

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

**PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS IN IDENTIFYING
AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DYSGRAPHIA IN MELKAM-
ERMIJACHIN KG AND PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

BY MEKURIA ABRHAM

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO IMPARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION.

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Approval of the board of Examiners.

Advisor

Signature

date

Internal Examiner

Signature

date

External examiner

Signature

date

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ADHD: Attention deficite hyper activity disorder

DCD : developmental coordination disorder.

MLC : minimum learning competency.

WMP : word per minute (it is a standard measure when testing writing and reading).

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Above all thank You God!!

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to describe challenges of teachers' in identifying and supporting students with writing disorder (Dysgraphia) and to identify problems affecting the implementation of support in teaching writing. The study was conducted at Melkam Ermijachin primary school in Addis Ababa city. Qualitative research method and case study design was employed to conduct this study. The study used 10 teachers by using purposive sampling technique from a total of 29 teachers. And five teachers were selected for questionnaires and another five teachers for interview in a purposive sampling. The data collection tools were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, observation of the teaching process and review of teachers' document. Interview and observation were used to enrich the data which was obtained through questionnaire for the sake of triangulation. Before administrating the questionnaire for the main study, pilot study was conducted. Qualitative approach ,data analysis was carried out to analyze the data collected through the above mentioned tools. The findings of this study revealed that the teachers have a little awareness and practice regarding children with writing disorder. This made challenges to teachers,students and the school in general and directly affects students with writing disorder in their academic performance. This was because of the shortage of adequate knowledge and training with teachers about writing disorder and on how to manage and teach the skill for these children, absence of the necessary facilities, time and collaborative work among the school's directors ,teachers and parents. And the study recommended teachers should give a great value for training on ways of teaching ,identifying, using standard screening tools and give the necessary support for students with dysgraphia in time and they should support these students with commitment in collaboration with their colleagues and students' parents.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Writing problem is one of the kinds of Learning Disability and many studies have been conducted concerning the challenges of teachers on teaching and evaluating students with Writing problems. These researches showed that teachers have no enough awareness of identifying and supporting students with Writing problems using the relevant instructional and intervention strategies and teaching resources. Teachers usually face a peculiar confusion regarding: the standard of the students and their learning style by the time they join upper grade level, the types of writing carried out by upper grade students, problems faced by the upper grade students in relation to writing skill. Causes of the writing problems and solutions to overcome the writing problems faced by upper grade students Sheeba.(2018).

Poor writing skills of students originate from the teacher .Teachers lack appropriate pedagogic approach to teach writing, including providing prompt and effective feedback to students, and most crucially, teachers' lack of ability to motivate students. (Bilal, Tariq, Din, Latif, & Anjum, 2013; Dar & Khan, 2015; Haider, 2012; Mahboob & Talaat, 2008) as cited in Fareed & Almas (2016).

Teachers and parents frequently ascribe the problems to laziness or lack of motivation, which causes frustration and disappointment for the child (Smits-Engelsman, Schoemaker, Van Galen, & Michels, 1996).

In the transition approach, the creation and evolution of writing in children and its problems are examined. Jooriagr (1960) and his colleagues determine three stages for the development of writing in six to eleven years old normal children. The first period (six to seven years old) is the pre-calligraphy (preliminary drawing of letters and lines) stage. The second period (seven to ten years old) is the stage of general equilibrium in calligraphy (dominance of hand movements and removing the major problems). After the eleven years old period, writing reaches to equilibrium.

In contemporary psychology literature, there are theoretically four approaches about the origins of writing disorders: A - Transition approach, B- Social-emotional approach and theories of personality, C- Neuro-psychophysiology approach, D- The approach of situation and mentalstate at the time of writing.

As several writing researchers disclose, in teaching writing skills in EFL classes successfully, there is no exactly hard and fast consensus among them. It could vary on the basis of the attitude of the teacher, his/her style, the type of learners, the purposes, the target group, the context in which the skill is taught. Nevertheless, there are approaches, which won more acclaim than others comparatively. The process approach is the case in point. According to Byrne (1990), the teaching of writing can be approached from four different perspectives. These are: accuracy, fluency, text and purpose oriented approaches.Mesfin (2010).

1.2 .Statement of the problem

In Melkam Ermijachin primary school, teachers supported their students with dysgraphia; the support's name called "MLC support" after the 7th period in every Tuesday and Thursday. So this study tried to study how teachers identify, support and the presence of challenges in supporting these students with dysgraphia (writing disorder). Some research works have been carried out in relation to this area. For example, Mesfin (2013) conducted a research on exploring the implementation of the process approach in conducting the lessons in Basic Writing Skills classes, and he concluded that it has not yet been given full attention at Hawassa University.

Zelege (2018) studied on perceptions of learning writing and teachers' practices of teaching writing. The findings disclosed that the practice of teaching writing in secondary schools is found to be unsatisfactory; it is far less to meet the objectives in the textbooks and the syllabus.

As referred above, studies were in educational level. For example Mesfin (2013) conducted his study in university level and Zelege (2018) conducted his study in secondary school, whereas the present study was conducted on primary school students of Melkam Ermijachin School. Furthermore, all the above mentioned research works did not incorporate teachers' practice and challenges in identifying and supporting students with Dysgraphia, which must not be neglected. This study was, thus, intended to fill a gap with regard to the study of teachers' practice and challenges in identifying and supporting students with Dysgraphia specially teaching writing in Amharic subjects at primary school level.

1.3. Research questions

In this study, the basic research questions were:

- 1. Are there students with Writing Disorder?**
- 2. How much is the awareness of teachers on writing disorder?**
- 3. How do teachers have identified students with Writing Disorder?**
- 4. How teachers supported students with writing disorders?**
- 5. What were the challenges in identifying and supporting students with Writing Disorder?**

1.4. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the research was to investigate the reality on the ground on the practice and challenges of teachers in identifying and supporting students with Writing Disorder in Melkam Ermijachin KG and Primary School. And thus the study specifically aims at:

- Investigating the awareness of teachers about writing disorder.
- Investigating the ways how teachers identify and support students with writing disorder.
- Identifying the challenges those teachers face in teaching writing skill.

1.5. Significance of the study

- The findings of the study will help teachers who specifically want to identify and support students with writing disorder.
- It may help other researchers who want to conduct further researches on this study.

1.6. Scope of the study

The scope of this research was to find out the practice and challenges of teachers in identifying and supporting students with writing problems in English and Amharic subjects in Melkam Ermijachin KG and primary school.

1.7. Limitation of the study

In conducting this research, the researcher encountered some constraints. The first one was, related to getting back the questionnaires administered to teachers. Some respondents were too reluctant to respond to the items of the questionnaires and give back to the researcher on time for various reasons. Some irrelevant issues were raised in answering the questionnaires and some respondents gave less attention for the questions.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study comprised six chapters. The first chapter encompassed the introduction part of the study which includes such sub-titles as background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, organization of the study and definition of key terms. The second chapter discussed the meaning of dysgraphia, characteristics of dysgraphia, subtests of dysgraphia to identify students with this disorder, ways of implementing support for students with Dysgraphia. Review of related literature, also discussed various views of scholars on the nature of writing,

the significance of the teaching/learning of writing, different methods of teaching writing, the nature of teaching materials along with the teaching methods, the role of the teacher and the students in teaching and learning writing through various approaches and the like along with critical analyses. The major purpose of the literature review is to give further supporting evidences against/for the major arguments presented in the study by referring different literatures. The topics treated in this chapter are, therefore, selected and orderly presented according to their connection to the rationale of the study. The third chapter consisted of the research design and methodology part. Under this section, how the research was designed, the type of research instruments used, how the data were sampled and analyzed, etc, were treated. In the fourth chapter, the major findings of the pilot study were presented by analyzing the data gathered through observations, interviews and questionnaires. The fifth chapter presented the description, interpretation and discussion of the results of the main study. The sixth chapter of this paper included conclusions and recommendations where the whole discussions of the results of the study were wound up and recommendations were forwarded based on the findings of the study. The last part of the paper includes the references and the appendices of the study. In the references part, the lists of references which have been used in the study were acknowledged.

1.9 definition of terms

Dysgraphia : writing disorder. DSM-IV (APA, 1994).

Calligraphy: the skill of beautiful hand writing. Joorriagr (1960)

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition and terminology

What is Dysgraphia?

“Dysgraphia is a specific learning disability that affects writing abilities. It can manifest itself as difficulties with spelling, handwriting and expressing thoughts on paper (National Center for Learning Disabled, 2009). The International Dyslexia Association (2009) defined dysgraphia as “a specific learning disability that affects how easily children acquire written language and how well they use written language to express their thoughts” (p. 1). ”

“Dysgraphia is a Greek word. The base word graph refers both to the hand’s function in writing and to the letters formed by the hand. The prefix “dys’ indicates that there is impairment. Graph refers to producing letter forms by hand. The suffix ia refers to having a condition. Thus, dysgraphia is the condition of impaired letter writing by hand, that is, disabled handwriting and sometimes spelling” (The International Dyslexia Association, 2008, p. 1). Students “handwriting may be impaired in 1) legibility—how easily others can recognize their letters out of word context, 2) automaticity—how many legible letters they can write in 15 seconds, and 3) speed—how much time it takes them to complete a writing task” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009).

2.2 Causes of dysgraphia

the cause of dysgraphia is unknown .If dysgraphia appears in child hood, it is usually the result of a problem with orthopedic coding. This is an aspect of working memory that allows you to permanently remember written words and the way your hands or fingers you must move to write those words. With dysgraphia, kids or adults have a harder time planning and executing the writing of sentences , and even individual letters. It is not that you don’t know how to read , spell or identify letters and words. Instead your brain has problems in processing words and writing. When dysgraphia develops in adults , the cause is usually stroke or other brain injury . in particular, injury to the brain’s left partial lobe may lead to dysgraphia. You have a right and left part of partial lobe in the upper part of your brain.

