learn.

Regarding the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of language to determine both differences and similarities between them,

James (1980:3) pointed out that " CA is a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive not comparative) two-valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a pair of languages) and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared."

For Krzeszowski (1990:9-11), "CA focuses on pairs of languages and explores similarities as well as differences among them."

James (1980) stated that contrastive comparison is more interested in the differences between languages than in their likeness.

James (1980) says,

There is a branch of linguistics, which I shall call interlanguage study, which is likewise not primarily concerned with languages in the conventional sense, this branch of linguistics is interested in the emergence of these languages rather than in the finished product. Now, CA belongs to interlanguage study, and since 'emergence' is an evolving concept (De Saussure), it follows that CA is to be viewed as an important phenomenon."

It is clear that these definitions are different from each other, but their subject areas are language and contrast, which are the pillars of CA in predicting and investigating learning errors.

Students learning a foreign language meet with many kinds of learning problems. Vocabulary, structure, and paragraph development are considered to be the major problems that students at secondary schools face. To minimize these problems, linguists propose the use of contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage theory



Jain (in Richards, 1974) mentioned some of the factors of L2 independent errors. He says,

"Of the many factors causing L1 independent errors, learning strategies teaching techniques, folklore about the second language, the age bilingualism i.e. the period over which the L2 has been used by the speech community to which the learner belongs and the learner's sociolinguistic situation."

### **2.39 Transfer Learning:**

Transfer learning reuses knowledge from past related tasks to ease the process of learning to perform a new task. The goal of transfer learning is to support previous knowledge and experience to learn novel but related concepts more easily, as compared to what would be possible without this prior experience. Learning to drive a van becomes a much easier task if we have already learned how to drive a car. Learning French is easier if we have already learned English, and learning Spanish is easier if we know Portuguese.

### **2.40 Definition of Transfer:**

Many have defined the term "language transfer." Odlin (1990) claims that language transfer represents a set of phenomena noticeable in the speech or writing of the speakers of L2 or L3, whereby some aspect of the grammatical structure of the L1 speakers is to be regularly substituted for an appropriate L2 form, often but not always resulting in non-native L2 production.

Odlin(1998) says,

"Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and the other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly acquired."

Shaozhong Liu has given two definitions for transfer, the first one being derived from the Latin word "transfer," which means "to carry from one surface to another" (Webster's Third New World International Dictionary, 1986). So to speak, when we say "technology transfer," we mean the transfer or carry-over of technology from one owner to another.

The second definition is, "the carry-over or generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another," especially "the application in one field of study or effort of knowledge, skill, power, or ability acquired in another" (Webster's Third New World International Dictionary, 1986).

Odlin (1998) defines transfer as the effect of one language on the learning of another. Khuwaileh (1995b) found that Arab students primarily translate ideas from their native language into English. Drawn from this point was a sort of negative transfer that resulted in unsatisfactorily written samples. Hussein and Mohammad (2012) similarly contend that Arab learners tend to compose words and sentences in their L1 and then translate them into L2. Odlin (1989) mentions that two types of language transfer may occur.

Positive transfer

He claims that transfer makes learning easier and may occur when both the NL and the TL have the same form.

For example, Arabic and English have words with the same meaning. Negative transfer, also known as interference, is the use of a native-language pattern or rule that leads to an error or incorrect form in the TL.

## **2.41 Linguistic Transfer:**

Linguistic transfer represents what learners carry over or generalize from their native language (NL) to help them learn to use a target language (TL) in speaking or writing. Linguistic transfer, in many cases, leads to linguistic

errors, especially in the two skills, speaking and writing, because learners take or carry the habits of L1 so as to learn L2. This meaning from the dictionary shows that "transfer" is a neutral word in origin and nature. Here, transfer does not indicate whether what is carried over is bad or good, and it is a clue to indicate that there are two types of transfer.

) Positive transfer

) Negative transfer

## **2.42 Negative and Positive Transfer**

This concept is classified by Krashen (1981) into two types:

Positive and negative transfers. Positive transfer occurs when literacy in the native language helps a student to learn a foreign language by transferring concepts from the mother tongue and applying them to the foreign one. Similarly, Cummins (1982) proposed the "Iceberg Theory." In his theory, Cummins (1982) states that proficiency in the first language can be beneficial for second language acquisition. The theory claims that students can learn a second language more easily because they have already learned language devices and concepts in their first language. Students do not have to re-learn new concepts; they are only required to re-label the terms in the second language. Cummins (1981) believes that concepts and skills are typically developed in the native language before they are transferred to the second. For this reason, it is crucial for students to continue to obtain input and practice in their native language.

In his work, Krashen (1981) also mentions "negative transference" as one of the frequent sources of errors. Students are believed to rely overly on word formation and structure resemblances in both languages, which results in usage of false alike and incorrect word-for-word translation. For example,

Russian-speaking learners may incorrectly use the adjective "accurate," assuming that it means "neat."

In his research, Parera (2004) concludes that negative transfer occurs as a result of the inadequate mastery of L2 and classifies it into the conscious and unconscious transfer.

The scientist classifies four types of mistakes in the negative language transfer:

- ) Omission
- ) Addition
- ) Malformation
- ) Disordering

Similarly, Odlin (1993) classifies negative transfer into four types:

- ) Underproduction errors
- ) Overproduction
- ) Production errors
- ) Misinterpretation

### **2.42.1 Underproduction Errors:**

They occur when language learners omit some elements in L2 under the influence of L1. For instance, where he live? (Where does he live?)

According to Odlin (1993), underproduction appears when a speaker avoids using difficult structures in L2 because they are different from L1. Therefore, the learner tends to underproduce certain structures in L2.

### **2.42.2 Overproduction Errors:**

They occur when a learner adds some elements from L1 to L2 under the influence of the mother tongue. For example, Nobody does not\* know (Nobody knows). Kazakh and Russian-speaking learners have a tendency to commit such errors, as double negation is possible in both Kazakh and Russian. Odlin (1993), however, defines overproduction as the overuse of structures the student is confident with as a result of the poor mastery of difficult structures in the target language, i.e. underproduction.

### **2.42.3 Production Errors:**

They are classified into two types: substitutions and calques. Substitutions are defined as the use of L1 forms in L2; for example, *privat* instead of *private*, while calques are the errors caused by the L1 structure. For instance, Kazakh-speaking learners can transfer word order from their native language and say, "I English study" instead of "I study English."

### **2.42.4 Misinterpretation:**

It is referred to some structures in L1 that might influence comprehension in the target language. As a result, learners may misinterpret the message the native speaker wanted to convey (Argynbayev, Kabylbekova, and Yaylaci, 2014).

According to Weinreich (1979), language transfer, also known as language interference, is a deviation from norms of both languages in the speech of bilinguals as a result of language contact. Another detailed definition is given by Odlin (1993, 27) where language transfer is defined as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired." (Argynbayev, Kabylbekova, & Yaylaci, 2014)

### **2.43 Teaching Grammar in Writing Classes:**

Correct writing depends on the mastery of grammar rules. Teachers give grammar assignments, thinking that they will help students write correctly. However, teaching only grammar and neglecting the other language skills may cause a negative backwash effect. In Sudan, the GTM (grammar translation method) that is used in teaching English is considered to be the cause of difficulties in students' learning to write correctly. They translate the target language into L1 or the mother tongue. The English syllabus in Sudan needs to use the communicative approach, which requires trained teachers, sufficient audio-visual aid, and small classes. However, many writers approve teaching grammar rules.

Grammar rules and exercises given to students while teaching the English language draw the learners' attention to verb forms in sentence-level contexts, which are created by textbook authors, teachers, or students themselves. This learning practice largely addresses the skills associated with identification of time adverbials, the manipulation of verbal inflections, and tense-related forms of auxiliaries.

Johns (1997: 10) demonstrated that in the evaluations of non-native speaker (NNS) writing, grammatical accuracy plays an important role. The presence of grammar errors has a negative impact on the native speakers' (NS) perception of the quality of L2 writing.

