

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background

The investigation of English spelling and pronunciation of the sound is an urgent issue in that it causes problems to the non – native learners of English language. There are some words have the same letters but differ in their sound system. Other words have silent letters. Some letters have different sounds in different contexts and situations.

Very often, English has accepted the new words with their original spellings, but has not always adopted the original pronunciations, or pronunciations were changed by common habit or political expediency, but the original spellings were never changed to match the new pronunciations.

In this research, the study will concentrate on the problems that face the basic school students in dealing with spelling while learning English language. This study will provide a number of areas that constitute difficulty and a number of examples to highlight the problem of the research.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study assumes that the difference between the sounds and the letters and the variety of the ways of pronunciation create a problem to the learners in dealing with spelling. It is observed that, some words have three or four letters, but have only one sound like [ough] in thought and bought have the sound [o].

Also the letter [k] is sometimes silent when occurring in certain positions as in [ knight ] [ knife ] all these cases constitute problems to the learners of English as a foreign language. Especially the basic

level school eighth class students upon whom this study will be carried out.

## **1.2 Questions of the Study**

The researcher poses the following questions:

- 1- What is the attitude of the students towards spelling and pronunciation?
- 2- What are the letters that constitute difficulty to the learners of English in differentiating between sounds?

## **1.3 Hypotheses of the Study**

The study hypothesizes that:

- 1- Students have negative attitude towards spelling
- 2- Some English letters have completely different sounds from their spelling

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1- To identify the aspects of the problem of spelling that encounter basic level school students and find solution to such a problem
- 2- To help students be aware of the fundamental rules that they are encountered and included in the syllabus

## **1.5 Methodology of the study**

The researcher adopts descriptive approach through giving the basic school students a test in spelling. The researcher also submits a questionnaire for basic school teachers to identify the aspects of the problem. The SPSS tools of the study.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is important in that it constitutes the backbone of learning the language. This is due to the fact that identifying the correct spelling of the English words enable the students to write correct and help him/ her know the difference between the letter and its sound.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the problematic areas of spelling in learning English as a second language by basic level school students namely the eighth class students and the extents this problem affect the writing process.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

#### 2.0 Introduction

Discussing such an important topic needs highlighting theoretical framework and literature review to clarify the study and to pave the road to the analysis in the fourth chapter. Spelling is essential in writing skills, for this reason the research will discuss what has been mentioned about the mistakes that can be made by non – native students.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this part of the research, the researcher finds it helpful to mention some of the rules of spelling and the exceptions to these rules alongside with some examples to make the study clearer to the readers. However, the study defines the term spelling and then presents the comments about the issue of spelling and its effects on the learning process.

##### 2.1.1 Definition of Spelling

Spelling is defined by Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics as "*a way of pronouncing a word which is based on its spelling and which may differ from the way the word is generally pronounced. it is the letters of the alphabet of a language. For example, a non-native speaker of British English might pronounce yacht as /jikt/ instead of /jit/. Native speakers also sometimes use spelling pronunciations, and some have become acceptable ways of pronouncing words.*" (p. 504).

It is also defined as "*the forming of words from letters according accepted usage*". Another definition is that it is "*a sequence of letters composing a word*". A fourth definition is mentioned in Webster

Dictionary, fifth edition as " *the proper way to write a word, using the correct order of letters*"

### 2.1.2 Rules of Spelling

- 1) When the word – final is [ - s , -ss , -sh , -ch , -x ] add [ -es] to form their plural. Examples:

Box ----- boxes

Miss -----misses

Match -----matches

Bush -----bushes

Also some verbs are treated in the same way as:

Go -----goes

Do -----does

- 2) Words ending in [ -y] , change the [y] into [i] and add [es] if the final sound is consonant :

Baby -----babies

Carry -----carries

Lorry -----lorries

Study -----studies (Murphy : 1990: p. 797)

However, the same author states that, the letter [y] isn't change if it occurred after ( vowel sound) :

Enjoy -----enjoys

Play -----plays

This is along with some exceptions in the case of :

Day --- daily

Lay ----laid

Say ----said (p.267)

Another author mentioned some rules concerning spelling, these rules are common rules:

- Making plural with –s , usually adds –s : books

- Words that end in -f , - fe , change the -f , fe into [ves]

Wolf ----wolves

Thief ----thieves

However, there is an exception that the [f] [ fe] do not change if the word final sound is vowel:

Roof ----roofs

Chief --- chiefs (Seely & Kitchen 1995)

- 3) Final (e) is dropped before a suffix beginning with a vowel: leave – leaving , cure – curable

With the exception that final (e) is retained in:

- (a) All words ending in [ ce] and [ge]

Peace – peaceable

Courage – courageous

- (b) All words ending in (ee) or (oe) or (ye)

Agree – agreeable

Hoe – hoeing

Eye – eyeing (Rowe 1930) p.272

- 4) Monosyllables ending in a consonant preceded by a single vowel, double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel:

Sit – sitting

Dip – dipped

God – goddess (p.273)

- 5) words in (re) pronounced [er]

Acre - calibre - centre – fibre (p.274)

On the other hand, (Thomas 1998) comments on other rules concerning compound nouns

- 6) True nouns normally become plural , the noun used as adjective doesn't change:

Tooth – brush                      tooth – brushes

City – centre                      city – centres

Concert – hall                      concert – halls (p. 100)

However, the most important thing to say in this respect, is in fact some letters, sounds are dropped while speaking and sometimes they affect the pronunciation of the other vowels.