Each is associated with a range of skills, such as reading and writing, as well as sensory processing, including pain, heat and cold. Though dysgraphia is a learning disability that primarily affects hand writing may seem straight forward, it is hardly a one-size-fits all disorder. Like other disabilities, dysgraphia is a highly genetic and often runs in families. Gill, M.D.K (2018)

2.3 What treatments are available?

Occupational therapy may be helpful in improving handwriting skills. Therapeutic activities may include:

- Holding a pencil or a pen in a new way to make writing easier.
- Working with modeling clay tracing letters in shaving cream on a desk.
- Drawing lines within mazes.
- Doing connect-the-dots puzzles.

There are also several writing programs that can help children and help children and adults form letters and sentences neatly on paper.

If other learning disabilities or health issues are present, treatment options will need to address those conditions as well. For example, medications needed to treat ADHD.

Karen Gill, M.D (2018) Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com>, 19/2/2020.

2.4 The Challenging Nature of Writing

In spite of its crucial role in all walks of life, writing is not an easy skill that can be achieved without experiencing lots of ups and downs. As Conrad puts it:

I sit down religiously every morning. I sit down for eight hours every day-and the sitting down is all in the course of that working day of 8 hours, I write three sentences which I erase before leaving the table in despair... sometimes it takes all my resolution and power of self control to refrain from butting my

head against the wall (1965:1). The above complaints point out that:

writing is a challenging skill which requires controlling a number of factors such as physical, cognitive, psychological, and social and so forth. As writing experts like Hodges (1991) suggest, for writers, in order to be effective in their writing, they often need a conducive, encouraging and interactive working environment in which they compose their written texts

so that they can achieve their goal. White (1995) further elaborates that writing is extremely a complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate his/her ability to control a number of variables simultaneously. These variables could emanate from the cognitive, linguistic, and psychological makeup of the writer. In general terms, regardless of the fact that writing is a language skill which plays a crucial role in the overall human interactions and progress, it is a very complex language skill which calls for strong patience of the learner in order to become a competent and proficient writer as cited in Mesfin(2013).

Children with hand writing problem frequently experience distress and frustration when asked to complete their home work, record diary entries or write an essay. Forming letters require more effort to this children and the child may forget what he want to write. Illegible hand writing speed and labored writing are the core hand writing problems experienced by elementary school children (Rosenblum , Weiss, and Parush, 2003).

Children with Developmental Disorder in particular demonstrate hand writing difficulties. Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is a prevalent yet un recognized developmental problem that significantly affects every day functioning(APA, 2000) . Poor hand writing is the most frequent symptom in children with DCD (Geuze, Jong Mans, Shoemaker and Smits-Engelsman,2001;Rosenblum and Livnehzirinski,2008).DCD has also been reported more frequently in children with Attention Deficit Hyper activity Disorder(ADHD) (Flapper,Houwen,& Schoemaker,2006) and Autism((Fuentes, Mostofsky,& Bastian,2009). Kirby,Sugden,Beveridge, And Edwards(2008)described the interaction between reading disorder or speling disorders and handwriting difficulties .

In the Netherlands , 25%-50% of all interactions carried out by privet practice Pediatric Physiotherapists involve3s handwriting remediation (Bosga-Strok et al., 2009). Hand writing Difficulty or Dysgraphia wasdefined by Hamstra-Beltz and Blote (1993)as a disorder related to motor output of writing in the absence of intellectual or known neurological deficits. Children with handwriting difficulties typically experience challenges keeping up the volume of written work required ,which may impede academicprogress(Feder and Majnemer,

2007).severehandwriting difficulties lead to academic underachievement unless compensations are made to complete school work. More over secondary problems such as lower self esteem of lack of confidence often accompany handwriting difficulties (Laszlo&Bairstow,1984)despite the wide spread use of computers ,legible handwriting remains an important everyday life skill that deserves greater attention from educators and health practitioners (Fedre and Majnemer, 2007) . importantly teachers and parents frequently ascribe the problems to lazy ness or lack of motivation , which causes frustration and disappointment for the child.(Smits-Engelsman, Schoemaker,Van Galen,& Michels,1996). Repeated failureswill likely lowerthe child’s motivation resulting in a vicious cycle .

Evidence suggests that occupational therapy or physical therapy can have a positive effect in hand writing skill(Jong mans, Linthorst-Bakker, Westenber ,& Smits-Engelsman,2003;Ratzon,Efraim,&Bar,2007). Thus timely identification and assessment of handwriting difficulties is important to initiating intervention. Teachers are best positioned to identify children with handwriting difficulties. Before referring a child to a diagnostic center , it can be helpful if the teacher can confirm any suspected problems in handwriting performance with a quick , sensitive , reliable and valid screening instrument. This is especially important in life of the long waiting lists at diagnostic centers .If a teacher can identify writing difficulties early, focused remediation strategies can begin. A child who is developing a handwriting skills as expected in the school system could first be offered supplementary handwriting practice or training . if insufficient progress is made after 3 months of supplemental training ,Overvelde and colleagues(2011)suggest that implementing a motor –based intervention can be an option to consider. Since poor writing occurs with various developmental disorders , such as DCD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism and dyslexia,screening for children at risk for handwriting difficulties is even more

important than in typically developing children . Several handwriting tests are available world wide ,but vary in terms of what they aim to measure . Some tests evaluate (1) handwriting speed and/or (2) legibility or readability judged globally and/or (3) specific features that characterize readability (E.g., letter formation ,spacing between letters and words , and the degree of line slant). Feder and Majnemer (2003) offered an excellent review of the five handwriting assessments most commonly discussed in literature . the words in Minnesota handwriting assessment are written in print and as such ,the test is not valid for children learning a cursive font .the BHK is designed to measure handwriting quality . internal consistency between all 13 items was reported to be 0.52 suggesting that different aspects of writing performance are measured furthermore the BHK has been shown to be sensitive enough to be used as an evaluation tool (Jongmans et al., 2003;Smits –Engelsman et al., 1996). The writing task consists of copying a standard text in 5 minute or at least five lines if the child is a very slower writer . The text is copied on unruled paper . the BHK evaluates both quality and quantity of the handwriting product . Unfortunately the BHK is not suitable for screening of the test needs extensive training and takes about 15-20 min. if the tester is experienced ,more over only primary cut off scores to classify children as good, poor, and dys graphic writers are available , based on the evaluation of writings of 10 children by 28 raters (Hamstra-Blitz et al., 1987). The SOS test (“systematic opsporing Van Schrijf motorische problemen”or “Systematic screening of handwriting difficulties”)(Smits- Engelsman, Stevens, van Vrenken, &Van Hagen ,2005) was developed to fulfill the need for a short effective handwriting screening tool .The SOS is based on the BHK,but can be scored in a shorter time frame. This offers the opportunity to use the written text of a child if information for developing an intervention plan is necessary . In a pilot study (n=128) ,, The six most discriminating items explained 65% of the variance, and were thus selected from the 13 BHK criteria . They were formulated and the scoring was simplified to develop the SOS test . the

aim of the present study was to evaluate Intra-inter rater and test –retest reliability of the SOS the convergent validity of the test was evaluated by comparing the test-retest results of the SOS to those on BHK using the same piece of writing. Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the SOS results from typically developing children with the results of children with the results of children with a learning disability. Gender and age variations were also examined . The hypotheses related to this study were that (a)children with learning disabilities would have more writing problems, (b) females were expected to write better and faster than males (Berninger & Fuller, 1992; Berninger, Nilson, Abbott, Wijsman, & Raskind, 2008; Ziviani & Watson Will, 1998) and (c) writing quality and writing speed were expected to improve from 7 to 12 years of age .Hilde Van Waelvelde, Tinneke Hellinckx, & Bouwien C.M. Smits-Engelsman, Wim Peersman.(2012).

2.5 Characteristics of Dysgraphia

A. academic characteristics of dysgraphia

“Specific symptoms which may be noted include:

- Cramped fingers on writing tool
- Odd wrist, body, and paper positions
- Excessive erasures
- Mixture of upper and lowercase letters
- Inconsistent letter formations and slant
- Irregular letter sizes and shapes
- Unfinished cursive letters
- Misuse of line and margin
- Poor organization on the page” (Richards, 1999. p. 63)

B. Characteristics of Dysgraphia of Older Students?

- Rate and legibility could be affected. “Specific symptoms which may be noted include:
 1. Inefficient speed of copying
 2. Decreased speed of writing
 3. Excessive speed when writing

4. General illegibility

- Inattentiveness about details when writing
- Frequent need for verbal cues and use of sub-vocalizing
- Heavy reliance on vision to monitor what the hand is doing during writing
- Slow implementation of verbal directions that involve sequencing and planning” (Richards, 1999, p. 63)

Students with dysgraphia often have problems with sequencing. Studies indicate that what usually appears to be a perceptual problem (reversing letters and numbers, writing words backwards, writing letters out of order and very sloppy handwriting) seems to be related to sequential and rational information processing. These students often have difficulty writing letters and words in sequence. The students could experience extreme difficulty with the “mechanics” of writing (spelling, punctuation, etc.). The students will also have a tendency to mix letters and numbers in formulas. In many cases, students have difficulty even when they do their work slowly. They will often lose their thoughts that they are trying to write about (West Virginia University, 2010). Students with dysgraphia may also have ADHD – inattentive, hyperactive, or combined inattentive and hyperactive subtypes (International Dyslexia Association, 2008). These students will often experience difficulty with writing and handwriting. This is because the students “also have difficulty organizing and sequencing detailed information. In addition, “ADHD students often process information at a very rapid rate and simply do not have the fine-motor skills needed to ‘keep up’ with their thoughts” (West Virginia University, 2010, p. 1).

Students with dysgraphia may also experience writing difficulties because of auditory or language processing (West Virginia University, 2010). “*Students may be uncertain about what they hear and thus have difficulty in learning to spell and write words*” (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 32).