Hammerly (1991) reports that to attain advanced proficiency in L2 writing, learners need to attend to grammar in their writing and that L2 pedagogy genuinely concerned about learner proficiency in writing needs to include the teaching of relevant L2 grammar. Fathman and Whalley (1990) found that attention to and feedback on grammar in the writing of NNSs significantly improve grammatical accuracy and the overall quality of writing. Ellis (1997) pointed out that many L2 linguistic features, such as verb inflections and uses

of tenses, are so complex that they are often difficult to learn in the process of communication.

#### **2.44 The Importance of Good Handwriting:**

The researcher thinks that handwriting is one of the means that evaluate student's achievements. Teachers formulate their first impression about the student on handwriting. If it is good, the student is smart and good in performance, and if it is bad, the student is weak in performance. Therefore, students need to enhance their handwriting so as to gain the satisfaction of the teachers.

Ediger (2002) declares that It is very important, in a recent newscast, and medical doctors were advised to take a course in handwriting due to prescriptions that are written illegibly for pharmacists to read. If incorrect prescription drugs are called for or turned over to individuals, the effects could be rather negative. An individual says that he or she cannot determine what was to be bought from a shopping list taken to the supermarket. Students have sometimes said they cannot read their handwriting notes taken in class. Students do need to develop readable handwriting to produce a coherent piece of writing.

#### **2.45 Quality Handwriting:**

This means that the written content is easy to read in either manuscript or cursive form. There are unbelievers of being able to evaluate handwriting progress in precise, measurable terms.

Teachers in the school setting need to emphasize quality handwriting across the curriculum.

Handwriting achievement can be assessed in degrees, from being legible to being illegible.

"The history of formal calligraphy has been thoroughly documented, and the demise of what people see as beautiful handwriting is frequently deplored, but the details of the teaching of this skill during this century have gone almost unrecorded. Everyday handwriting is ephemeral, and school books will soon disappear. It seemed important to write this history while those who learned to write at the beginning of the century, or taught the subject soon afterward, can still tell of their experiences" (Sassoon 1999).

## **2.46. The Effect of New Technologies on the Learning and Writing Process**

Technology is a great tool for supporting learning. Computers are one of the modern technologies students can use in learning, but the exact relationship between student achievement and computer use is ambiguous. Researchers have examined different aspects of technology use, and some of the results have surprised them. For example, Thomas Fuchs and Ludger Woessmann (2004) identified the following pattern after analyzing student data on an international student achievement test that also gathers information about availability and student computer use at home and school:

*"Students who never use computers or the Internet at school show lower performance than students who sometimes use computers or the Internet at school. However, students who use them several times a week perform even lower"(p.2)*



These researchers concluded that simply having access to technology does not raise overall student achievement.

Helen Stepanova, in her website, opposes some authors on the importance of modern technology in improving writing skill. She looks at some of the resources available for improving students' language skills.

Nowadays, the Internet provides numerous possibilities for students to improve, polish, and master their writing. She introduces in her lessons how students can use the Internet to improve their writing skills.

### **2.46.1 Social networks**

Skype, Twitter, and Facebook are examples of free resources that allow students to communicate in written English, as they would do orally. If students mention on their Skype profile that they are looking for native speakers to improve their language skills, someone will contact them, and they can explain their needs and offer to correspond on a regular basis.

Students can then chat with people through Facebook Messenger, on Twitter, and through blogs.

The disadvantage of this approach is that people are unlikely to correct the mistakes (unless the students ask them to); however, as the correspondence is very informal and friendly, the learner can relax and express him/herself freely. Twitter messages make learners formulate their thoughts very concisely because the maximum length of the post is 140 characters. This teaches them to write the core idea. Blogging is also a good way to present the learners' ideas to a wide audience and invite comments and corrections to their writing.

### **2.46.2 Language Learning Communities:**

Language learning communities, such as Lang-8 and Phrasebase, are specialized sites that help learners polish their language skills, where native speakers from 180 countries will correct learners' writing for free. First, the learners have to log in, write their texts, publish them, and wait until a native speaker (possibly even a teacher) checks them and gives a detailed explanation of any mistakes. Learners can write on their blog, correct the posts of other participants if they are in their native language, make friends, create a community, and expand their network.

### **2.46.3 Writing Clubs/Classes:**

Writing clubs or classes are a very popular form of mastering the language. The teacher gives a theme to write about and a deadline for submitting the work. The goal is to write an essay to develop students' writing skills and to monitor the mistakes, both grammatical and stylistic. Sometimes, writing clubs can include written debates on a particular topic. When the discussion is over, the teacher comments on the mistakes, or a peer assessment is provided. Different universities offer such courses, and there are several such classes on Coursera.

### **2.46.4 Private Journal:**

This resource demands a higher level of motivation, as the student has to commit to keeping a regular journal. It can be fictitious or simply a record of everyday events. The habit of writing regularly promotes a habit of thinking in English. There are several online journal tools, such as Life Journal. Nobody monitors the mistakes, but Life Journal's password and encryption

system will keep the learner's information safe and private unless the learner chooses to share it to get feedback on his or her writing.

The process of wiring has changed from age to age as language changes. These changes are inevitably for the better. The last changes were due to technology and the spread of an interesting and amazing tool that has been used in teaching the skill mentioned above and other skills. Helen Stepanova follows her on her website.

The technology has some contributions to teaching writing. Irene L. Clark and Betty Bamberg, et al. claim that the computer was first used in the 1960s as a tool to teach writing so as to automate the teaching of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and the evaluation of student composition. Many views came around about the role of computers in the teaching of writing. Some teachers used the computer completely in their classes, while others thought there was no need to exhaust themselves and their students with this new software that needed from them yearly finance and upgrading. In the 1970s, multi-system tools were invented including electronic grammar drills where students encountered grammar rules and corrected wrong sentences. At that time, few people were concerned with this system because no one seemed to be interested in it.

Baron (2009) states that computers and the Internet are neither the best developments in the history of writing nor the worst. They are simply a series of inventions on how we do things with words.

"Computers have been embraced as the newest best hope for schools, but while they represent significant upgrades to the older blackboards and overhead projectors, and they help instructors find materials and communicate with students outside of class, my guess is that computers will

not take the place of conventional, face-to-face lessons in American schools any more than earlier technologies did" (Baron xv).

After examining the importance of this tool in teaching and learning to write, one can say that it has facilitated the process greatly in many ways. It is a practical method for enhancing traditional teaching methods.

"In composition classrooms, students and teachers may share files and documents, collaborating both in composing and in deriving standards for student writing. The techniques of collaboration with students and the revolutionary stance toward the teacher's authority allow students to witness pedagogical strategies, to catch the magician putting the rabbit into the hat... [and] to display the writing process in ways not previously available. " (Barker, 1990)

### **2.47 The Setting Where the Learning of How to Write Takes Place:**

The setting where learning to write takes place in all three years of Sudanese secondary schools is formal, with class-based teaching as opposed to individualized learning.

This formality appears in the arrangement of the desks in the classrooms, where all desks face the teacher. Students sit, listening to the teacher, with no freedom to move or speak.

The only person to talk during lectures is the teacher, and he or she addresses the class as a whole.

The teacher does not interact with individual learners, and learners do not interact with one another.

When the teacher asks the students to carry out a certain task, all learners will be engaged in doing the same task at the same time individually, and once

they finish, they have to wait for the teacher's instructions on what to do next. There is no element of self-sufficiency, and there is no freedom of choice in what to write, when to write, and how to go about doing it. The textbook is represented by the SPINE series, which has been prepared by Sudanese experts; it focuses on teaching English skills with a special focus on reading and writing.

The time allowed for learning and teaching writing in secondary schools in Sudan is limited compared to the past, when there were more than nine English periods per week. During the three years of secondary education, learners are subjected to foreign language instruction at a rate of five 40-minute classes a week. These minutes are divided for teaching the four skills. Reading and writing are given more emphasis.

The researcher says that teachers cannot allot much time to writing practice during class because of the overloaded syllabus, limited time, and overcrowded classrooms.

## **Part Two: Previous Studies**

The purpose of this section is to review, compare, and discuss the previous studies that have been done by many researchers. The researcher wants to know the relationship between this study and the other studies.