This is stated by (Stannard 1976) who mentioned the following rule:

- 7) Silent [e] at the end of words pattern: ( vowel + consonant + silent [e] ) makes the vowel long or diphthong:

Hid - hide

Mad - made (p.56)

### **2.1.3 Spelling and Pronunciation**

Spelling and pronunciation are widely commented on by linguists.

The indented quotation below explain what is said in this concern:

*Since the sixteen century , we find that spelling has to some extents influenced the standard pronunciation. The struggle between those who demanded that words be spelled according to pronunciation generated great heart in that century ... many words that are spelled with the initial [h] honest , hour and hotel.*

( Fromkin & Rodman 1998: 511)

The above quotation shed light on the difference found between spelling and pronunciation , in that sometimes the spelling of the word is totally different from the way it is pronounced as the word: fought / fot/ Another author commented about the habit of spelling which should be established early in life.

(Stratton 1984) stated that "spelling habits are established early in life, and if you are still a poor speller by the time you are in college, it is probably too late to change. (p. 105)

Rodman & Fromkin stated that " ...also the written language has some influence on the spoken language... spelling no longer accurately reflects the pronunciation"

Many writers agree that the way English is written is different from the way it is spoken or pronounced, however, the case here is that, the students may find it difficult to deal with spelling in writing skills due to this difference.

However, the author (Rowe 1930) stresses that fact that although English spelling, no doubt presents some difficulties, but it can be mastered if you set about the task in the right way. And to solve these problems he stated that a student should have:

- (1) A dictionary at hand to consult whenever you are in doubt
- (2) Make a list of the words that he/she misspell
- (3) Commit to memory the main rules of spelling
- (4) Note the derivation and formation of words (p.271)

The above mentioned is simply a review of what has been stated by other authors and linguists concerning the issue of spelling and the rules that might be beneficial to the students of English. It is also a helpful step towards achieving the general aims of the research; which are the identification of the problems and the solutions to these problems. Then the indirect improvement of the ability of having good spelling in writing skills.

It is important to remember that the phonological system of every language changes, but writing systems do so very slowly. There are many



so-called silent letters in modern English spelling which originated at a time when they actually did represent sound segments. For example, the letters "gh" in fight, light, and night date back to the old English. The list below contains examples of silent letter in English:

- 1) [b] *subtle, doubt, climb*
- 2) [c] *scissors, scene, muscle*
- 3) [d] *Wednesday, sandwich, handkerchief*
- 4) [g] *gnaw, ought, long*
- 5) [h] *hour, what, ought*
- 6) [k] *know, knee*
- 7) [l] *talk, half, could*
- 8) [n] *autumn, column*
- 9) [p] *psychology, pneumonia, cupboard, receipt*
- 10) [r] *car, more, core, bother* (in non-rhotic accents)
- 11) [s] *island, aisle*
- 12) [t] *listen, whistle, often* (though some speakers pronounce it in *often*)
- 13) [w] *write, wrong, two, answer, yellow*

Spelling pronunciation involves pronouncing a word in a way that reflects the spelling in cases in which the standard pronunciation deviates from what is expected from the spelling. For example, falcon once had no [l] in it, but now it more often is pronounced with [l], and waistcoat was once pronounced as [weskət], but it is now usually [weɪstkəʊt]. The process sometimes involves reverting to a previous way of pronouncing the word, as we will see when we consider the different kinds of spelling pronunciation. But first let us briefly consider historical and current

changes in the pronunciation of English. However, though spelling became relatively stable, pronunciation continued to change, with the result that pronunciation increasingly diverged from spelling.

It is worth noting that, while some countries have institutions empowered to try and control spelling, such as in France where the Académie Française acts to regulate the standard language, there is no such organization for English, which means that norms of English pronunciation and usage are relatively unstable. (Nur 2015: 45)

As more people became literate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, spelling sometimes influenced pronunciation. We will now discuss four basic ways in which the pronunciation of English is changing to reflect spelling: reversion to an original pronunciation; etymologically-based changes; Anglicization of borrowed words; and pronunciation of the letter ‘o’.

As a reference, we will use Received Pronunciation (RP), the prestige accent of English in Britain (Hickey, 2014: 263), though we should acknowledge that the pronunciation of some of the words differs in regional varieties of English as well as in so-called non-native speaker contexts.