2.6 The Process of Identifying Students With Dysgraphia Characteristics

A team or committee of knowledgeable persons (SAT) determines whether the student has dysgraphia characteristics. The team must be knowledgeable about the following:

- The reading and writing process
- Dyslexia and related disorders such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific

developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability

- Dysgraphia instruction
- District, state, and federal guidelines for assessment
- The assessments used which includes The KISD Student Handwriting Form
- The meaning of the collected data

A committee of knowledgeable persons (SAT) determines the identification of dysgraphia characteristics after reviewing all accumulated data including the following areas:

- The observations of the teacher, district, and/or parent/guardian
- Data gathered from the classroom (including student work and the results of classroom measures) and information found in the student's cumulative folder (including the developmental and academic history of the student)
- Data-based documentation of student progress during instruction/intervention; the results of administered assessments
- Language Assessment Proficiency Committee (LPAC) documentation, when applicable
- All other accumulated data regarding the development of the student's learning and his/her educational needs
- KISD Student Handwriting Form

After taking into consideration the previous information, the committee of knowledgeable persons (SAT) determines whether the student has dysgraphia characteristics. If the student has dysgraphia characteristics, the committee of knowledgeable persons (SAT) could place the student under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 504, (unless the parent does not consent). A student is considered to have a learning difficulty under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning. Students with additional factors that complicate their dysgraphia characteristics may require additional support or referral to special education. KISD Dysgraphia Hand Book(2010)

2.7 Screening Dysgraphia

Screening is given by each classroom teacher at the end of the year to the entire group to determine students' writing skills. The students will complete five subtests. The results will be used to make decisions about the students' writing needs. This simple process should take less than fifteen minutes to complete.

- Writing the Full Alphabet
- Sentence Copying
- Dictation Sentence
- Spelling

- Copying Shapes. Borjes (2010)

2.7.1 Dysgraphia Instruction for Reading Specialist

Students who have been identified as having characteristics of dysgraphia, will be served with supplemental handwriting and spelling instruction. Instruction provided will come from the Handwriting/Spelling Component of the Herman Method Set A (peach-colored pages of the instruction manual). The lessons should be completed in order. The Reading Specialist teacher will move at the student's pace (as quickly as possible or as slowly as needed). A Skill Mastery assessment is administered at the end of each level. The results will determine whether or not

the student is ready to move forward or needs more instruction. The reading component of the Herman Method, Basic Language Skills, Reading Recovery, Slingerland, and Lexia may be used for supplemental instruction when skills are not mastered. Dysgraphia instruction should be scheduled for 20-30 minutes per day. The instruction group must be limited to three students or fewer as per direction of the Herman Method. If the dysgraphia assessment determines the student has a weakness in copying skills, a 10-minute copying component can be integrated into the instruction time. The Story Cards from the Herman Method can be used. The Reading Specialist teacher can allow the student to choose which story he will copy. Story Cards 1-9 are recommended. Copying a story may take the student several days to complete. The Reading Specialist teacher will determine what type of pencil and writing paper best suits the student's needs (i.e. regular-ruled paper, lined-paper from the Herman Method kit, raised-line paper, etc.) Upon completion of the Herman Method Set A, instruction can continue as needed using Set B. Once Set B is completed, the student has been given the skills needed for his academic success.

Borjes, J. ,Burns, K. ,Grona, D. ,Hale, R. ,Keller, L. , Smith, N. , McCorkle, J. ,and Liaison, S.(2010)

2.8 Theory and perspectives on Dysgraphia.

In contemporary psychology literature, there are theoretically four approaches about the origins of writing disorders: A - Transition approach, B- Social-emotional approach and

theories of personality, C- Neuro-psychophysiology approach, D- The approach of situation and mental state at the time of writing.

In Transition approach, the creation and evolution of writing in children and its problems are examined. Jooriagr (1960) and his colleagues determine three stages for the development of writing in six to eleven years old normal children. The first period (six to seven years old) is the pre-calligraphy (preliminary drawing of letters and lines) stage. The second period (seven to ten years old) is the stage of general equilibrium in calligraphy (dominance of hand movements and removing the major problems). After the eleven years old period, writing reaches to equilibrium. *Dysgraphia and pre-writing skills:*

The shortcomings of writing are related to the visual - motor coordination and dysgraphia. Many children cannot take advantage of the skills of writing by hand, because they have not learned the pre-writing skills. These skills include understanding the relationship between the upper and lower part of the body, recognition of a variety of sizes and shapes, correct pencil grip, and correct paper position.

2.9 Factors affecting bad handwriting:

1 - There are errors in the writing by hand:

- A) Excessive deviation to left
- B) Excessive deviation to right
- C) Writing with pressing hard the pencil
- D) Excessive faded writing
- E) Excessive italic writing
- F) Excessive spacing

2 - Family related factors:

Calligraphy is a skill that must be learned. If a child lives in an artist and talented family, he will not suffer from bad handwriting.

3- Factors related to student:

For appropriate writing, the child should physically and mentally be healthy.

A-Dysfunction of the hand and fingers due to orthopedic injuries:

- A healthy child should be able to grip the pen with three thumb, pointing, and middle fingers. If for any reason, there is a dysfunction of finger, there will be bad handwriting.
- The right median nerve damage can cause the disability of the thumb and will disrupt the writing.
- Sores on fingers

- Limitation of motion in the joints of the wrist, fingers, elbow, and arm
- Lesions in the elbow, forearm, and arm
- Burns, fractures, and bruises
- Fingers dysfunction due to neurological disorders

B - Psychological factors and its impact on writing:

Neurological conditions can cause muscle cramps in children. In other words, child's handmuscles contracts after writing a few lines and he will not be to write anymore. In this case, symptoms such as Paratony (contraction of a muscle and then lack of its relaxation) and anxiety-related reactions may be seen in writing. Also, restlessness, hyperactivity, and short attention and concentration span are factors that affect the handwriting of students.

C - Left Hand:

The bad handwriting of these children is due to not seeing the words.

D – Poor seeing condition:

Due to poor seeing condition, children get close to the paper.

The various forms of bad handwriting:

The bad handwriting of students has different forms including:

- Large and small handwriting
- Improper spacing between letters and words
- Messy writing
- Tilted writing of letters and words
- Getting out of the line. Farah, M.; Farzane, A. and Azra. R. (2014)

2.10 The Social Constructivists' Perspective to Writing and Its Instruction

This school of thought views writing from the point of view of its social relevance. The underlying belief is that writing, as a mode of language use, is basically social in its nature. The argument is that writing is a social act and is done within the constraints of specific social context Rubin (1998). The philosophy of the school is that lots of written texts are produced as a result of the interaction between the writer and the reader. Thus, the proponents of the school argue that during writing instruction, emphasis should be placed on developing understanding about the community and the social collaborative nature of writing, Williams and Burden (1996). In principle, though writing is produced for an intended target group, it is mostly done lonely in the absence of the audience. This, however, does not mean that the text produced is not influenced by other social factors. When we examine the point with some

details, writing is a social act which requires the involvement of others. Producing advertisement copies, drafting legislations and issuing corporate reports is the case in point Rubin (1988). Under most circumstances, it is obvious that the product of any written work is directly or indirectly influenced by others and in turn the written product itself can influence others. One of the widely practiced conventions especially in the context of the academic world is citation of others' thought to substantiate one's argument with tangible evidences. This implies that writers develop their ideas in their written work by utilizing others' ideas and perspectives. Studies disclose that this interactive performance which is used in producing written texts, does not only ensure the social behavior of writing but also it indicates the significance of sharing of knowledge Glasersfeld (1995). In connection to this, John (1990) remarks that "knowledge itself is a joint construction of communities of like-minded peers." The writer is a member of the community like anyone else who collaboratively works, evaluates decisions, appreciates, loves, hates, worries and passes judgment pertaining to knowledge, nature of language, discourse and other issues. This interactive life in the community enables him/her to conceptualize the discourse community. Discourse community refers to the audience, the writer, the text through which the feelings of the writer are accommodated. According to Crombie (1985) the discourse community's norms influence the content, style and form of written texts which are the reflection of the ways in which a particular discourse community creates, perceives and organizes knowledge. This view takes us to the conclusion that the way constructivists' perceive audience is to some extent different from the process writing experts. As has been repeatedly explained in this study earlier, the process writing experts, especially the expressivists, perceive writing as a creative thinking tool to express personal thoughts. Accordingly, their conviction about audience is that writing is part of the discourse community if only it could back up the purpose of the written text. In relation to this, Ede (1995) comments that the major concern of the expressivists' approach to writing is creating a situation in which audience is given less attention in producing a variety of written texts. In other words, the process writing school of thought gives major emphasis to the writer and the writer's cognitive thinking process. In line with the social constructivists view, however, writing instruction should not only focus on the writer but also on the context of the writing and its nature. With regard to writing instruction, the social constructivists recommend that writing is best taught when it is handled collaboratively in a classroom where students are provided with a social context in which they come together to think about their writing collaboratively. This model argues that a writer actually immerse him/herself into the whole social contexts when he/she begins to

develop any written text. The social nature of writing is often manifested when he/she is responding to a multitude of issues and other texts. In short, this school of thought considers writing as part of a wider dialogue. A piece of writing is then produced, according to Ede (ibid), as a result of the writers' social communication. When writing teachers have the perception that writing is a social act, they need to look at a student's paper as part of scholarly commentary on a particular topic. This means, in evaluating the students' papers, considering the components of the writing is not sufficient; furthermore, attention should be given to the social contexts in which the paper is written. This includes the topic of the class, the sequence of writing assignments, the instructions and expectations of the instructor, etc. In the collaborative writing classroom the teacher is a facilitator, setting up an environment for students to work together on all stages of the writing process. Conversation is encouraged, because writing is viewed as internalized talk. Social constructionism states that meaning is not privately constructed, but is generated by social interaction. Advocators of the social constructionism perspective like Ede (1995) believe that the goal of education is to engage the human community in problem-solving and in an ongoing conversation of humankind. Therefore, the school perceives both thinking and writing as outcomes of social constructionism. Lastly, in implementing the social constructionism in writing classes, several teaching techniques such as encouraging group/pair discussions, giving writing exercises for critical analysis to various genres, peer-evaluations, and redefining the teacher's role can be employed.