Hala Dalbani conducted a study entitled, "An Investigation into Relationship Between the Educational Context and the Writer Product of University EFL Students with Implications for the Teaching of Writing." A thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics at the Faculty of Education, University of Leeds,

1992. The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the sources of difficulties that Damascus University learners face in their composition writing courses at the Department of English Language and Literature. The findings of this study suggest that the writing problems that students face are inherent in the writing pedagogy in current practice at the University. The difference between this study and the researcher's study is that it has looked not only at the final product but also the context. Another difference is that it is a longitudinal study of both the context and the product of writing across a four-year EFL writing course.

Ali Ahmed conducted a study entitled, "Problems of English Language Teaching in high secondary schools in the Sudan," a thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English at the Faculty of Education), University of Khartoum, 1999. The main objectives of this study are to identify and analyze the problems facing English language teachers, find out whether teachers of English in secondary schools received training, and identify the 25 problems of teaching in secondary schools in teacher competence in the English and training program. The findings of this study show that most of the teachers are unqualified, and few of them graduated from faculties of education. Objectives of teaching English are not clear to 40% of the population, and some teachers notice that English grammar in secondary school does not prepare the students for life. Teachers use different methods of teaching, and visits of supervision by the inspectors to schools are ineffective. This study has 50% a likeness to the researcher's study. They both spoke about teachers' training. They used the same tool to reach the result that teachers are not qualified or trained enough to teach writing skills.

Fawzi Eltayeb conducted a study entitled, "An analysis of pertinacious common errors in the writing performance of EFL learners in Sudan," a thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education (Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2010). The main objective is to investigate the common errors committed by Sudanese learners in writing skills and their causes. The findings of this study show that most students had problems in writing because of the weak grasp of language habits, interference of culture and mother tongue, learning strategies, insufficient activities, and practice. The relationship between this study and the researcher's study is the influence of the learners with the mother tongue. Both the samples committed errors as a result of the interference of their mother tongue.

Adam Arbab conducted a study entitled, "Evaluating Teaching Writing Skills in Sudanese Secondary Schools," a thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education (Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2010). The main aims of the study were to evaluate teaching writing in the SPINE series, Books 4, 5, and 6, the activities, the materials, and the teaching strategies. The findings of this study show that pupils were not able to express themselves (writing) in English due to the poor and inadequate writing activities presented in the textbooks investigated in addition to the lack of authentic materials in teaching writing. Classes were large, and little emphasis was given to the teaching of writing. The study recommended the need for further refining of the writing activities in Spine and incorporation of authentic materials, particularly, materials for developing writing skills.

The fifth study was conducted by Wijdan Abdalla, entitled "Exploring EFL University Students' Errors in English Sentence Structure: A Case Study of Third-Year English Language Students' Performance in the Faculty of Education at Sudan University of Science and Technology, A Thesis for the Degree of Ph.D.in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education, Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2016." The main purpose of this study is to attempt to achieve these objectives: First, discover the types of errors that are committed by Sudanese university students in sentence structure. Second, find out if the teachers correct students' errors in sentence structure or not. Third, investigate whether the textbooks contain sufficient examples and practice questions or not. The findings of this study show that errors committed by third-year university students are interlingual errors. Students also committed errors because of interlanguage errors. Teachers always correct errors that relate to grammar and the mechanics of writing. The writing activities which are given to students are not sufficient to practice writing skills. The classroom time is not enough to allow students to practice writing activities. The most important recommendations of this study are: Techniques which are used by the teachers in the initial phase of teaching new structures and patterns in the second language should be effective. Students need qualified teachers to teach writing skills. Students also should improve their level by reading, listening, and speaking. Teachers should give students more practices. Finally, teachers should correct errors that relate to sentence structure. The relationship between this study and the researcher's study is the similarity in the result, although the samples are different. The samples are different in the level and the syllabuses. Teachers of both samples are different in their qualification and experience.



Fatima Mohammed Omer, conducted a study under the title, "Factors Hindering Effective English Language Teaching and Learning in the Classroom. A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Gezira State, Sudan," a thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education, University of Gezira, 2014. The main objectives investigate the main factors hindering effective English language learning. The study also attempts to find out if the schools' environment and classroom atmosphere are suitable for learning. It also attempts to provide Sudanese EFL teachers with the knowledge about the factors that hinder the learning process regarding the English language. The findings of this study show that some teachers need advanced training. Most of the learners (85%) do not have the motivation for learning English. Differences appear in the objectives of both studies, but they investigated the need for teacher training.

Mohammed Aradeb conducted a study entitled, "Evaluation of the Writing Performance of Sudanese EFL Learners. A case study of second-year English students in Kordofan University," a thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in teaching English as a Second Language submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education at Sudan University of Science and Technology (2010). The main objective is to evaluate the writing performance of the second-year students in Kordofan University. The researcher tries to find out how students in Kordofan University can produce a well-organized piece of writing regarding correct language, good sentence and paragraph construction. He also aimed at finding the ability of the students to use the right punctuation marks and write correctly without spelling mistakes. The findings of the study revealed that students were good in using the appropriate language, weak in sentence and paragraph

construction, and weak in the use of punctuation marks. Aradeb declared that students were to some extent able to produce a good piece of writing with correct spelling and clear handwriting. The most important recommendation of this study is there should be enough qualified teachers to draw students' attention to the importance of writing and call back their motivation. More exercises on the skills of writing should be given to enhancing students' writing ability. This study and the researcher's study concentrate on paragraph development and sentence structure. However, Aradeb's study is different from the researcher's study in the result, which says that students were good in the use of appropriate language. The result of this study shows that from the test and the questionnaire, students are weak in the use of appropriate language. The difference between these studies is the samples.

Another study conducted by Gamar Addawla Alboni entitled, "An analysis of syntactic errors in written and oral production: A case study of students studying English at the Faculty of Arts University of Khartoum,." A thesis for the Degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum (2004). It is an unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The main objectives of the study are to discover whether students improved their learning ability in written and oral production at the end of the year and to determine which gender showed better improvement in written and oral production. The population consists of first-year students. The samples are male and female students. The data collected are ready-made materials from the students' written works. The findings of this study show that students improved in oral and written production in the second semester. Average performance in written production is higher than in oral production. Female students' average performance in both written and oral production is higher than that of male

students. Arabic interference is evident in student's frequent omission of the verbs 'to be,' 'to have,' and other basics of sentence structure. Both studies deal with writing performance, but the only difference is that the present study deals with students' writing ability only, while the previous study investigates both written and oral production. There are some differences in population, sample, and the tools of the studies. The most important recommendation of Alboni's study is that students need a lot more practice in the areas of both written and oral skills. The difference between the two studies is the kind of samples.

Manahil Mukhtar conducted a study entitled "An Investigation Into Coherence and Cohesion in Sudanese EFL Learners' Writing" (a case study of three Sudanese universities). A thesis for the degree of Ph.D. in applied linguistic submitted to the Department of English Language, College of Languages (Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2010). The main objective of the study is to investigate coherence and cohesion in Sudanese EFL learners' writing. The findings of this study show that there is a weakness in Sudanese students' written work due to their ignorance of coherence and cohesion. Moreover, university students do not use cohesive devices appropriately. The most important recommendation of this study focused on paying attention to the questions of coherence and cohesion when teaching or designing syllabuses. Although the samples were different, the investigated data shows the same result; first, the lack of coherence and cohesion and second, the teaching material and teaching strategies need to be improved. The difference between the two studies is that the two researchers handled different objectives and obtained different results.

Mohammed Adam conducted a study entitled "Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Writings of Saudi Undergraduate Students." A thesis for the degree

of Ph.D. in applied linguistics submitted to the Department of English Language, College of Languages (Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2015). The main objective of the study is to analyze grammatical errors in English language writing performance among the first year preparatory students at Jazan University in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study revealed that the ability of the students to understand and correctly apply syntactical rules is low. This was reflected in the enormous number of grammatical errors made during the tests. The findings also revealed that negative transfer from the mother tongue language (Arabic) is one of the major causes of syntactical errors made by the students in their written production. The most important recommendation of this study is that more attention should be paid to grammatical errors, particular errors in tense, and instructors should utilize more effective methods of stressing tenses through meaningful and interesting texts. It is also recommended that students be guided to look critically and analytically at their written texts and try to self-correct any grammatical errors. The difference between this study and the previous study is that the researcher has investigated grammatical errors and their sources. The results show that literal translation and interference of the mother tongue are the sources of the errors.