Brown (1991, p. 27) suggests that spelling pronunciation may be more prevalent in ‘non-native’ speech, as people acquire English at a later time, usually after literacy, and therefore base their pronunciation more on spelling.

#### **2.1.4 Implications for Teachers and Learners**

Teachers need to be aware that the pronunciation of English is constantly changing, sometimes to reflect the spelling of words, and it is inappropriate to insist on an old-fashioned style of pronunciation if a new

way of saying a word is becoming prevalent in a particular context. Furthermore, it is valuable for teachers to have knowledge about how and why the pronunciation of words is changing, even if it is not always essential for such detailed knowledge to be passed on to their pupils.

Awareness about the historical background can give confidence to teachers in providing explanations when required and also in offering suitable advice to learners about the best way to pronounce words. (Nur 2015 :36)

Spelling Connections includes all the best practice strategies for teaching spelling: The pretest-study-posttest cycle, word sorting, teaching a few spelling rules, and interleaved practice of meaningful exercises offers correct balance and variety. In a comprehensive review of spelling research, Steve Graham (1983) validated the use of the language-based, standalone program with the pretest-study-posttest word lists (Graham, 1983, p. 563). Graham outlined five research-based principles in his synthesis that still hold today:

- 1) Use word lists but not arbitrary lists. Construct lists to reflect words and patterns likely to be used by writers at developmentally appropriate grade levels and teach a few key rules.
- 2) Pretest and have students self-correct.
- 3) Teach students to use a research-based word study technique. Our look-say-see-write-check technique is directly based on a multi-modal method validated by Ernest Horn (Horn, 1954).
- 4) Use the test-study-test cycle.
- 5) Use spelling games and other alternative activities such as word sorting to increase motivation and to take advantage of the social context of learning.

Each of these research-based strategies has been built into Spelling Connections. Spelling Connections enables students to build a deep and wide word-specific knowledge base to support the reading, writing, and communication skills needed for language proficiency.

### **2.1.5 Problems with English Spelling**

Davies (2000) mentions that the English language has words which are sometimes spelt quite differently from the way they are pronounced. In other words, English spelling and English pronunciation are hostile and strangers to each other; hostile, because neither accepts without a quarrel the usage of the other; strangers, because very often one does not recognize the other.

Note that the learning of English spelling and English pronunciation are as important as learning English grammar and vocabulary to language learners. We look at the history of English spelling in the English language. Today, no one would deny that in spite of English advantages, the writing system of modern English contains a number of deviations in its phonemic representation. In fact, many of these can be explained historically. ( Davies 2000 : 58)

It is important to remember that the phonological system of every language changes, but writing systems do so very slowly. There are many so-called silent letters in modern English spelling which originated at a time when they actually did represent sound segments.

For example, the letters "gh" in fight, light, and night date back to the old English sound segment [x], a voiceless fricative produced at the position of articulation of either [k] or [c]. Just as English has borrowed words, morphemes, and phonological features, so it has also borrowed

spellings from other languages. For example, in the Middle English period, many literate people knew French as well as English.

Many French words were borrowed into English during this period, so many in fact, that the language gradually became quite different from Old English spoken in earlier days and it is not surprising that some characteristics of French writing were extended to English. (Falk, 1978)

In addition, Bloomfield (1933, p.21) observes that “writing is not language but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks”. It needs to have a systematized form by making use of the components, namely graphemes, vocabulary, syntax, and so on, so as to make a decoder understand it clearly. Language is a storehouse of knowledge with many dimensions of production and reception, so a standard system is needed to record a language in coded form.

A spelling system established several hundred years ago and is still used for a language that continues to change and develop its spoken form. Thus, the initial k in knock, knot, know, knee, and certain other words were once pronounced, as was the [gh] in knight and thought, among others.

Cook (1991:1) asserts that "unlike native speakers, students may not know the actual system of English, and will appear to use the wrong letter" .For example: Choosing between two or three consonants [c, z and s] : recognice [recognize] tradisional [traditional] spetial [special], deciding whether to use /e/ or /i/: devided [divided] dicided [decided], wrongly omitting vowels, particularly (e) when is absent from the spoken form in the middle of words: \*intresting [interesting] \*sevnth [seventh]

Davies and Pearse (2000) argue that one of the ways to learn new vocabulary is that students must be able to recognize and produce the

form of a new vocabulary item as well as understand its meaning and use. They added that the students must learn how the new item is pronounced, and how it is written.

Ur (1996, p. 52) mentions that "the aim of pronunciation improvement is not to achieve a perfect imitation of a native accent, but simply to get the learner to pronounce accurately enough to be easily and comfortably comprehensible to other (competent) speakers." He added that learners' errors of pronunciation derived from various factors such as:

- 1) A particular sound may not exist in the mother tongue, so that the learner is not used to forming it and therefore tends to substitute the nearest equivalent he or she knows.
- 2) A sound does exist in the mother tongue, but not as a separate phoneme: that is to say, the learner does not perceive it as a distinct sound that makes a difference in meaning.