As research on second language indicate various language learning theories such as the Input Hypothesis developed by Krashen (1982) and the Interaction Hypothesis developed by Long (1981) laid foundation for the emergence of task-based learning in almost all areas of a foreign language instruction with the aim of carrying out students' needs identification, syllabus designing, methodology designing, materials writing, testing, program evaluation, etc. By the same token, Rooney (2002) lists the benefits of tasks as follows:

1. They are immense sources of action research for language teachers so that they can increase the magnitude of second language acquisition research.
2. They promote learner-centered method of instruction where there is a balance between theory and practice in the teaching learning environment where theory is thought as a derivation of practice.
3. They promote reflective methodology in teacher development programmes as opposed to traditional language learning exercises. Process writing proponents believe that writing is a

developmental process which can be better learnt through teaching materials which are developed holistically and meaningfully. In connection to this Kumara (1993) elaborates:

A learning-centered task-based pedagogy enjoys comprehensiveness, because, its theoretical principles and classroom procedures, unlike that of language and learner centered pedagogies, are basically grounded in currently available insights derived from psycholinguistic research on development.

As such the designing of tasks has to take into consideration, minimally, the following psycholinguistic principles: language learning as developmental process is a decision making process; it is a process of negotiation; it is not linear and additive; it is primarily incidental; it is largely subconscious activity, and it is a meaning-focused activity (p. 81).

One can understand from the above explanation that the relevance of communicative tasks in second language class is so multi-dimensional that writing instructors/teachers, who conduct writing courses in the light of the process approach need to consider them as effective tools to negotiate meaning among interactions and deal with writing creatively as cited in Mesfin(2013)

2.11 Educational interventions: can be used for eliminating the dysgraphia:

A- Self-learning: it includes speaking loudly at the time of writing and directing him/herself

through speech. Loorya pointed out that children develop their behavior by speech; they pass through four stages:

1. Directing behavior by adults
2. Directing behavior by loudly speaking with him/herself and connecting the words with action
3. Directing behavior by slow speaking and whisper
4. Directing behavior by speech therapy

B- Self-monitoring: in this case, children are asked to pause after each word to see if they have gripped the pen correctly. Otherwise, he should correct based on his/her evaluation. This is actually getting feedback from himself.

C - Relaxation and refreshment: The child will be asked to write five minutes, then play and engage in desired activities for ten minutes.

Since the stress at the time of writing increases the fatigue of children, the rest intervals will help the child to calm and refresh him/herself.

D- Mental - movement exercises: this exercise includes the way of gripping the pen and keeping the thumb half-open.

The child tries to grip the pen correctly and in the best status. Farah, M.; Farzane , A. and Azra. R. (2014)

2.13 Teaching strategies to help children develop their writing skills.

The following exercises illustrate techniques that can be useful in helping children to learn writing:

1 - On-board exercises: These exercises create the necessary skill before you start writing. Lines and geometric shapes of letters and numbers can be drawn with free movement of shoulder muscles, arms, hands, and fingers on the board.

2 – Improving the writing with other devices: drawing or writing by finger on the ash tray or on the sand, flour, clay, and etc. can be used for improving the movement of fingers.

3 – Position of body: To prepare for writing, children should sit in a comfortable chair. Their desk must have proper height. The child's feet should touch the ground. He must be able to place both his forearms on the table.

4 - Position of paper: the paper should be parallel with the edge of the desk.

5 - Pencil grip: Many children who have writing disorder do not know how to grip correctly the pencil. It should be placed between the thumb and middle finger; the index finger is placed on the pencil.

6 - Patterns and templates: the geometric shapes of letters and numbers can be provided as cardboard or plastic models.

7 - Drawing from the Model: copying from various forms by using thin or transparency papers.

8 - Drawing between the lines: Force children to draw parallel lines with different shapes. These two parallel lines can be the plot of a letter. In this case, putting the arrow to show the direction and the spelling of letters will be helpful.

9 – Dotted line: Draw a simple scheme. Then, draw the same scheme as dotted line alongside it. Ask the children to complete scheme by connecting the dots together.

10 - Lined paper: initially, start with paper that has no line. Then, use a paper that has open and distant lines. It may help the child to write letters correctly.

11 - Standard lines: for children who get out of the line in writing, the top and bottom of lines can be taped.

12 - Letter from the simple to difficult: for teaching the letters, those letters which are easier should initially be learned.

13 - Verbal instructions: providing guidance on writing exercises can help some of the children.

14 - Words and sentences: After learning to write simple letters, children should try to write words and sentences. Farah, M.; Farzane, A. and Azra, R. (2014)

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3. Research method

3.1 Research Design:

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the practice and challenges of teachers in identifying, supporting and the challenges in supporting students with Writing Difficulty. In order to meet the purpose qualitative case study design was employed. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), case study research is one of the several approaches to qualitative inquiry which is commonly used in educational research.

The main characteristics of case study design is its focus on an in-depth investigation of specific instances (cases) of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspectives of the participants involved in the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gall et al., 1996; Patton, 2002). In addition, unlike quantitative inquiry, case study research does not begin with predetermined constraints (theoretical framework) on its findings. Instead, it bases on the spirit of grounded theory in that it begins with specific instances and builds towards general patterns (Gall et al. 1996; Patton, 2002). Therefore, since the primary intention of this study is an in-depth understanding and thick description on the practice and challenges of teachers in identifying, supporting and the challenges in supporting students with Writing Difficulty, but not labeling and passing judgment on teachers, and the researcher employed the case study design.

This research used qualitative approach and case study research design; because of the need of describing the reality on the ground about the challenges of teachers in identifying and supporting students with Writing Disorder in Melkam ermijachin KG and primary school.

And this study used descriptive descriptive research, it was primarily concerned with finding out the practice and challenge of teachers in identifying and supporting students with Writing Disorder when teaching learners with Writing Disorder in primary school called Melkam Ermijachin.

The researcher had a population of 38 teachers among them 9 were from KG level teachers and 29 grade teachers from grade 1 to 6. Altogether the number of population of the study was 29.

3.3 Sampling and sample size

The research used purposive sampling specially the teachers of Amharic and English subject teachers from 8 sections. The sample had 10 participants i.e. 5 male and 5 female teachers.

3.4 Sampling Method

The research used purposive sampling technique. The sample was from the school's teachers who taught Amharic and English subjects .

3.5 Sources of data

To have valuable, secure, reliable and adequate information for the study, the researcher used qualitative data collection tools. These include: questionnaire, semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis. The questionnaire was developed for **teachers**(i.e. questionnaire for 5 teachers and semi structured interview for another 5 teachers) to assess the level of awareness and their skill of identifying children with writing problem, commitment and challenge to support students with writing problem, The questionnaire had two parts. Part one contained background information of the participant (i.e. sex, qualification, experience, school work, and training). Part two presented closed and open ended questions. The **questionnaires** were prepared based on the research questions. Semi structured interview was designed to enhance the data collected through questionnaire. It helped to validate the data obtained through questionnaire. The **semi-structured interview** guides was developed by the researcher based on the purpose of the study and research questions, **teachers' documents** used in supporting students with writing problems, **class room observation** was also done the focus was assessing how students used to write and how the teacher helped these students with Writing Disorder .All the above were prepared after reading different literatures (journals, articles and research papers) on the area of Writing Disorder.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The interview questions delivered for teachers it consisted of 7 questions to be answered by teachers. The contents of these questions were based on the research questions that was: the present condition of awareness teachers on students/children with writing problems, skill of identifying and supporting and challenges in supporting such kind of students.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The interview questions were formulated on the basis of main research question. What was the teachers' awareness of learning disability?, how teachers identified students with writing problems?, How teachers supported their students with writing problems? What challenges(i.e, **challenges** related to teachers themselves, challenges related to the school

administrators, challenges related to students' family and challenges related to the school environment were raised and discussed.)

3.5.3 Observation: the researcher observed how the teacher taught known students with writing problems in the class room. On the areas of lesson planning, teaching methodologies, preparation of teaching aids, adaptation of the contents of the lesson, and other ways of supporting students with writing problems were observed in the class room.

3.5.4 Document analysis: documents of teachers i.e. students' mark list, students' portfolio of selected students with writing problem and parent teacher communication book and discussion agendas b/n the teacher and the parent, and the teachers' lesson plan and teachers' note book and prepared examination and test questions for students were seen to collect relevant data.

3.5.5 Procedure of data collection

The procedure followed for data collection had the following steps with the aim of ensuring the legal and ethical nature of research which would be very crucial for the successful completion of the particular study. First the researcher obtained permission letter from Department of Special Needs Education under College of Education and Behavioral Studies found of Addis Ababa University. The permission letter was submitted to the principal of Melkam ermijachin Kg and Primary school. Next to this the researcher checked the presence of students with writing problems and decided the number of students to be sample after that the data was collected through the selected instruments (i.e. questionnaire, interview, document analysis, and observation)from the selected participants based on the informed consent of the school. The participant of the study were informed about the purpose of the study by the school director and partly by the researcher before the questionnaire distributed. There was a clarification on some issues which were not clear for the participants during questionnaire administration. And the questionnaires was translated in to Amharic language to have clear question for the teachers to be asked. Here the selected teachers were of 4 groups these are : questionnaire ,interview, class room observation and focus group discussion. Then the information was collected, tabulated and described using case by case analysis.

3.6 Method of data analysis

Qualitative data, which are based on observations, interviews and documents, are not usually immediately accessible for analysis. They rather require some processing in that raw field notes need to be corrected, edited, typed up; audio recordings need to be transcribed and

corrected; and documents need to be reduced, organized and categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Therefore, in order to make the data accessible for analysis, described observations were edited, corrected, coded and categorized; interview results (audio recordings) was transcribed from mobile phone as stated and was translated from Amharic into English , and the data from documents were verified, reduced and categorized. Based on the categorized data into themes, each case was analyzed deeply according to the research questions qualitatively and quantitatively. Then, case by case analysis was employed. Finally, based on the findings, different literatures and the researcher's own interpretations and reflections of the issues, and discussions were made.

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Bailey, Hennink and Hutter(2011), ethical issues have the following considerations:

1. Informed consent. Individuals should be provided with sufficient information about the research, in a format that is comprehensible to them, and make a voluntary decision to participate in a research study.
2. Self-determination. Individuals have the right to determine their own participation in research, including the right to refuse participation and also pull out at any time.
3. Minimization of harm. Researchers should not do any harm to participants or put them at risk.
4. Anonymity. Researchers should protect the identity of research participants at all times.
5. Confidentiality. Researches should ensure that all data records are kept confidential at all times.