Alsadig Yahiya conducted a study entitled, "Investigating Sudanese EFL learners written discourse competence: A case study of fourth-year English students in some national universities," a thesis for the degree of Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics Submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum (2000). The main objective of the study is to investigate Sudanese EFL learners' writing problems at the discourse level. The findings of this study show that students were poor in grasping the properties of English written discourse such as cohesion and

mechanics. Students' spelling errors were due to their lack of grammatical and morphological awareness and the complexity of the English language. Students were also poor in capitalization. Both studies investigate writing performance. Alsadig investigated it at the university level, and the researcher investigated it at the secondary school level. The difference between them appears in the detailed investigation of paragraph development, which appeared briefly in the previous study.

Sayed Hassan conducted a study entitled, "Frequently repeated errors in essay writing: a case study of Saudi university students," an unpublished M.A. thesis submitted to the Department of English Language at the Faculty of Education, Omdurman Islamic University (2006). The objectives are to find out the reasons behind the repeated writing errors by Saudi students, to suggest strategies that enable students to avoid committing such errors and to suggest a practical solution be adopted by teachers, syllabus designers, and researchers to improve students' writing competence. The findings of this study show that the frequently repeated errors in essay writing were due to interlingual factors, intralingual factors, fossilization, habit formation, performance and competence errors. Teachers themselves help students commit errors through improper instruction and correction. The previous study investigated only the grammatical aspects of students' writing performance, while the present study deals with the different aspects of student writing performance, like correct use of language, sentence and paragraph structure, punctuation and spelling.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction:**

This chapter is assigned for the procedures followed to conduct the present study. Sampling, tools of data collection and analysis will be discussed in details besides validity and reliability.

#### **3.1 Methodology:**

The researcher adopts the analytical and descriptive method to analyze the data collected from participants.

### **3.2 Population and Sample:**

The population involved in this study consists of both secondary school students and English language teacher at secondary level . (100) teachers were randomly chosen as subjects of the study from different secondary schools in Sudan. Their considerable experience of teaching English was taken into consideration. Both male and female teachers were involved in the questionnaire. A total of (100) secondary school student has also participated in this study.

### **3.3 Tools of Data Collection:**

The data concerning this study were elicited from the subjects by using two tools for gathering data: a questionnaire for teachers and a test for students.

#### **3.2.1. The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed for teachers with the purpose of eliciting the required data for the topic of the study. The questionnaire consists of four parts. Part one is demographic background. Part two was designed to know teachers' attitudes and views towards their students writing skill. Part three is teacher's attitude and personal opinion about responding to students writing. Part four is about how teachers develop their skills, knowledge, and experience.

#### **3.2.2 Student's Test:**

The researcher designed a test for the secondary school students. They have to write a composition of three or four paragraphs. It is a guided composition because students need some support.

### **3.3. Data Analysis:**

The data collected by both questionnaire and test were analyzed by using (SPSS) program using percentages.

### **3.4 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire was shown to experts, after some amendment the questionnaire was considered as valid, as they test what it purposed to test. The reliability of the questionnaire was affirmed by experts.



# **Chapter Four**

## **Data Analysis, Result and Discussion**

### **Chapter Four**

#### **Data Analysis, Result and Discussion**

##### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter is limited to the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results of the questionnaire for ESL teachers and the data collected from the test for students. The data gathered from both tools are discussed in relation to the hypothesis.

The descriptive features are as follows:

- ) One hundred (100) secondary school students from Al Dammar Secondary School for Girls.
- ) One hundred (100) secondary school teachers from different schools in Sudan.

The hypotheses of the study are tested by the SPSS program in a descriptive method. Frequencies and percentages are used in this method. The questionnaire is used to show the opinions and attitudes of the teachers towards writing skills. The test shows the competence of the students in terms of writing skills.

#### 4.1 Results and Analysis of Teacher's Questionnaire:

The questionnaire consists of eight statements in the first part and 12 statements in the second part. The researcher designed them in a way that can help to find out the common teaching techniques used by the EFL teachers. The results are shown in the tables.

##### 4.1.1 Testing the First Hypothesis:

"Interference of the mother tongue affects the second language learning especially at the level of sentence structure." This hypothesis attempts to answer the question: To what extent does the interference of the mother tongue cause problems in writing at the level of sentence structure?

This hypothesis will be proved by the following statement from the questionnaire:

When teaching writing skills at the level of sentence structure and paragraph development, do your students concentrate on capitalization, punctuation,

spelling, appropriateness of lexis, grammar, organization of the paragraphs, and the process and product of writing?

Table No (4.1): Interference of the Mother- Tongue Affects the Second Language Learning Especially at the Level of Sentence Structure

Sentence Structure	Always		Seldom		Sometimes		Never		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Capitalization	2	2	6	6	6	6	86	86	100	100
Punctuation?	4	4	2	2	18	18	76	76	100	100
Spelling?	2	2	2	2	8	8	88	88	100	100
Appropriateness of lexis?	4	4	6	6	22	22	68	68	100	100
Grammar?	4	4	10	10	18	18	68	68	100	100
The Organization of Writing?	4	4	4	4	20	20	72	72	100	100
The Process and Product of writing?	2	2	8	8	24	24	66	66	100	100
Form and content.	2	2	3	3	7	7	88	88	100	100

This hypothesis is strongly supported by the results of the above Table (4.1). As shown in the Table, 2% of students always concentrate on capitalization, 6% seldom, 6% sometimes, and the 86% majority never do. In regards to punctuation, 4% of respondents always concentrate on punctuation, 2% seldom, 18% sometimes, and 76% never concentrate on punctuation. The results for proper spelling, when writing at the level of sentence structure,

show that 2% always check for proper spelling, 2% seldom check, 8% sometimes and the 88% majority never check.

The analysis of the appropriateness of the lexis (verb, noun, and adjective) illustrates that 4% always concentrate on the suitability of the lexis when they write at the sentence structure level, 6% seldom do, 22% sometimes, and 68% never concentrate on the suitability of the lexis. While 4% of students always concentrate on grammar when writing at the sentence structure level, 10% seldom do, 18% sometimes do, and 68% never concentrate on grammar. It is clear from the above analysis and from the percentage of students that write sentences without capital letters, fail to use periods, and ignore the usage of other punctuation marks, that they do not know how to use the lexis properly.

**4.1.2 Testing the Second Hypothesis:**

Many students are not aware of the proper techniques for developing a paragraph. The hypothesis attempts to answer the question:

**To what extent do students follow the proper techniques to develop a paragraph?**

Table No (4.1.2): The Way It Looks, Organization of Writing and Indentation:

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Never	72	72
Seldom	4	4
Sometimes	20	20
Always	4	4
Total	100	100

The table above demonstrates that 4% of respondents always and seldom, respectively, concentrate on the organization of writing at the level of paragraph development, 20% sometimes, and 72% never.

Table No (4. 1.3): Process and Product of Writing More than One Central Idea in One Paragraph:

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	66	66
Seldom	8	8
Sometimes	24	24
Always	2	2
Total	100	100

Most of the students (66%) never concentrate on the process and product of writing while writing at the level of paragraph development followed by 24% sometimes, 8% seldom, and 2% always.

The table showed that those who do not concentrate on the process and product of writing are having the highest percentage, which means that the majority of the teachers agreed with the first hypothesis: "Many students are not aware of the proper techniques of developing a paragraph."

This will make teachers do their best to concentrate on teaching students the proper techniques for developing a paragraph.

#### **4.1.3 Testing the Third Hypothesis:**

Assessment of writing plays an important role in improving students' writing.

The hypothesis attempts to answer the question:

What is the effect of writing assessment in improving a student's writing?