### **2.1.6 Causes of Spelling Problems**

Kenworthy (1990) focuses on several possible causes of spelling problems among foreign language learners as follows:

Among learners whose native languages use the Raman alphabet, as English does, problems may be caused by confusion between the sound value of a particular letter in the native language and its value in English.

- a) Learners whose native language uses a non-alphabetic system will have to adjust to alphabetic conventions.
- b) Another source of difficulty is the English spelling system itself. As soon as learners are exposed to written English, they start to make generalizations about how the system works. Since English

is an alphabetic system, this means basically sorting out which letter corresponds to which sound.

- c) Many teachers are not able to pronounce correctly. This affects the pronunciation of their students. They have not sufficient knowledge of phonetics and phonology. The physical disability of a child sometimes causes poor pronunciation. It is a cause of retardation in pronunciation as well as spellings
- d) Most of our English teachers do not know about phonetics or phonology. Therefore they do not impart good training of speech to their students. They have got their defective pronunciation. The students learn the defective pronunciation from their teachers. This process goes on when the students become teachers they also impart the training of defective speech habit
- a) Last item is that there is the pronunciation of the learner. If a learner has difficulty in distinguishing English /p/ as in 'pet' from English /b/ as in 'bet', then, in doing a dictation, he or she may spell 'pill' as 'bill'.

Bose (2005) argues that one of the important errors in learning of English language is spelling errors. He believes that most of the language learners make errors in spelling due to wrong learning of the spelling of words and lack of practice in spelling.

He mentions that the words are spelt according to their syllables in order to remember the spelling and a good dictionary can help the learners to improve the spelling errors in English language.

The development of the English language learners' spelling differs from those whose first language is English. It has been well established in

literature today that unlike English monolinguals, language learners use knowledge of their first language when they learn to spell in English.

Since language learners use their knowledge of their first language in learning to spell in English, the proficiency level of first language is closely related the acquisition of second language spelling. According to Brisk and

Harrington (2000), "literacy skills are acquired only once through one language and then applied to new languages" (p. 4). Language transfer from first language to English can be defined as "the effect of first language knowledge that was learned during the development of first language skills on learning or performance when spelling in English as a second language"

### **2.1.7 Spelling and Writing**

Spelling contains the rules which govern the way letters are used to write the words of speech; a particular sequence of letters in a word. The history of English spelling begins with the origins of English in the British Isles 1500 years ago.

This long history has led to many oddities of English spelling. They are factors that have caused the complexity between sounds and spelling in English Language: first factor is that the pronunciation of English Language has changed over the last 500 years and second one is the thousands of words English has taken from other languages such as India, Latin, and Greek... (Kenworthy (1990 :34).

Spelling is a linguistic unit of language which refers to writing skill directly. Hence, definition of writing as one of language skills is necessary for discussion in this paper. Hedge (1983, p. 89) mentioned that "writing is the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of text,



developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure".

Bose (2005) argues that "writing plays an essential role in language learning. Writing is defined as art of a writer". He adds that the learning of writing is one of the most important skills that second language learners need to develop their ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in target language. Writing can be recognized as an integral part of the language learning process in ELT classroom.

An English language learner has to know English spelling system in order to write down English sentences. Kenworthy (1990) said that the spelling system are considered in two different situations: the situation of the reader and that of the writer.

In writing, a person has to recall the spelling of a word that he or she wants to write down, something must be pulled out of memory, whereas, in reading, a person uses the patterns on the page to decide how to pronounce a particular word.

It is true that the problems of the reader and the writer are not the same. However, in English language, the problem of the reader is certainly usually simpler than the writer's problem.

### **2.1.8 International Phonetic Association (IPA)**

In 1888, the scientific description of speech sounds appeared to develop a phonetic alphabet to symbolize the sounds of all languages over the world. Richards, et. al. (1992, P. 188) mentioned that "a system of symbols for representing the pronunciation of words in any language according to the principles of the international phonetics association. The symbols consist of letters and diacritics".

To overcome the problem of the mis-match between sounds and letters in English language, phoneticians have evolved an International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.). In other words, The IPA can be used to represent in writing the sounds, words, phrases and sentences of any language of the world. Such representation is called phonetic transcription.

To illustrate how this is done, take the English words, 'cent' and 'can't' both begin with the letter c. The first is transcribed as [sent] and the second as [ka:nt] . From the transcription it is clear that the letter c is pronounced differently in these two words.