Therefore, all the above ethical issues or considerations were taken to account in this research by the researcher.

Chapter Four: Findings of the Study

4.1 Introduction

This part of the study dealt with the presentation of the data obtained from questionnaire, interviews, observations and document analysis. The presentation has two sections. The first section dealt the description of the demographic data of the participants. The second part focuses focused on the findings related to the teachers' awareness and practice regarding children with Dysgraphia. The data were presented using tables, paragraphs, photos and were organized thematically.

4.2 Description of the School Setting

One of the basic characteristics of case study is that it is holistic and context sensitive. Therefore, before directly going to the presentation of each case, it is worth describing the setting. This helps the readers familiarize and visualize the setting in which the study was conducted. Geographically, Melkam Ermijachin primary school is found in Addis Ababa, in Arada sub city Piazza area in wereda 10. It is a governmental school which was established in 1973 E.C as a primary school and at present the school encompasses grade levels 1-6. Concerning the school's population, there were 573 students and there were 38 teachers and 3 directors. The school has one ground plus one building, consisting total of 8 classes from grade 1-6 students.

4.3 Description of the case

Before assessing the teachers' awareness and practice, the researcher tried to check the presence of children with dysgraphia using screening tool. Thus, four students were selected purposefully based on the information obtained from the key informants, classroom teachers and SPNE professionals. First the students were selected based on the symptoms of dysgraphia. The researcher used the Herman screening tool. In addition the researcher used observation checklist and interview from teachers to identify the presence of dysgraphia. The observation checklist was developed to observe and identify the cases consisting of the core symptoms of dysgraphia. These core symptoms were obtained and adapted from DSM-IV (APA, 1994). Based on the findings, the researcher described the cases using 'pseudo name' for each child. The researcher used pseudo names to represent each teacher by calling teacher 1, teacher 2, teacher 3, 4, 5, ... and teacher 10 respectively.

Table 1. background of students with dysgraphia in Melkam ermijachin primary school.

Name	Gender	Age	Grade
Eldana	F	9	3
Befikadu	M	10	3
Kidist	F	8	2
Yafet	M	16	5

The screening test was given. The kind of test was carefully prepared basing the sub tests from KISD Dysgraphia Hand book. The screening questions were 5 in number .The kind of questions and the way how to assess were described in the hand book. The tool was **Herman’s method of screening Dysgraphia** from the book called KISD Dysgraphia Handbook, 2010 and from the book called assessment in SNE . It tells about how teachers should screen students with dysgraphia and how teachers score the assessment. And the screening was done according to the procedure put in the hand book; the assessment was carried out on these selected students and 4 of them **showed writing disorder suspect**; especially these selected students had a difficulty in spelling letters with the right shape and proper size, omission of letters when sequencing letters, reversing of letters (like /b/ with / d/, /y/ with /r/...), difficulty in writing more words because of omission, reversing letters , problems of using capitalization and punctuation marks, low copying speed with the given time, misuse of lines and margins of the paper, and frequent cross outs. The students’ writing samples and the results of the assessment was as follows:

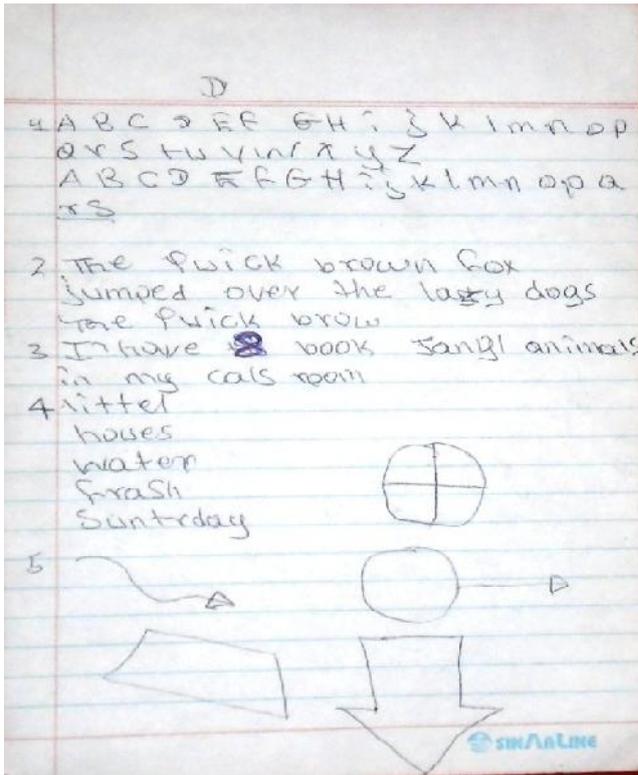


Fig 1. Writing sample of Eldana.

This student wrote all the 26 letters of English alphabets with a fast speed. She wrote some letters with incorrect shape, She missed the word eight and replaced by figure form 8, reversed letters (e) and (s) while writing the word house, reversed (e) and (l) when writing the word little, This student replaced (e) by (a) when writing the word (fresh), the student wrote (suntrday) to write the word (Saturday) ,the student didn't finish the dictation sentence and didn't spell 3 words. She couldn't copy 3 of the pictures correctly. This student writes with large font and slant form and also had poor space management. All the above results showed the student had a writing problem. Such kind of writing disorder was seen in 2of the screening process.

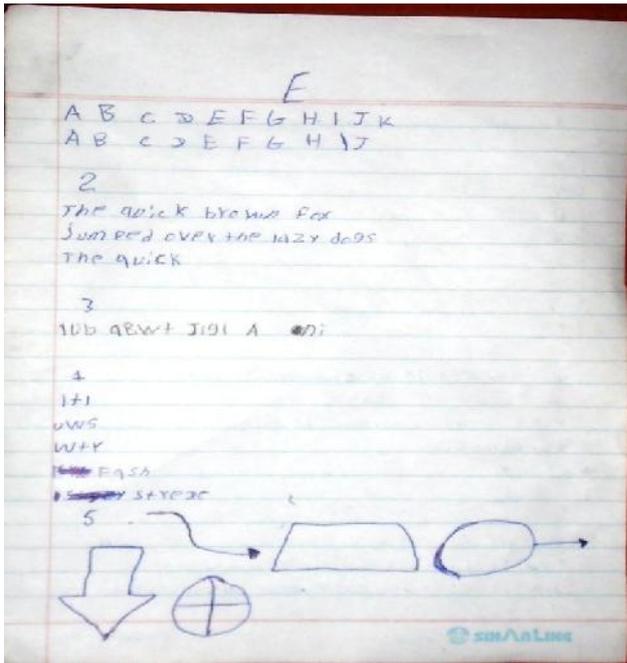


Fig 2. Writing sample of Befikadu.

This student is a grade 3 student with the age of 10 and showed the following problems of writing:

He didn't spell all the 26 letters of English alphabets ,He copied the written text correctly, He didn't dictate the sentence given, He didn't dictate no word correctly, and He missed the copy of two pictures. The student showed this kind of problem in **2 of the screening process**. The above writing of this student showed that he had a problem of writing.

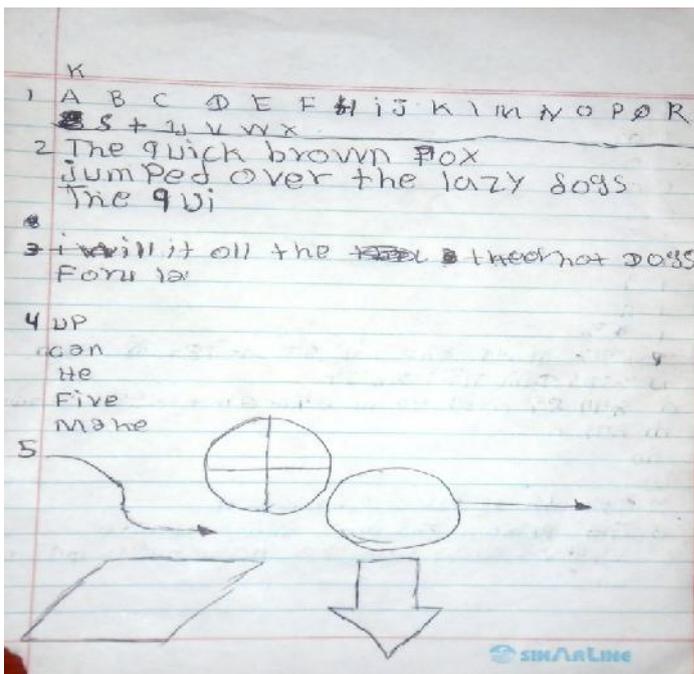


Fig 3. Writing sample of Kidist.

This student is a grade 2 student with the age of 8 had the following results:

She didn't write all the 26 letters she missed two letters (Y & Z), in writing the alphabets the student mixed small letters, spelled the letter (Q) incorrectly, the student used to make errors and canceling the error about 7 places, the copying speed was very good and wrote the sentence asked to be copied correctly, the student tried to dictate the sentence, but didn't spell all words correctly and couldn't finish all the sentence in 1 minute time, the student could dictate all the words correctly, the student tried to draw all the pictures correctly, but it was with broken line. Kidist showed this kind of problem **in 2** of this screening process. All the results of this student showed there is some problem of writing.

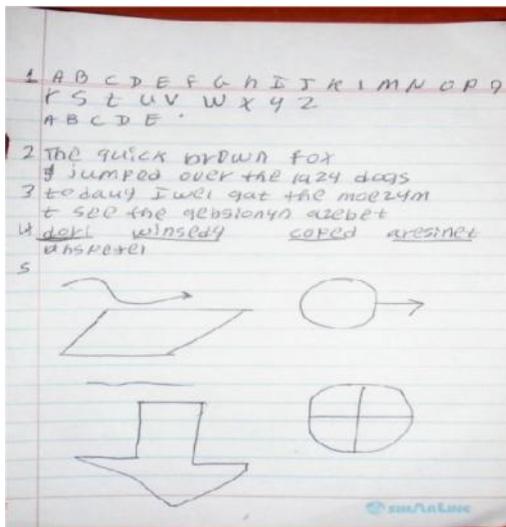


Fig 4. Writing sample of Yafet.