Table (4.1.4): Attitudes and personal opinions about responding to students' writing assessment:

Statement	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Always		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I respond to students' writing by underlining all their writing and grammatical errors	10	10	-	-	32	32.	58	58	100	100
I underline and correct all lexical errors	6	6	10	10	46	46	38	38	100	100
I refer to the writing errors without correcting them (indirect feedback)	50	50	14	14	30	30	6	6	100	100
I write positive comments on students' papers	2	2	4	4	44	44	50	50	100	100
I write negative comments on students' papers	52	52	24	24	14	28	10	10	100	100
I focus on rhetorical features (content, organization, development of ideas) when responding to students' writing	4	4	18	18	44	44	34	34	100	100
I meet with students individually to discuss their errors	4	4	12	12	40	40	44	44	100	100

I organized peer response pairs and groups to give students the opportunity to provide feedback on each other's writing	2	2	22	22	54	54	22	22	100	100
I give equal consideration to all students' writing errors	4	4	14	14	26	26	56	56	100	100

Table (4.1.4) demonstrates the attitudes and opinions of the investigated teachers about responding to students' writing.

When asked about the statement, "I respond to students' writing by underlining all their spelling and grammatical errors," 10% of teachers never responded, 32% sometimes responded in that fashion, and 58% always did so. The results indicate that most of the teachers make corrections with a red pen on the students' work.

This can sometimes have a negative impact on students' motivation. Also, students may feel upset seeing their exercise book marked in red pen. However, it may also encourage students to work hard to avoid these errors in the future.

Concerning the statement, "I underline and correct all the spelling errors," 6% of teachers never underline and correct all the spelling errors, 10% seldom, 46% sometimes, and 38% always. This action may lend the students a positive attitude in the learning process. It may make them more attentive to their mistakes. They will try harder to learn, know their mistakes, and be correct next time.

Fifty percent of respondent teachers never refer to the writing errors without correcting them (indirect feedback), 14% seldom, 30% sometimes, while 6% never refer to those errors. It is very important that errors must be corrected. Teachers need to highlight and concentrate on the common errors; they should try to develop a special technique to motivate the students to correct their errors.

Of the interviewed teachers, 50% always write positive comments on students' papers, 44% sometimes, 4% seldom, and the rest (2%) never. A positive comment on a student's writing work is essential because it encourages the students to work hard and develop their writing skills.

As for the reply of teachers in the study about the statement, "I write negative comments on students' papers," 52% never, 24% seldom, 14% sometimes, and 10% always. Writing negative comments on students' papers can have side effects on students' progress, as they may feel disappointed and upset about the comments. The result will be negative.

When responding to students' writing, 4% of teachers never focus on rhetorical features (content, organization, development of ideas), 18% seldom do, 44% sometimes, and the rest of the teachers (34%) always do so. Analysis of the results of this statement shows that the highest percentage responded positively to it.

It is known that the first and most important step for improving student writing skills is to organize the content of the topic and then start developing ideas about it. Therefore, teachers should focus on this step and encourage their students to produce many ideas about the topic before starting to write.

When asked if they met individually with students to discuss errors, 4% responded that they never did so, 12% responded that they seldom did so, 40% sometimes did so, and 44% always did so. Meeting with students



individually may solve many problems and assist them in avoiding the repetition of common errors. The process of correcting students' mistakes in front of them may give the student self-confidence and reinforce the relationship between him/her and the teacher.

Organizing peer response pairs and groups to give students the opportunity to provide feedback on each other's writing was a practice never employed by 2% of the teachers, seldom employed by 22%, 54% sometimes employed it, and 22% always did so. This process has many positive impacts on the students' progress as they can learn from each other's mistakes. It also gives the students a chance to practice assessing a piece of writing and taking responsibility to play the role of the teacher.

Half (50%) of respondent teachers never give equal consideration to all students' writing errors, 14% seldom, 32% sometimes, and 4% never. It is impossible for the error to be considered equally as the number of the students in a class is very large. The time is also too limited for the teacher to cover all the students' writing errors equally.

#### **4.1.4. Testing the Fourth Hypothesis:**

Time allowed for teaching English in class is not enough for learning English (four lessons a week for 12 chapters, including other skills and grammar).

The hypothesis attempts to answer the question:

To what extent does time allowed for teaching English in general, and writing in particular, affect the process of teaching and learning writing skills?

This hypothesis will be supported by the results in the following table.

Table (4.1.6) Time Allowed for Teaching English in Class is not Enough for Learning English:

Statement	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Always		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Does your class write on a daily basis?	6	6	28	28	44	44	12	12	100	100
Does lack of time affect your concentration on the writing skills?	4	4	16	16	50	50	30	30	100	100

In investigating teachers' responses when asked, "Does your class write on a daily basis?," 6% of the teachers replied never, 28% replied seldom, 44% replied sometimes, and the rest, 12%, replied always. Most of the teachers respond positively to "sometimes their students write on a daily basis"; this indicates that students do not practice writing most of the time. It means that they have very little time for writing.

When asked, "Does lack of time affect your concentration on writing skill?" 4% of teachers responded that lack of time never impacts the instruction of writing skills, 16% replied seldom, 50% replied sometimes, and 30% replied always.

#### 4.1.5 Testing the Fifth Hypothesis:

Some teachers avoid teaching writing because they lack the experience and training that enable them to teach this skill effectively. The hypothesis attempts to answer the question:

What is the effect of teacher training on student writing ?

Table (4.1.7) Lack of experience and training:

Activity	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Did you have a course on how to teach writing as an undergraduate?	26	26	74	74	100	100

Have you taken one at the graduate level?	2	26	74	74	100	100
Has the Ministry provided any additional training or in-service in the area of writing skills?	38	38	62	62	100	100
Have you ever participated in any professional development or training courses in teaching techniques regarding writing skills?	16	16	84	84	100	100
Do you feel that you need additional training courses in teaching techniques in the area of writing skills?	90	90	10	10	100	100

Table (4.1.7) presents the professional development of teachers within the study. The majority (74%) did not have any course on teaching writing as an undergraduate. The same number, 74%, have not taken any training at the graduate level. When asked if the Ministry provided any additional training or in-service training in the area of writing skills, 38% responded that it did not. It is clear that most of the teachers (84%) do not participate in any professional development or training courses in teaching techniques, particularly regarding writing skills; while most of them (90%) feel that they need additional training in the area of writing skills.

#### **4. 2 Students' Test:**

The researcher conducted a test for 100 respondents taken from second-year secondary school students. The samples were randomly taken from Al Dammar Secondary School for Girls. The question asked in the test was a guided composition. The aim of the composition was to check students' writing ability in the area of sentence structure and paragraph development. Another aim of the test was to prove the hypothesis of this study.

After correcting the guided composition, the researcher found what he was expecting: many mistakes in terms of sentence structure and paragraph development. The researcher assumes that errors relating to sentence structure are due to interference of the mother tongue and lack of training, and those which relate to paragraph development are the responsibility of the teachers because many of them are unqualified and others are untrained. Teachers do not concentrate on writing; they only concentrate on reading and listening while ignoring the writing skill.

#### **4.2.1 Using the Test to Prove the Hypothesis:**

Interference of the mother tongue affects second language learning, especially at the level of sentence structure.

The test is conducted to analyze students' writing errors. The researcher analyzed the nature and the number of errors.

The test will be used to prove the first hypotheses, which concerns the interference of the mother tongue and its impact on students' writing.

The researcher will identify, describe, and analyze errors that are committed by the samples; each type of error will be explained with examples attached.

The researcher will illustrate the sources of each error.

#### **4.2.2. Linguistic Taxonomy of Error:**

The researcher used the Linguistic Taxonomy of Errors to identify, classify, and describe the errors.

James (1998) clarifies that the word taxonomy was defined in the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993) as the branch of science that deals with classification. James (1998) says:

*"A taxonomy must be organized according to certain constitution criteria. These criteria*

*should as far as possible reflect observable objectives and facts about the entities to be classified."*

The criterion the researcher used in this study is a guided composition. It has been given to students to discover the types of errors they commit during writing.

The composition revealed these types of errors:

- 1) Spelling mistakes
- 2) Excessive use of "and"
- 3) Subject verb disagreement
- 4) Incorrect use of the negative
- 5) Verb "to have" omission
- 6) Verb "to be" omission
- 7) Addition of auxiliary
- 8) Word order
- 9) Misformation in word class
- 10) "They are" instead of "there are"

In addition to the above types of errors, there is a lack of knowledge on developing a good paragraph. This will be discussed as well, after the analysis of the types of errors included in the list above.