The particular characteristic of phonetic transcription viz, 'one sound, one symbol' enables us to show the pronunciation of words unambiguously in writing, thereby making it possible to provide pronunciation in dictionaries. (Roach :)

## **2.2 Previous Studies**

The first study was conducted by Ali Akbar Khansir (2015) under the title "The Relationship between Spelling and Pronunciation in English Language" at Bushehr University of Medical Sciences, Bushehr, Iran. His study's main aim is to investigate the relationship between spelling and pronunciation in English language. Learning to spell correctly is perhaps as important as learning grammar, vocabulary and phonology.

His study found that spelling and pronunciation have a complicated connection between them and the connection is often inconsistent. In other words, most of the English language errors of spelling and pronunciation are due to the lack of connection between them. One of the best strategies his study recommended is to remove these kinds of errors

in English language is for the English learners to use the English dictionary and they should also learn phonetic transcription.

Another study was conducted by Zainab Abdulameer (2009 ) at Texas A&M University entitled "Analysis of Spelling Performance in English among Students Whose First Language is Arabic". The researcher used 99 Arabic speaking participants from fourth grade whose performance was compared with 40 monolingual English speaking participants.

The findings of the present study indicated that the Arabic participants had particular difficulty in spelling the novel phonemes /p/ and /v/ with large effect size. The participants mostly confused these two phonemes with their phoneme pairs and spelled /p/ as b and /v/ as f. The Arabic participants also had some difficulty in spelling the phoneme pairs /p/ and /v/, and spelled /b/ as p and /f/ and v.

This finding had a medium effect size. Finally, both groups of participants generally performed better when the target phoneme was in the initial position.

The study recommended the learners to differentiate between the sounds and letters of alphabet of Arabic and English in order to well write and read the English spelling.

A third study was conducted by Dr. Ahmed Ali Fadul Benyo (2014) under the title "English Spelling Problems among Students at the University of Dongola, Sudan". This study investigated English spelling errors made by first year students of Dongola University, including both vowel and consonant errors.

This study was based on the assumption that the first year university students have a weakness in English spelling. The researcher

carried out this study to discover the factors behind these problems. Unawareness of spelling rules and sound problems might be the cause. To deal with English spelling errors, two spelling tests (pre-and post-intervention) were administrated to two hundred students in two different faculties (Arts and Education), at Dongola University.

Based on the test results, the main findings of the study were that spelling errors were noticeable in vowels, which were particularly poor. Students face difficulties with English sounds that do not exist in Arabic. Also, the study indicates that overgeneralization of spelling rules is a causative factor for the spelling errors committed.

Based on an analysis of the results, it is recommended that a possible solution for the spelling problem involves teaching correct pronunciation, basic spelling rules and reminding the students of the exceptions to English spelling rules. Students should have a good grasp of these skills before reaching the secondary educational level. Thus, it is necessary to focus on spelling rules and English sounds in primary education.

One last study was carried out by Safa NabeeL Subhi (2015) entitled Investigating Study of an English Spelling Errors: A Sample of Iraqi students in Malaysia.

The study investigated the spelling mistakes and errors made by the Iraqi students who are studying English language as an essential requirement to begin their academic study in Malaysian universities. Two instruments of data collection adopted in this study were used namely a questionnaire and a writing task. Based on a survey of 30 students, the results indicated a high percentage of spelling errors in Iraqi students writing composition.

Furthermore, the results of an examination on the problems behind the spelling errors and the causes of these errors were also discussed. The researcher recommended the teachers to include certain strategies to help the learners overcome the problems of spelling.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the methodology for this study. The study is designed to investigate the difficulties that face eighth class basic level school students in using correct spelling and the effect of this problem on their writing skills. The chapter also shows the sample population and the tools used in collecting the data. It also includes the validity and the reliability of the study.

#### **3.1 Method of Data Collection**

The data collected in this study is a classroom in the area of Al Kadaro, North Khartoum basic schools. These students were given a test on spelling. The teachers' response to the questionnaire and show their observation and opinions to the statements submitted to them.

##### **3.1.1 Sample of Population**

The participants in this study are the students and their teacher in Al Kadaro area North Khartoum. This is to determine the difficulties that face them in using correct spelling. This is because English language is different from Arabic and there are many sounds that do not resemble their spelling. The ages of the participants range from 12 to 14 years old. They are learning English as a second language ( ESL) in the eighth class. The study also is carried on the teachers in the same areas who teach English for the eighth class students.

##### **3.1.2 The Test**

In this research, the researcher adopted a test to collect the data. This test consists of (10) sentences to be filled with one word from the alternatives given in brackets and which is to be spelled correctly by the

eighth class students to identify the problematic areas in dealing with spelling in basic level schools. These sentences have been chosen randomly to show the aspects of the problem that face basic school students. The test is distributed to (30) students at Akl Kadaro basic school.

### **3.1.3 The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of (10) statements and is distributed to group of teachers from different schools in the area of Al Kadaro North Khartoum. Their number is estimated to be (10) who teach English in basic schools. The questionnaire is intended to collect data from the teachers and their attitude towards teaching spelling and / or to show their students' attitude towards spelling.