This student is a grade 5 student with the age of 16 and he had the following results: He wrote all the 26 letters, the copying speed was very good and wrote the sentence asked to be copied correctly, the student tried to dictate the sentence, but didn't spell all words correctly and couldn't finish all the sentence in 1 minute time, the student could not dictate none of the words correctly, the student tried to draw all the pictures correctly, but it was with some errors, there was also misuse of margin line. This student showed this kind of writing disorder from **both** screening processes. All the results of this student showed there is problem of writing. Similar result was found in the assessment of students in Amharic language.

1. She wrote the letters with a little difference. (incorrect shapes of Amharic letters)
2. She missed letter.
3. She interchanged letters; she used (ቃ) instead of (ቂ) .
4. She had a problem of slow speed in copying written texts.
5. She didn't differentiate ታ and ገ.
6. She had a problem of using punctuation marks.

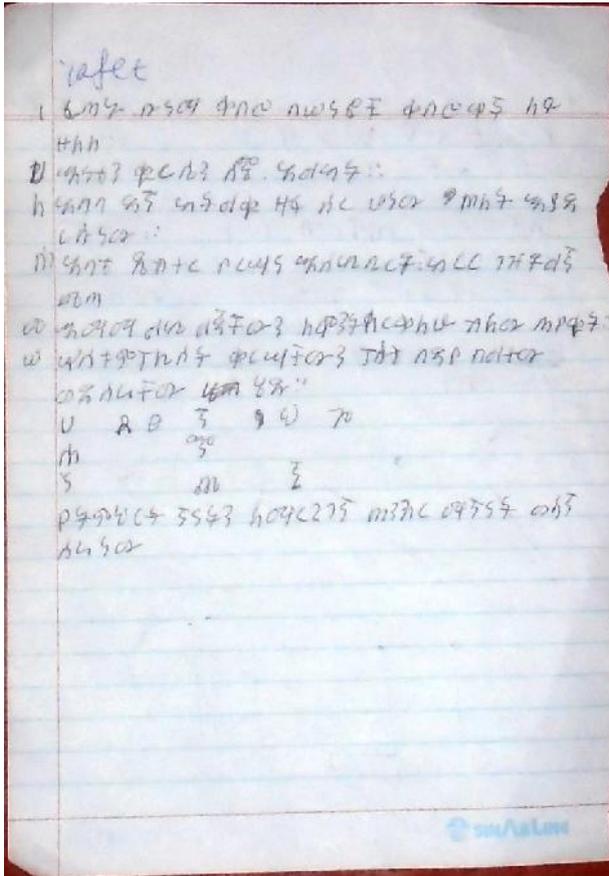


fig 6. sample of Yafets Amharic writing.

The student Yafet is a grade 5 student he had the following problems of writing:

1. Hurrying and not listening carefully he replaced (ውሻዎች) by (ቀበሮዎች).
2. Replaced (ኳ) by (ካ).
3. He Missed (ኝ) to say (ስጭኝ).
4. Reversed the head shape of the letter (ስ) .
5. He replaced the word (ጸሎት) by (ጠሎት).
6. He replaced (ደብተር) by (ዴብተር).

7. He replaced the word (ከለር) by (ከረር).
8. He used (ሁ) instead of (ሀ) to write the word (ትሰርቃለሀ).
9. A problem of identifying ፓ and ፖ.
10. A problem of writing letters (ች፣ዎ፣ኅ፣ጭ፣ኸ፣ኝ፣ጥ).
11. He had used margin improperly.

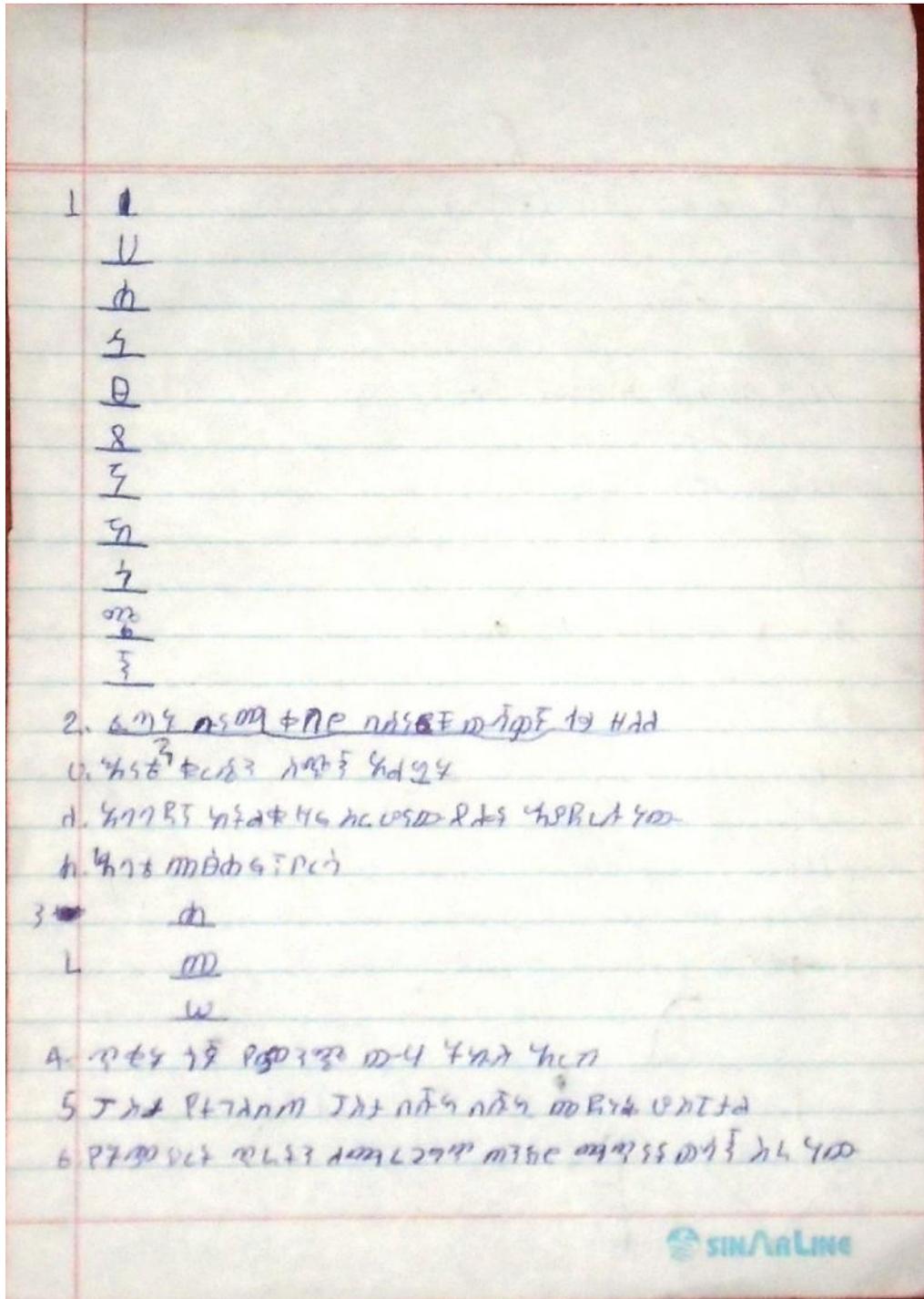


fig 7. Sample of Befikadu's Amharic writing

1. Missing the letter (ኘ) to write (እናቱን)
2. He used(ፓ) instead of (ፖ)
3. He had slow speed of copying written texts.
4. He forgot to use punctuation marks.

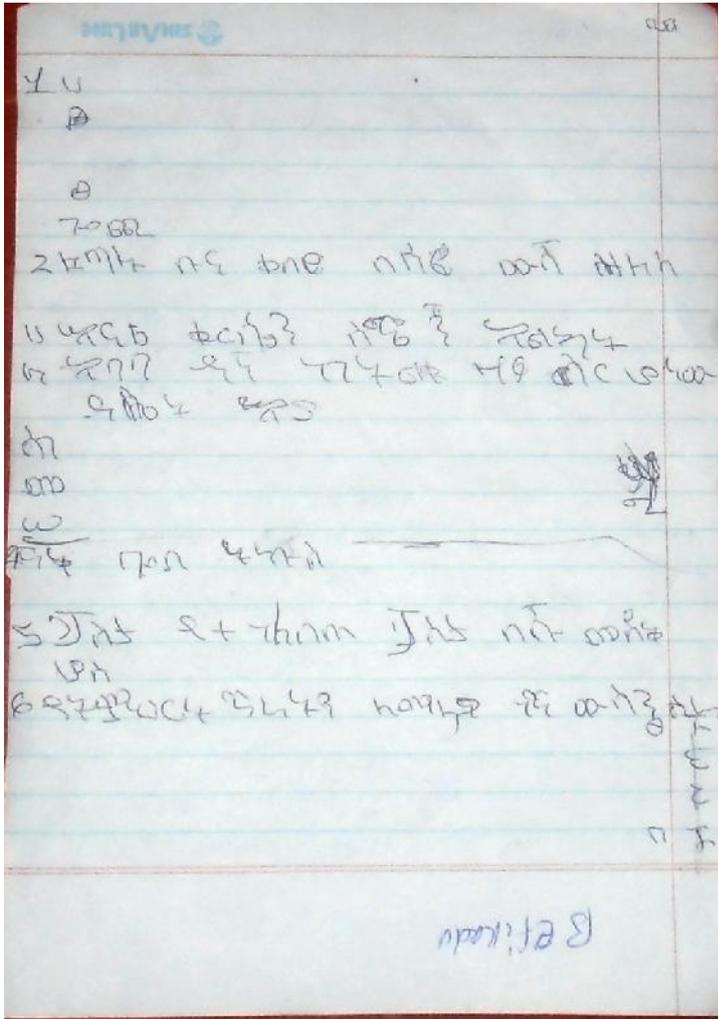


Fig4. Sample of Eldana’s Amharic writing.