Types of errors and their frequency will be shown in Tables. The total number of errors is 4364. There are ten types of errors committed by the samples. The frequency of each error is different from the others. The error with the highest frequency is the excessive use of "and." The one with the lowest frequency is the use of "they are" instead of "there are."

Table (4.2): Shows Clearly How the Errors are stated:

	Type of errors	Example	Number of cases	Percentage
1.	Spelling mistakes	Includ* -officas* facilits* *-mor - licks* dapartment* - worke* houres*	950	21.8%
2.	Excessive use of and	there were no theaters *and clubs *and parks.	657	15.1%
3.	Subject verb disagreement	There *are a new factory.	600	13.8%
4.	Incorrect use of the negative	The town not too big.	500	11.5%
5.	Verb to have omission	There been many changes	400	9.2%
6.	Verb to be omission	My town * more pleasant	310	7.1% 7.1%
7.	Addition of auxiliary	The government *was build schools and hospitals.	300	6.9%
8.	Word order	Is it better because the building new been built.*	205	4.7%
9.	Miss formation in word class	Riskable for risky	240	5.3%
10.	they are instead of there are	*(They are) many shops near our house.	200	4.6%
	Total		4362	100%

### 4.2.3 Spelling Mistakes:

Spelling mistakes are considered to be the most common mistakes among students. In this test, it takes the highest percentage. One of the reasons for spelling mistakes is that the English language has a disagreement between its letters and their pronunciation; there is no consistency between them. The total number of mistakes committed by the samples is (950) cases, which shows the largest number. The percentage is (21.8).

## **2.4 Excessive use of and:**

The test revealed that (and) has repeatedly been used. In English, (and) is used in several ways:

- ) And is used to join two or more grammatically similar expressions. (the boy and the girl. John and Omer).
- ) When there are more than two items, we usually put at the beginning of the series and before the last item in the series.

I bought books, pencils, and pens.

In Arabic (\*wa), which means "and," is not used in the same ways as "and" in English. It occurs much more often and is used with each item in a series at the beginning of each new thought and sometimes in the speech of some persons. One of the problems of L1 learner is his inclination to overuse and.

The examples below show how and is used by the samples:

- ) There were no theaters \*and clubs \*and parks
- ) \*and new buildings have been built \*and the school \*and the hospital.

In the first example, and is used after each item, which is not allowed in written English.

The second example starts with and, which is wrong because in written English, a sentence should not start with and.

The total number of errors done by the samples is 657 cases, which shows the largest number. The percentage is 15.1%.

The researcher can refer this type of error to the influence of the samples with their MT. This kind of error is called the interlingua error or mother tongue interference.

## **4.2.5 Subject Verb Disagreement**

The most common error here is the disagreement of the verb to be with the noun. In the samples, the sentences are incorrect because the wrong form of the verb "to be" is used with the subject. There are 600 cases, and the percentage out of the total errors is 13.8%. This is the third most common type of error, which demonstrates that it constitutes problems for learners writing in their L2.

Table (4.2.1) Subcategory of subject verb disagreement:

subject verb Disagreement	Number of Cases	Percentage
Are	175	29.2%
is	155	25.8%
Was	145	24.2%
Were	125	20.8%
Total	600	100%

#### **4.2.6. Incorrect Use of the Negative:**

The negation error is the most common error. The samples always omit the word "not" in the negative form, for example, "do not," "does not," and "did not." The total number of errors is 500 with the percentage 11.5%.

There are two causes of these errors:

- ) Classroom teaching methods do not put enough emphasis on correctly making the negative form. This may happen because of the short time that is given for teaching English grammar in class.



- ) Students carry the rules and form of their first language and apply it to their second language (SL). This interference of the mother tongue can cause errors.

Examples:

- ) Incorrect: They not accustomed to the cinema.
- ) Correct: They are not accustomed to the cinema.
- ) Incorrect: The town not too big.
- ) Correct: The town is not too big.

#### **4.2.7. Verb to Have Omission:**

Interference of the mother tongue appeared again in the verb to have. Students omit the verb to have because it does not exist in their native language, so they commit errors unintentionally. They do not use have or has when they write sentences that need these features.

In the test that has been written by the samples, there are 400 cases with a percentage of (9.2%).

Table No (4.2.2): Types of Verb to Have Omission in Number and Percentage:

<b>Verb to have Omission</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Omission of have	197	49.25 %
Omission of has	203	50.75 %
Total	400	100 %

The cause of the errors refers to the mother tongue interference or interlingual errors.

Examples:

- ) There been many changes. (There have been many changes).

- ) The government built new schools. (The government has built many schools).
- ) People not adapted themselves to the changes. (People have not adapted themselves to the changes).

#### 4.2.8 Verb to be Omission:

According to Table (1), verb to be omission is one of the common errors that committed by the samples. They remove the verb to be in their descriptive composition many times. Their sentences are no longer correct sentences. The origin of this error is due to the absence of this concept in the mother tongue of the samples (Arabic language), i.e., there is no verb to be in the Arabic language, so students do not use it when writing sentences in English. There are 310 examples of this error, and the percentage is 7.1%.

Example: My town in the past clean.

Table (4.2.3) Sub-category of verb "to be" omission:

<b>Verb to be Omission</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Is omission	98	31.6%
Are omission	149	48.1%
Was omission	63	20.3%
Total	310	100%

Table No (4.2.4) Addition of Auxiliary:

<b>Addition of Auxiliary</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Addition of was	152	50.7 %
Addition of were	148	49.3 %
Total	300	100 %

#### 4.2.9. Word Order:

Word order is also one of the common errors made by L2 learners. These learners took the rules and form of their L1 and applied them to their L2, causing them to commit errors. This type of error is called an interlingual error.

English has five patterns of word order:

- ) Subject + verb
- ) Subject + verb + object
- ) Subject + verb + adjective
- ) Subject + verb + adverb
- ) Subject + verb + noun

Arabic has two patterns of word order:

- ) Verb + subject
- ) Verb + subject + adjective

The greatest number of errors involves:

- a. "To be" noun replacement:

The relative frequency of noun replacement is 55 with a percentage of 27.5%.

Example of noun replacement:

- ) Incorrect: Is it better because the building new been built.
- ) Correct: It is better because the new building has been built.

- b. Noun adjective replacement:

This type of error is committed by many students. The cause of this error is the interference of the mother tongue. In the students' L1 the noun comes before the adjective.

Examples:

The building new has been built.\* (wrong)

The new building has been built. (right)

The relative frequency of noun replacement is 70 with a percentage of 35%.

c. Noun Instead of the Verb

The students use the noun instead of the verb as in the following example:

People do not entertainment their children.\* They used the noun 'entertainment' instead of the verb 'entertain.'

This kind of error is due to the way of teaching . Students are not well-trained to use nouns and verbs correctly because teachers themselves are not well-trained to teach students these parts of speech and it is also not included in the students' books. The frequency of this error among the students is 75 in number and 37.5% in percentage.

Table No. 4.2.5 - Sub-category of Word Order Errors:

Word Order Errors	Number of cases	Percentage
To be / noun Replacement	55	26.8%
Noun Adjective Replacement	70	34.1%
Noun for verb	80	39.1%
Total	205	100 %

#### 4.2.10 Misformation in Word Class:

Misformation in word class is another type of error that appears repeatedly. The students do not know how to use the appropriate prefixes and suffixes. Teachers play a role in this type of error. Teachers do not give their students enough practice work and exercises on how to change a verb into a noun or a

noun into an adjective. This kind of error is due to the lack of training and practice. The frequency of this error is (240), with a percentage of (4.8%).

Example:

Riskable for risky

enjoyed for enjoyable

#### **4.2.11 They are instead of there are:**

The samples committed many errors of the type they are instead of there are; they use they are instead of there are. This type of error is due to the lack of sufficient training to use the structure. They do not know how to distinguish between the two structures. The frequency of the error is (200), with a percentage of (4.0%).

Examples:

\*(They are) many shops near our house.

\*(There are) built two years ago.

Other Types of Errors:

The researcher noticed, aside from the abovementioned errors, other types of errors that hinder the correctness, coherence, and consistency of the sentence.