### **3.1.4 Validity of the Tools**

To achieve the ultimate goal of this study, content and construct validity are given special attention in preparing the instruments of the study the "test" and the "questionnaire ". The questionnaire is designed to draw out information about (10) points each of which is specified to a precise piece of information without any interference from any other points. The components of the instruments are structured in a way that each item is clearly distinguished in terms of its construction and hence achieved its validity.

### **3.1.5 Reliability of the Tools**

In this research, the test instrument applied in data collection, measured its reliability because the same test when given to another group, it achieves the same or nearly the same results. Reliability was measured by adopting a simple manual statistics analysis. The test's

reliability indicates a significant level of reliability in the responses provided by the subjects in the two groups

### **3.1.6 The Procedure**

This section gives a detailed description of the actual steps taken in collecting data through the test and the questionnaire given to the eighth class at Al Kadaro basic school alongside with ten teacher from the area in the nearby schools. The researcher adopted this procedure to achieve the reliability and constant responses of the test and the questionnaire.

### **3.2 Summary**

The overall chapter discusses the way data are collected and the method of the study through which it will be handled. Moreover, the researcher highlights the subjects of the research and the validity of the questionnaire designed in this study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The analysis of the study depends on the facts and data presented in the previous chapter. The researcher discusses the results of the test and the responses to the questionnaire which is consisted ten items to identify the areas of difficulties in investigating the English spelling and find the practical solutions to this problem.

To begin the analysis, it is worth giving a look at the tables that includes the statistics and the results of the test. Then, the researcher discusses the questionnaire's positive and negative variables. These tables are prepared below to show the number and the percentage of succeeded as well as failed students; whether males or females.

The table's statistics will be explained and paraphrased to clarify the statement of the problem. This will be done by showing and identifying the words that constitute difficulty to the students in dealing with spelling.

#### **4.1 Tables and Data Analysis**

The study is divided into four main tables that cover all the results of the test and the teachers' questionnaire. The first two tables deals with the test's results. In these two tables, the researcher shows the results of the students' performance in the test.

The other two tables are concerned with the questionnaire submitted to the basic level schools' teachers to show their responses towards this tool. The two method used are analyzed statistically via using the SPSS method of analysis.

**Table (4.1): Fill the Gap Question [ Multi – choice]**

Students No	Section No	Item	Percentage %			
			Correct Answer	Incorrect answer	Total	
30 students	1	<i>Naughty</i>	13.6%	86.4%	100%	
	2	<i>Vehicles</i>	16.6%	83.4%	100%	
	3	<i>Island</i>	24.6%	75.4%	100%	
	4	<i>Receiver</i>	40%	60%	100%	
	5	<i>Elephant</i>	28.3%	71.7%	100%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>123.1%</b>	<b>376.9 %</b>	<b>500%</b>

Table (4.1) shows that the students' correct answer in the first word is only 13.6% and the incorrect is 86.4%. the second word is 16.6% and 83.4%. The third word shows 24.6% as correct answer and 75.4% as incorrect. The fourth word reflects 40% correct and 60% as incorrect answers. The last word in the above table has 28.3% correct and 71.7% as incorrect answers.

**Table (4.2): Fill the Gap Question [ Multi – choice]**

<b>Students No</b>	<b>Section No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
			<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Incorrect answer</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>30 students</b>	<b>6</b>	<i>Knife</i>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>7</b>	<i>Bought</i>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>8</b>	<i>Flour</i>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>9</b>	<i>Pieces</i>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>79.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>10</b>	<i>Sails</i>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>56.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>148.5 %</b>	<b>351.5 %</b>	<b>500%</b>

Table (4.2) shows that the students' correct answer in the sixth word is 33.3% and the incorrect is 66.7%. the seventh word is 25% and 75%. The eighth word shows 26.6% as correct answer and 73.4% as incorrect. The ninth word reflects 20.3% correct and 79.7% as incorrect answers. The last word in the shows 43.3% correct and 56.7% as incorrect answers.

The second part of the analysis includes the responses of the basic school English teachers to the questionnaire which contains (10) statements as shown in the third and fourth tables below:

**Table (4.3) Positive and Negative Responses to the Questionnaire**

Question No	Percentages					
	Positive			Negative		
	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<b>1</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>50 %</b>	<b>2 %</b>	<b>2 %</b>	<b>6 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>30 %</b>	<b>40 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>	<b>5 %</b>	<b>15 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>45 %</b>	<b>40 %</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2 %</b>	<b>3 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>208 %</b>	<b>189 %</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28 %</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>500%</b>

Table (4.3) shows that 90% of the teachers agree and strongly agree to the first statement, only 8% disagree and 2% neutral. The second statement shows 70% of the respondents agree, 20% disagree and 10% neutral. 85% agree and strongly agree to the third statement, 5% disagree and 10% neutral. The fourth statement gives 72% agree, 34% disagree and 4% neutral. The last statement in the above table shows 80% agree, 7% disagree and 13% neutral.