Evaluation of Eldana’s test result.

This is Eldana’s test result . Befikadu is a grade 3 student and he had the following writing problems:

1. She had a problem of writing (ሀ፣ሐ፣ኀ፣ጸ)
2. She wrote (ቡና)to write (ቡናማው)
3. She Used (ካ) to write (ካ)

4. She Used (ዳሌት) to write (ጸሎት)
5. She used (ቅ) to write (ቁ)and used (ቦ) in place of (ጃ)
6. Missed(ካ) to write (ሹካ) and missed (ኅ) to write (መደነቅ)
7. She had lower speed of copying written texts.
8. She forgot punctuation marks.
9. She careless use of page (upside down page)
10. She frequent errors and canceled texts. All these results showed the student had writing problem.

4.4 Summary of the screening for dysgraphia.

All the four students showed the writing disorder in the given assessments, and the researcher was sure of the presence of the dysgraphia with the students in the school.

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

After checking the presence of the problem with the students in the school, the researcher went to collect the data from teachers through questionnaire ,interview, observation , and document review. Here the researcher used pseudonym for every participant teachers. In this school teachers were supporting students with dysgraphia with the time table prepared by the school; that was twice in a week. How the teachers were identifying and supporting students with dysgraphia was the concern of this study and questionnaire was distributed for 5 teachers and interview was given for another 5 teachers in addition to this the documents of the participant teachers was reviewed and observation was carried out during these participant teachers support students with dysgraphia. Research data were collected by a "questionnaire" that was developed by the researcher using the tool as one of the in the qualitative research approach. An individually completed question form consisting of 2 open-ended questions and 5 closed ended questions on the themes : the presence of students with dysgraphia in their school, the way that teachers identify students with dysgraphia, how teachers support students with dysgraphia and their challenges and lastly students' parents collaboration in teachers' support were asked, and the participants(teachers) were requested to complete questions through writing.

Table 2. General demographics of the 10 Participant Teachers selected for questionnaire and interview.

Gender	Professional experience			Educational status	
	5-10 years	11-15years	>or=16years	Degree	Diploma
Male	-	3	1	2	2
Female	1	2	3	1	5
Total	1	5	4	3	7

4.6 Ways of identification of students with dysgraphia by participant teachers.

The participant teachers were used to identify students with writing disorder (dysgraphia) was by the following ways: by their hand writing, observing from the way they sit and grasp their pen, by looking the amount of pages the student written, by looking the quality of the students writing, by observing usage of paper, observing illegibility, by observing punctuation marks and capitalizations, and capitalizations. For example **the** participant teachers answered for the questionnaire, “I identify such kind of students by their hand writing when they write note, and when I assess their home and class works.”(Teacher 1 answered) , “I usually identify students with this writing problem from their exercise book. And I also observed from the way they sit and grasp their pen. ”(teacher2 answered.) “I usually understand them since it is visible problem, it is easy to know them ,even I can name them. For example they used to have very few pages of written notes and exercises with poor handwriting. ”(teacher 3). “I know writing problems are of different indicators and there are also many students with this problem the indicators are: many cross outs with in their writing , wrong usage of paper lines, repeated usage of rubber and miss use of punctuation marks and capitalizations are some of the indicators.” (teacher 4). “ It is easy to identify students with writing disorder for example I can identify them by dictation activity most of my students are with a problem of small vocabulary capacity, carelessness of punctuation and shapes of letters. are some of the ways that I use to identify such kind of students.(teacher 5). **And teachers gave the following evidence for the presence of students with dysgraphia** teacher 6 said, “yes there are many students who do not write correctly and appropriately in every class of our

school.” ,teacher 7said, “ yes , there are students, who do not spell even the amharic letters, some of them could not copy what was written on the chalk board.”, teacher 8 answered, “ yes, there are such kind of students in the class which I teach, most of them could not copy what I wrote on the board even from the book, they spell the letters without the correct shape of the letter, they used to write in every part of the page they want, they mix capital letters with small letters.” , teacher 9 answered, “ It is unquestionable that there are many students of this problems , you can’t get 10 students from 42 students of grade5 with good writing skill most of them are with poor writing.”, teacher 10answered, “ in our school there are students who have poor / illegible / they need longer time support to improve their writing, many of them couldn’t copy and dictate sentences with the right alphabets or letters of Amharic and English languages.”

4.7 Participant teachers’ practice to support students with dysgraphia in the school.

4.7.1 Strategies used to support students with dysgraphia.

During observation of teachers’ teaching students to write the researcher could see the followings : teachers didn’t consider students with dysgraphia in their lesson plan, the participant teachers didn’t have the right skill to support students with dysgraphia, there were no students with the expected good result or change after the support of their teachers.

The participant teachers of this school used to support their students only by using the traditional and inappropriate way for example ,re teaching of the class lesson, using repetition drill, guided writing and misuse of other varieties of teaching strategies for example they didn’t use activities before writing like hand exercises to build fine motor skills, inconsistency follow up and by pass strategies (use of technology), and they didn’t understand what kind of strategies for what kind of writing problem.

4.7.2 Frequency of the support by the participant teachers.

The amount of time given to support these students was not enough ;2 days were given with boring time. Students with dysgraphia need more time to get good training , and exercise more ,but the school didn’t have more than 2 days. For example for the question how often do you support these students with dysgraphia? ;teacher 1 answered “sometimes” , teacher 2 answered “ rarely” , Teacher 3answered “ sometimes” , teacher 4 answered “ sometimes” and teacher 5 also said “I sometimes ”.

4.7.3 Ways of supporting students with dysgraphia by the participant teachers.

Teachers were asked and replied in the questionnaire for the question “How do you support students with writing problem ?” “ I advised students of this problem about the use of good handwriting , I let them to share with their peer’s excellent hand writing to create initiation to write better than their previous writing. ” (Teacher 1 answered), I didn’t try to support such kind of students by myself because I was be lived as they write more notes and assignments, the students will improve their writing gradually by themselves.” (teacher 2),“I support this students with the support program called minimum learning competency twice in a week .this is the school program, and I train them how to grasp their pen and how to spell the alphabets of Amharic and English language , I also let them re write the difficult letters repeatedly for half a page, and I appreciate them when they made some improvement.” (teacher 3),“ I used to give a hand exercise i.e. how to grasp a pen and how to move their hand when they spell different letters , and I show them the computer print letters from their books and I let them spell the letters with enough time and appreciate their trying during the MLC (minimum learning support programme.”(teacher 4). “ I gave a support in the MLC support program of the school by giving Amharic and English scripts through copying and dictation exercises and by sharing the graph styles of their good writer peer and advices to motivate to write better. ” (teacher 5).And from interview of participant teachers the following evidence was taken for the question: “what are the ways did you support students with writing problems?” : teacher 6-10 said that ,“ to support our students with Writing Disorder our school had a plan in every year; to give additional support for students who have a skill below minimum learning competency ,so a supporting program was prepared for these students twice in a week on every Tuesday and Thursday . And we Amharic and English language teachers were helping by the following tasks in every two days of the week : re teaching what the students were learned in the normal class, by checking the students’ hand writing and correcting their mistakes of writing (especially spelling mistakes), teaching of vocabulary with how to spell selected words repeatedly , re teaching of Amharic and English letters with their right shape and sequence, letting students to spell difficult words repeatedly.”

4.7.4 Cooperation of parents in supporting students with dysgraphia.

Teachers of this school didn't get any collaboration from students parents as the reply in the questionnaire indicates for example the participant teachers were asked about the collaboration of students' parents ,and they replied that ; only some teachers collaborate but most of the parents didn't have any collaboration.

4.8 Challenges of participant teachers in supporting students with dysgraphia.

4.8.1 Challenges of the teachers when teaching students with dysgraphia.

As the reply of the questionnaire indicated teachers faced such challenges in teaching children with Dysgraphia. As 5 of the participant teachers said; "Most parents have no support for their children as we expected because of this we language teachers call parents of students and tell them the problems of their children , but the parents had nothing to do on their children ,so their children have no improvement on their writing."

"And there were also problems of the school like: the directors of the school do not support the necessary supports forExample, they didn't make the school's compound calm during the MLC support time there was volleyball game with noise while we were teaching , there was no teaching materials that could help to teach writing and they couldn't train us on how we support such kinds of students."

As all the participants said most of the parents of these students with Dysgraphia couldn't help teachers in encouraging and teaching when the students are at home; this was because of different reasons some literate parents tell their own reasons for example, "I have no time to help my child", and other parents say "I am not literate and I couldn't help them and the child do not do what I advised him." and other reasons ;so 100% of the challenge was fall in the shoulder of teachers.

4.8.2 Challenges of the teachers related to the school directors.

The school directors of this school melkam ermijachin primary school had poor follow up of teachers support for students with dysgraphia. They didn't encourage the language teachers to work better. It is possible to say there was no follow up and support for language teachers to support the students with dysgraphia;as aresult of this the teachers didn't give the relevant support for students with dysgraphia.

4.8.3 Challenges of the teachers with students’ parents.

Teachers of the school didn’t get any collaboration from students’ parents or families in supporting to get a progress of students’ writing skill. Most of the parents of the students’ were illiterate and the literates were very busy as a result they couldn’t support these students in collaboration with teachers.

4.8.4 Challenges of the teachers with time management.

Teacher of this school didn’t have good time management that was they waste the time specially at the beginning and the end of the supporting class (MLC) supporting class. In addition to this the time table didn’t help the teachers because it was not suitable time for both the student and the teachers(after the seventh period) ;that was a time of feeling tired for the teachers and the students .

4.8.5 Challenges of the teachers with teaching resources.

There were no teaching resources to teach writing in the school at all i.e. the KISD hand writing form, materials to give hand exercises, computers, screening manuals, relevant trainings, and other necessary materials in the school.

4.8.6 Challenges in compiling their works (portfolio)

The participant teachers’ documents were reviewed the documents reviewed were lesson plans, note books, continuous assessment mark list, question banks, parent-teacher communication book, hand writing exercising forms, and feedbacks given for students’ writing were seen (reviewed).