Some of these errors are:

##### a) Wordiness

Some participants in this study wrote long sentences in their composition, which made their paragraphs wordy.

They have to punctuate these sentences. They have to break these long sentences into multiple sentences because sentences longer than 15 words are often very difficult to follow.

Example: \*I left my village when I was ten years old most of the people are farmers workers some of the men work in government some in hospitals.

b) Dangling and misplaced modifier

Students tend to put the modifier in the wrong place, and it becomes a dangling modifier. They put it far from the word it modifies, however, it should be close to the word it modifies.

c) Capitalization

Some of the samples do not correctly capitalize words. They start paragraphs without indentation. In general, the students are not able to correctly capitalize their work.

d) Point form

Some of the samples begin each new sentence on a new line. Some also put numbers in front of each new sentence.

Table No (4.2.6): Types of errors and their sources:

Types of errors	Sources of errors
Excessive use of and	Interlingual ( mother tongue)
Eubject verb disagreement	Interlingual ( mother tongue)
Incorrect Use of the Negative	Untrained teachers and poor English teaching methods.
Verb to Have Omission	Interlingual( mother tongue)
Verb to Be omission	Interlingual( mother tongue)
They are Instead of There are	Untrained teachers and poor English teaching methods.
Spelling Mistakes	Inconsistency of L1and L2 in spelling and pronunciation
Dangling and misplaced modifier	Interlingual ( mother tongue )
Word order	Interlingual, ( mother tongue )Untrained teachers and poor English teaching methods.

From the above table and the previous discussion, it appears that the main sources of errors are mother tongue interference (interlingual) and poor English teaching methods at secondary schools. The questionnaire also revealed that no training is given to teachers. The majority of the teachers said that they need additional training courses in writing skills teaching techniques.

A literature review states that teachers should be trained or given at least some training in teaching the English language, especially teaching writing. This training ensures a teacher is qualified enough to impart the appropriate knowledge which the student needs. Teachers should be qualified, well-trained, and have many years of teaching experience. Teaching experience helps teachers teach effectively. So, lack of training for teachers at secondary schools and the weakness of their syllabus are considered to be sources of the errors in the samples.

### **4.3. Other sources of errors:**

Jordan (1996.11), states that there are other sources of errors. He mentioned two of these sources:

Probably the biggest cause of error is the literal translation from L1 to L2. Whenever students try to translate word for word, they will commit errors. The result of this literal translation is in the change of word order and sentence structure.

Writing long, complex sentences causes students to commit errors because the sentences will be complicated and the subject and verb tenses may become confused.

### **4.4. Paragraph Development Problems**

The study identified two causes that triggered learners' errors: intralingual and interlingual (interference of the mother tongue). However, the majority of the errors attributed to intralingual causes that mainly resulted from the lack of full mastery of the basics of the English language. Students commit grammatical errors that adversely affect the structure of their sentences and the idea they want to communicate.

Aside from the grammatical errors, the researcher pointed out through the test and the questionnaire the poor command of developing a good paragraph. All the mistakes they committed will hinder them from writing a well-formed paragraph. Their writing lacked coherent and coherence. They write long and complex sentences that lead to ambiguity. These long sentences missed transitions to link the sentences within the paragraph.

## **Chapter Five**



# **Conclusion and Recommendation**

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **5.1 Introduction:**

The researcher noticed from the tests and the questionnaire that student performance in writing skills is very weak. The researcher discovered from the analysis of the tools that:

1. There was a significant weakness in sentence structure and paragraph development.

2. Students lack the ability to construct well-formed sentences. They are not able to perform good writing with correct spelling and good grammar.
3. Students are not able to use punctuation and capitalization properly.
4. The time allotted for writing is not enough. An English lesson is given in forty minutes; no time is given for each skill. Teachers have to go over the four skills through these minutes. So, there is no chance for the teacher to concentrate on writing skills and for the students to learn the basic strategies for writing a good paragraph.
5. Teachers need some training badly so as to give the students the right knowledge they need.
6. Teachers do not give special care when correcting student composition and assignment.
7. Ministry of education and syllabus designers do not give any care to improve the English language syllabus, updating for the textbook, or the material used in teaching writing.
8. Some teachers deal with students' writing assessment carelessly.
9. Some teachers do not make a careful study of students' work. They have a quick look at the work and give students marks. They do not notice serious errors.

## **5.2. Recommendations:**

The most important recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. English language syllabus should be provided with materials that are designed especially for teaching writing. The syllabus should include a workbook for exercises to help the learners improve their writing.

2. Teachers should stress the fact that writing in English will become easier if students practice writing daily.
3. The study recommended that there is a need for further refinement of the current writing activities and the need to incorporate authentic materials, particularly materials for writing development.
4. Teachers must be creative. They should not depend only on the textbook; they must search and update their information consistently.
5. Sufficient amounts of practice should be given to students to show them how to use the different structures of language; this includes how to use the verb "to be" and "to have."
6. Students should not depend on teachers; they should read and write outside of the classroom as well.
7. Parents should be careful and always aware of what their children study at school. They should follow their learning daily.
8. Differences in the word order of English and Arabic must be clearly stated.
9. 10 There must be pair work, teamwork, and heated discussion among the students.
10. Teaching writing must be the most important goal of teaching English.
11. The current time allotment for teaching English is not sufficient; more time should be given to enable the students to practice reading and writing.

### **5.3. Suggestions for further studies:**

This study recommends the following suggestions:

a study can be conducted on

- 1) EFL learners problems in using preposition
- 2) Analysis of prepositions errors in writing among Sudanese secondary schools students

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## Appendix (No.1)

### Teachers' questionnaire:

This questionnaire is part of the research for a Ph.D. degree conducted by the researcher. The topic of the research is " A suggested program to handle the deficiency of second year secondary school writing performance

Faculty of languages / Sudan University of Science and Technology

The researcher would be very grateful if you would be kind enough to complete this questionnaire by recording your opinions and ideas. suggestion will receive great consideration and secrecy. All your answers will remain confidential. the researcher appreciate your time in filling out this survey.

#### Part (1)

#### DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Please put a check (✓) in the appropriate box or write your own answer in the space provided.

1-Name (optional):

2- Gender: Female Male

3- Age (approximately): Below 24 24 to 31

32 to 40 41 to 51 Over 51

4- Total years of teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_

5- Did you complete a teacher education or training program?

a. Teacher education

b. Training program

6- Highest Qualification: Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree  
Ph.D.

7- What class do you teach in secondary level ?

first class second class third class



8- Average class size:

Less than 15

15– 20 students

20– 30 students

Over 30 students

9- How often do you give writing assignments?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Never

Part (2)

Attitudes and views toward your students writing skills

You are kindly requested to reply on the following questionnaire regarding your attitude and views toward your students writing skills.

Your responses are highly appreciated and will be exploited to improve the teaching of the writing skill at secondary school.

Please tick the box below the most appropriate item.

STATEMENTS		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Always
1	Do you feel there is evidence of lack of basic writing skill in your students?				
2	Are you satisfied with writing curriculum that the spine series provide?				
3	Do you use supplementary writing materials?				
4	Does your class write on a daily basis?				
5	Does lack of time affect your concentration on the writing skill?				
6	Do your students make errors of different types in their writing?				

7	Do you think the interference of the mother- tongue caused problems in the writing skill in your students?				
8	When teaching the writing skill at the level of (sentence structure) for your students, do you concentrate on:				
	A. Capitalization?				
	B. Punctuation?				
	C. Spelling?				
	D. Handwriting?				
	E. Appropriateness of lexis?				
	F. Grammar?				
	G. The organization of writing?				
H	The process and product of writing				

*Adapted from Hourani, T. (2008)*

### Part (3)

#### Attitude and personal opinion about responding to students' writing

Please put a check (✓) in the appropriate box in the column on the right to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statements		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Always
1	I respond to students' writing by underlining all their writing errors.				
2	I underline and correct all grammatical errors.				
3	I underline and correct all lexical errors.				
4	I refer to the writing errors without correcting them (indirect feedback).				