**Table (4.4) Positive and Negative Responses to the Questionnaire**

Question No	Percentages					
	Positive			Negative		
	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<b>6</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>16 %</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>40 %</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>30 %</b>	<b>45 %</b>	<b>1 %</b>	<b>9 %</b>	<b>15 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>45 %</b>	<b>34 %</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>12 %</b>	<b>3 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>154%</b>	<b>145 %</b>	<b>33 %</b>	<b>98 %</b>	<b>70 %</b>	<b>500%</b>

Table (4.4) shows that 20% of the teachers agree and strongly agree to the sixth statement, only 66% disagree and 14% neutral. The seventh statement shows 75% of the respondents agree, 24% disagree and 1% neutral. 79% agree and strongly agree to the eighth statement, 15% disagree and 6% neutral. The ninth statement gives 55% agree, 40% disagree and 5% neutral. The last statement in the above table shows 70% agree, 23% disagree and 7% neutral.

## **4.2 Discussion**

It could be argued that the sentences in the test's questions create difficulty to the eighth class students in basic level schools in dealing with spelling. When we say that half of the students 86.4% are unable to give the correct answers to the first question, this means that those students are expected to make mistakes in writing. Such a phenomenon is dreadful, because it leads to wrong versions of written materials.

The same comments explained above is applicable to the performance of the eighth class students and this reflect the fact that basic school students show their weakness in working with words. This is from one hand, is attributed to the non – gradual learning of the rules of spelling and the lack of daily practice in this important issue in writing skills.

So, it could be true to say that the total percentage of correct and incorrect in the first table justifies the statement of the problem and highlights an urgent issue that could affect the standard of students in learning a second language. This is clear in the second, third and fourth sentences as well as the fifth respectively with their percentage of incorrect 83%, 75%, 60% and 71%

This may lead to the argument that most of the students fail to treat the test in a responsible way and it also stresses the fact that the basic school students are faced by a real problem concerning spelling.

It could be true to say that the rules of spelling are important in the course of writing and the students have to have a considerable amount of knowledge about these rules to avoid making mistakes.

The second table (4.2) shows the total percentage of correct and incorrect answers as 341.5% as incorrect answer. This could verify the statement of the research in that; the basic level students are encountered by problems in dealing with spelling.

Some of the words [receiver], [elephant], [bought] are complex words that confuse most of the students who are unable to keep the spelling rule that state " /i/ before /e/ except after /c/. in addition to this English language contains words that have silent letters ; written but not pronounced like the words [ island – vehicles] as clearly seen in the test. This the inability of the second class students leads to the shaking and weak performance

However , the third question shows that the students ear – training is not practiced well. This is because unless you listen well you won't be able to write the correct word. The students are not accustomed to hear a native speaker saying these words , so the outcome will be incorrect writing.

Also the unawareness of the rules of spelling hinder the generating of correct words. For the reason that, some of the rules state that [ there are words with the same spelling but with different pronunciation and vice – versa] also there another rule that states [a group of letters can stand for one sound] as the letters [*ough*] in the word [ *bought*] represented by the sounds [o].

The above shows that the percentage of success is weak if compared to that of students whose answers are incorrect which in the first two tables concerning the performance of the students. This means that two – third of the students are unable to deal with the rules of spelling. And thus a shaking performance is expected to arouse due to the unwariness of the students in dealing with writing skills.

Finally, the questionnaire also reflects the attitudes of both the teachers and the students in this study. Table (4.3) reflects the positive responses of the teachers to the statements of the questionnaire. It is clear that the total percentage of the positive responses toward this study reaches 397%. This analysis of this table shaped the defect of the students. This identification of defect may pave the road to the formation of practical solutions to such problems.

In table (4.4) the responses to the questionnaire show their true attitude towards the teaching of spelling and the role played by teachers in creating such a problem. 308% of the overall table percentage show that there is a real problem in dealing with spelling from the side of the teachers.

One could say that spelling is problematic and constitutes difficulties to the basic school students as well as to the teachers who neglect teaching it because of the negative attitude of the students towards this very important aspect in writing skills.

The teachers unawareness of the essentiality of spelling is reflected negatively upon their students and this makes the writing process is very weak and not motivating to the students. This could be attributed to the lack of training sessions to the basic school teachers and / or the defect in the syllabuses.

Finally, the test and the questionnaire in this study proved to be the standard to measure the ability or inability of the students in dealing with spelling and the role of the teachers in declining the students' abilities in writing process.

### **4.3 Testing the Hypotheses**

It could be said that, the analysis and discussion proved to be matching the hypotheses mentioned in this study and answering the questions of the research in that some basic level school students have confusion between the spelling and sound of words and this is clear from the results of the test and the responses of the questionnaire.