5	I write positive comments nonstudents' papers.				
6	I write negative comments on students' papers.				
8	I focus on rhetorical features (content, organization, development of ideas) when responding to students' writing				
9	I focus on linguistic features (control of grammar and vocabulary) when responding to students' writing				
10	I meet with students individually to discuss their errors.				
11	I organize peer response pairs and groups to give students the opportunity to provide feedback on each other's writing.				
12	I give equal consideration to all students' errors in writing.				

*Adapted from Abou Eissa, A. (2010)*

Part (4)

Professional Development

In this section professional development is defined as activities that aim to develop an individual's skills, knowledge, experience and other characteristics as a teacher.

Please put a check (✓) in the appropriate box or write your own answer in the space provided.

1. Did you have a course on how to teach writing as an undergraduate student? YES NO

2. Have you taken one at the graduate level? YES NO

3. Has the ministry provided any additional training or in-service in the area of writing skills?YES NO

If yes, please indicate what type:

4. Have you ever participated in any professional development or training courses in teaching techniques regarding writing skills?YES NO

If Yes, What kind of training have you received?

-----  
-----

5. For the professional development in which you participated, did you receive any of the following support?

A.	I received scheduled time off working hours at this school for activities that took place during regular working hours at this school.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
B.	I received a salary supplement for activities outside working hours	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
C.	I received non-monetary support for activities outside working hours (reduced teaching, days off, study leave, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no

6. Do you feel that you need additional training courses in teaching techniques in the area of writing skills? YES NO

*Adapted from Korbil, M. (2001)*

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

The Researcher

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## **Appendix ( No.2)**

### **Students' test**

#### **A guided Composition:**

In not more than 200 words describe how your town has been changed over the past few years. You can use the following questions to help you.

Compare the town a few years ago with the present condition. The points below will guide you to write the composition

1. What is the name of the town?
2. Have any buildings been pulled down?
3. What new buildings have been built?
4. What is the system of transport look like? Is it better or worse than it used to be?
5. Are there new shops, markets, or factories?
6. Are there any entertainment facilities now?
7. What were they like before?
8. Is the town more pleasant to live in than it used to be?
9. Have there been any other important changes?

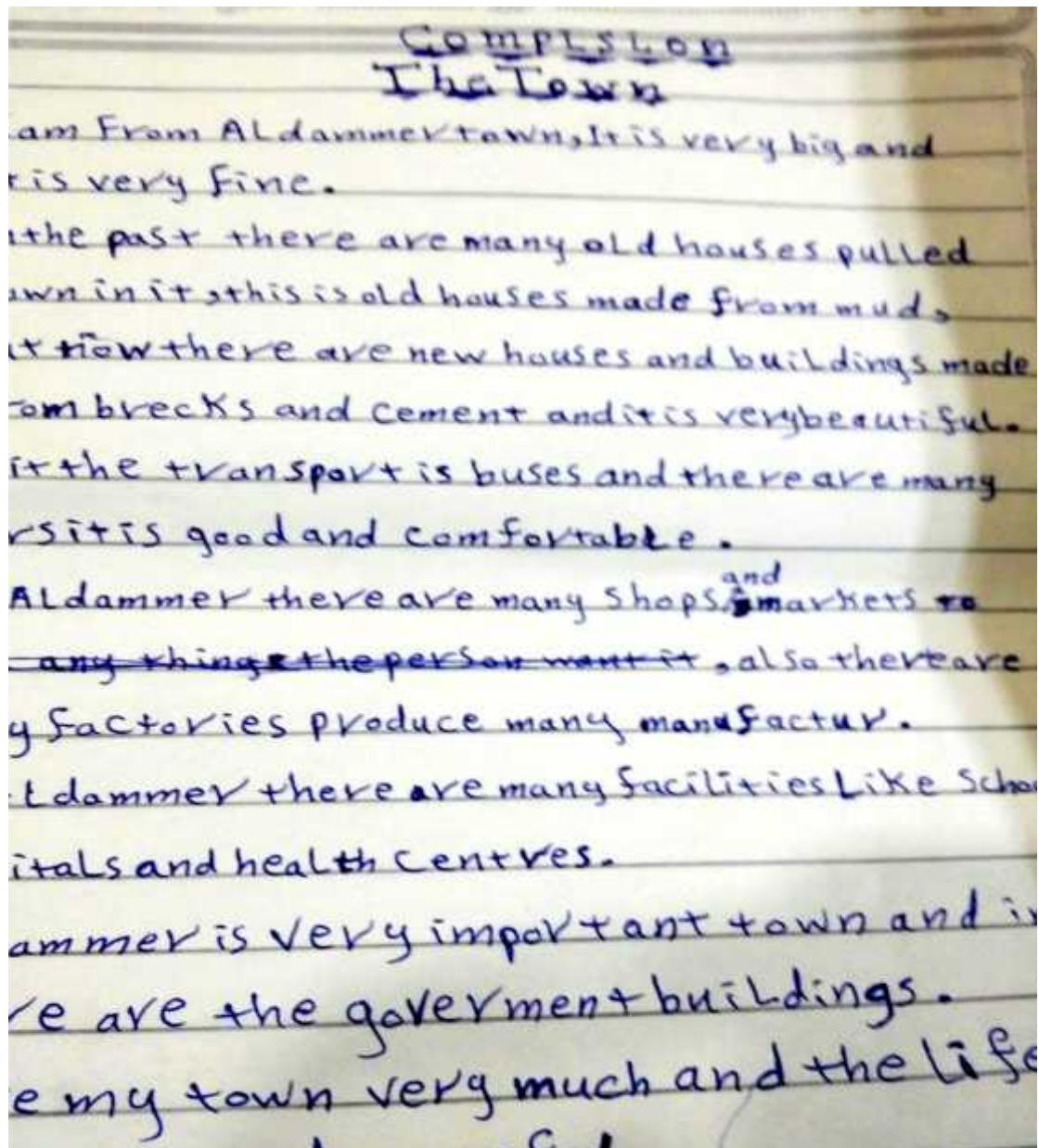
Appendix ( No.3)

Items to be corrected	Assigned marks	A warded marks
1. Getting the main idea	4	
2. punctuation	2	
3. indentation	2	
4. sentence structure	4	
5. spelling	8	
Total	20	

#### Appendix (No.4)

#### Samples of Students' Writing:

#### Sample No (1):



#### Sample No (2):



موضوع الدرس: قابلية التغيير  
التاريخ: / /  
اسم الطالب: / /  
Changes in my town

My town is Addamer. There have been many changes in it over the past few years. Some old buildings have been pulled down, while new ones have been built. The new buildings are like the banks, halls, ministries, offices, schools, colleges and some parks. People travel by buses, cars, trains and planes. The system of transport is better than it used to be. There are now shops, markets and new factories like the cement factories. Now there are entertainment facilities which there were before like the new stadium. So, the town now is more

Sample No (3)

## Completion The Town

am From Aldammer town, It is very big and  
is very fine.

In the past there are many old houses pulled  
down in it, this is old houses made from mud,  
but now there are new houses and buildings made  
from bricks and cement and it is very beautiful.  
In the transport is buses and there are many  
and it is good and comfortable.

Aldammer there are many shops <sup>and</sup> markets to  
~~any things the person want it~~, also there are  
many factories produce many manufacture.

Aldammer there are many facilities like schools,  
hospitals and health centres.

Aldammer is very important town and in  
there are the government buildings.  
I love my town very much and the life



«ربان عبد الله»  
Life in the village is vers easy and  
comfortable than in the town. <sup>SP</sup>  
<sup>CA</sup> in the village people are health because <sup>SP</sup>  
<sup>wrong sentence</sup> there are not pollution ~~and~~ and many <sup>SP</sup>  
<sup>CA</sup> robust <sup>pun</sup> people in the there are very kind  
other and help every one but in town every  
one took care of him self and not ask  
about there neighbour.  
In my opinion <sup>SP</sup> I like to live in village <sup>SP</sup>  
<sup>SP</sup> then in town because there you can find the  
best kind of life. like when you wake up <sup>SP</sup>  
you first <sup>SP</sup> listen to the birds sing <sup>SP</sup> then all  
the family come and drink tea with milk  
and pathers after that the house keeper go  
to the butcher <sup>SP</sup> to buy meat and some vegetables  
then they go back and prepared there <sup>SP</sup> dinner