This is clear in that some teachers have negative attitude towards teaching spelling and that the majority of the students have negative attitude towards spelling. In this sense, the analysis proved the first two hypotheses.

The third hypothesis stated that "some English letters have completely different sounds from their spelling". This is clear in words like [bought] and [naughty] and many other words. This makes confusion among students. This is due to the fact that the spelling system of English is a bit different from the sound of the letters.



So, one could say that these hypotheses are agreed upon by the majority of the students and the teachers in this study under discussion. The spelling in this sense, appears to be problematic to basic level school students in the Sudanese schools.

To sum up, the study achieved the researcher objectives, answered its questions and proved its hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MAIN FINDING, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter contains the findings of the study which investigated the difficulty in spelling and their effects on the students' writing at basic level school in Khartoum taking the area of Al Kadaro as a sample to the study. the study presented the recommendations and the suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.1 Findings**

This study was conducted to explore the difficulties that encounter basic level students of the eighth class in writing spelling. Therefore, the subject group of variable background was involved in this investigation. This group is an experimental group included students of Al Kadaro basic level school and some teachers were also included in the study as sample of population to respond to the questionnaire submitted to them.

The results of the research were compared to examine the achievements of the research hypotheses at the level of the existence of Students' problem with spelling. The study found out that:

- (1) Many basic students are confused with some spelling letters and their sounds.
- (2) Some of the words include silent letters that are written by the majority of the students assuming them to be written instead of being omitted.
- (3) The majority of the students have problem in identifying the rules of spelling. This is due to the differences aroused between Arabic and English languages in terms of patterns and structures.

- (4) The main problem is resulted from many teachers who neglect teaching spelling. This is either because they do not know how to teach spelling or they find it boring.
- (5) The students' attitude towards spelling in of the major role in making the problem and arouse the difficulty in dealing with spelling.
- (6) One last finding is that there is not separate lessons that are concerned with spelling as a separate and important part in the course of learning English.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Speaking about the problems and difficulties that face basic level students in dealing with spelling is an urgent and essential issue. Therefore, this study emphasized the importance of spelling in developing writing skills. The study investigated the difficulties in spelling and their effects on writing. The study is carried out in North Khartoum basic schools at Al Kadar area.

In brief, this research aims to identify such a problem and try to find solutions to spelling problems. For this reason, the researcher has chosen the random sample population to handle this study practically.

Writing is one of the main skills of the language without which all the efforts of the students will vanish because the exams are written rather than spoken.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that:

- 1- Learners of English should pay special attention to spelling when teaching English in basic level school to set up a good foundation for students

- 2- Teachers should help their students by following up their learning process and correct their mistakes in spelling.
- 3- Sudanese basic schools should be equipped with modern laboratories and recorded materials to help in developing the skills of language especially writing skills.
- 4- Syllabuses designers should include activities that motivate students to writing spelling

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

1. The researcher suggests that separate periods on teaching spelling should be included in the school timetable to be part of daily routine of the students.
2. Books and references that include spelling rules should be additionally given to students' libraries.

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### Questionnaire on Spelling for Teachers

**Subject:** *Investigating the Problems in Writing English Spelling at Basic Schools by Eighth Class Students*

**Grade** .....

**Gender:** Male  Female

The statements are part of Master Degree in linguistics. Tick [√] in front of the column below to help collecting the data about this topic.

Statement	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Basic school students make many spelling errors.					
Basic school students lose marks because of their confusion in using spelling and sounds of words.					
The English spelling system does not have clear rules for writing and spelling					
Poor spelling makes parts of some basic level students' writing almost impossible to read.					
Text books do not include activities that help students to differentiate between spelling and sounds					

Statement	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Basic school students change their negative attitude towards spelling					
Basic school students avoid attending spelling lessons					
I don't like teaching spelling, because the students are always unwilling to have lessons on spelling					

Some teachers would like to teach spelling, but they do not know the best way to do it.					
Teachers do not pay much attention to it, because of the students' lack of desire					

### Test on Spelling for Students

**Complete the sentences by choosing the correct form of spelling:**

- 1) Ali is a.....pupil [ naughty - naughty – nauty ]
- 2) Cars, lorries and buses are types of ..... [ vehicles – vehicles – vekiles ]
- 3) Tuti is an ..... [Iceland – island – iland ]
- 4) When the bell rang, I took the ..... [ receiver – reciever – resever ]
- 5) An .....is big animal [ elephant – elifant – elephant ]
- 6) We cut with a ..... [ knife – nife – naif ]
- 7) I went to the market and .....a shirt [ bout – baought – bought ]
- 8) .....is made from wheat [floor – flour – flower ]
- 9) Cut this into ..... [pieces – peace – pices ]
- 10) The ship .....across the sea [sales – sails – seils ]