Currently the selected teachers(participants) were asked any documents they had and they brought what they had and assessed and summarized in table as follows:

Table 3: reviewed documents of participant teachers.

Teachers’ name	Documents						
	lesson	Note	handwriting	communication	Question		Sample of given

	plans	book	Exercise form	Book of teacher-parent	Bank	Students attendance sheet	Relevant feedbacks for students' writing on ex.book.
Teacher 1	A	P	A	A	P	P	A
Teacher 2	A	P	A	P	A	P	A
Teacher 3	A	A	P	P	A	P	A
Teacher 4	A	A	A	A	A	P	A
Teacher 5	A	P	A	A	A	P	P

Keys: P= present ,A= absent

This checklist was used to assess how much teachers were worked in supporting their students with Dysgraphia and they documented their works.

As shown in the table above 71.4% of documents were not used by these language teachers. It is known that lesson plan should be prepared before teaching students, teaching without lesson plan means teachers are not working for students success.

Preparing note book is related to lesson planning ,teachers should prepare what they are going to teach their students and give the relevant knowledge and exercises through writing, and this must be prepared first ,unless it becomes teaching by guessing that leads to miss important point of the lesson. Teachers should teach their students how to write starting from ways of spelling letters ,teachers shouldn't leave their students if they don't write properly. Teachers should train their students writing since their students are a primary school students they should let and encourage them to improve their writing with the relevant materials from school like a handwriting training form.

As described in the table 80%of the participant teachers didn't train their students with a handwriting exercise form. The school didn't have such type of form at all, 40% of the participant teachers did not have a communication book to solve students problem of writing, 80% of the participant teachers didn't have encouraging marks for all written

answers (the thick and cross for answers of the students) on students exercise book. And 80% of the participant teachers didn't work with question bank these questions were very important to evaluate as the objective of the curriculum ,but most teachers were evaluating their students without the objective of the curriculum. Generally teachers were not working hard giving great credit for the problem.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion of the Major Findings

5.1 Effect of Dysgraphia on school performance.

Writing is the one among the 4skills of language ; this skill is very important to describe or communicate with ideas in the learning and social life issues. If somebody is with dysgraphia it is impossible to describe his/her ideas through writing ,this makes a negative impact on the work, life of the person; because of the disability to describe the information in his/her mind. If the person is a student this disability leads to repetition of class;this is because the students can't grasp the knowledge from what he/she learned and couldn't describe in words properly to the teachers.

Unfortunately, many students struggle in school because of dysgraphia, a problem with expressing thoughts in written form (Richards, 1999). Dysgraphia can have a negative impact on the success of a child in school. Many children with dysgraphia are not able to keep up with written assignments, cannot put coherent thoughts together on paper, or write legibly. This disability needs to be recognized and remediated before it creates long lasting negative consequences for the child. Alyssa L. Crouch and Jennifer J. Jakubecy. (2007).

5.2 Participant teachers' awareness on the characteristics to identify students with dysgraphia.

The study's results indicated that majority of the characteristics of children with Dysgraphia are not clear for teachers. This implies that teachers do not have awareness regarding these children. Different literatures reported that when selecting and implementing successful instructional strategies and practices, it is imperative to understand the characteristics of the child, including those pertaining to disabilities or diagnoses.

5.2.1 Characteristics of Dysgraphia

- * Cramped fingers on writing tool
- * Odd wrist, body, and paper positions
- * Excessive erasures
- * Mixture of upper- and lowercase letters
- * Mixture of printed and cursive letters
- * Inconsistent letter formations and slant
- * Irregular letter sizes and shapes

- * Unfinished cursive letters
- * Misuse of line and margin
- * Poor organization on the page
- * Inefficient speed in copying
- * Decreased speed of writing
- * General illegibility
- * Inattentiveness about details when writing
- * Frequent need of verbal cues and use of sub-vocalizing
- * reliance on vision to monitor what the hand is doing during writing
- * Slow implementation of verbal directions that involve sequencing and planning .

And the study indicated that most of the specific indicators of the identification characteristics of children with dysgraphia were shown: a varieties of writing problems specially: illegibility, very large and very small sizes of letters, mixing capital and small letters carelessness in spacing of letters and words ,in ability of spelling most of Amharic letters, improper usage of page margins and jumping pages, a problem of copying notes from book and chalk board ,and writing together with errors of teachers, shortage of vocabularies/spelling problems.

5.3 The challenges found with the participant teachers when supporting children with Dysgraphia.

As indicated above teachers faced such challenges in teaching children with Dysgraphia. As 5 of the participant teachers said; “Most parents have no support for their children as weexpected because of this we language teachers call parents of students and tell them the problems of their children , but the parents had nothing to do on their children ,so their children have no improvement on their writing.”

“And there were also problems of the school like: the directors of the school do not support the necessary supports forExample, they didn’t make the school’s compound calm during the MLC support time there was volleyball game with noise while we were teaching , there was no teaching materials that could help to teach writing and they couldn’t train us on how we support such kinds of students.”

As all the participants said most of the parents of these students with Dysgraphia couldn’t help teachers in encouraging and teaching when the students are at home; this was because of

different reasons some literate parents tell their own reasons for example, “I have no time to help my child”, and other parents say “I am not literate and I couldn’t help them and the child do not do what I advised him.” and other reasons ;so 100% of the challenge was fall in the shoulder of teachers.

5.4 Supports of the participant teachers to students with Dysgraphia.

The language teachers had to offer practical information and sample strategies that can be used to help students with Dysgraphia manage learning so that students are successful and experienced in communicating with writing with anybody. But the result indicates that the teachers were not familiar with the management approaches for supporting students with Dysgraphia. Concerning this all of the participant teachers stated the following: ‘we understand whatDysgraphia is and how it can affect the student, but we couldn’t support the student to manage these students Writing Disorder.

This study indicated that students with dysgraphia in Melkam ermijachin primary school were being supported by the Amharic and English teachers twice in aweek. Inappropriately. (with out the right knowledge and skills of teachers.)

5.5 Ways (strategies)the participant teachers used to support students with Dysgraphia.

The participant teachers in this study didn’t apply the relevant teaching strategies .Amharic and English language teachers were helping by the following tasks in every two days of the week : re teaching what the students were learned in the normal class, by checking the students’ hand writing and correcting their mistakes of writing (especially spelling mistakes), teaching of vocabulary with how to spell selected words repeatedly , re teaching of Amharic and English letters with their right shape and sequence, letting students to spell difficult words repeatedly only but teachers need to know more useful teaching strategies. There are two such remedial treatment is using drill and practice. different approaches to address dysgraphia Richards (1999) as cited in Alyssa L. Crouch and Jennifer J. Jakubecy. (2007). The first is using systematic techniques that improve functioning; this is referred to as a remedial treatment. Remedial treatments are those that seek to correct handwriting either through direct instruction of handwriting or a fine motor program.The second strategy is using bypass strategies, such as technology, to find a way around the handwriting difficulties.

Compensatory techniques or ways to alleviate the problem would be bypass strategies. For the purpose of this strategy review, only remedial treatments were included.Alyssa L. Crouch

and Jennifer J. Jakubecy. (2007).suggested that the teacher should provide a clear example of good handwriting and then the children should practice and drill using the teacher’s model. People with dysgraphia struggle with the display of letters because often the letter that is asked for in the brain is not the letter that is retrieved and produced (Richards, 1998). Repetitive practice, along with correct position and pencil grip can help with this process. “Another remedial treatment that has empirical evidence is building fine motor skills. Using drills that build the muscles used for fine motor activities can help improve hand functioning, which can lead to better handwriting” Berry (1999) as cited in Alyssa L. Crouch and Jennifer J. Jakubecy. (2007).Keller (2001). used activities in a club she created to help the handwriting of students with dysgraphia these were : *Rub hands together Squeeze tennis balls,Rub hands in circles on the carpet, Play with Wikki Stix, Build with small Lego blocks, String small beads, Roll clay between fingers, “Walk” fingers up and down the pencil.* Alyssa L. Crouch and Jennifer J. Jakubecy. (2007).

Chapter Six: Summary Conclusions and Recommendation

6.1 Summary

The objective of the study was to assess primary school teachers' awareness and practice in supporting students with Dysgraphia in Melkam Ermijachin school.. Accordingly, the following basic research questions were proposed in the present study: Are there students with Dysgraphia in the school? How teachers supported children with Dysgraphia? , What was the practice in identifying and supporting children with Dysgraphia in the school? , What were the challenges faced by teachers in teaching children with Dysgraphia in the school?. In order to find out answers for the above research questions the researcher selected 10 teachers using purposive sampling. and the researcher tried to check the presence of students with dysgraphia using KISD screening manual and the problem was really found in the school. A 7-point questionnaire with open and closed ended type was adopted for the participant teachers. The interview was semi structured with 5 items.Observation check list and document review were used to collect data.The collected data were analyzed using qualitativemethod. And from the inspection of the data analysis, the following **findings** were obtained.

- A. It was found that there were more amount of students with Dysgraphia who were learning from grade1-6 along with their peers.
- B. Teachers were trying to support these students without any training ,skill and teaching materials and calm setting of the school's compound.
- C. Parents of teachers were not working with students' in supporting these students.And students were not interested because it was from 9:50-10:30PM.(felt boring)
- D. Teachers were teaching these students without lesson plan and teaching materials for writing.
- E. Teachers were feeling tire (during their time of supporting these students)
- F. Teachers were not familiar with the specific identification characteristic criteria to identify children with Dysgraphia.
- G. The school directors were not motivating the teachers to support even they were not monitoring the teachers work consistently.
- H. Students couldn't improve their writing skill even in the second semester .
- I. Most of these students had poor academic competence .

- J. These students were passing from grade to grade by the will of teachers without improving their writing disorder.

6.2 Conclusion

This study revealed that the teachers have lack of awareness and practice regarding children with writing disorder, this presented great challenges to teachers, students and the school in general and directly affected students with writing disorder and their academic performance. Because of the shortage of adequate knowledge, right time to support, training on how to support such kinds of students, especially on how to manage and teach these children, absence of the necessary facilities and collaborative work with the school's directors, teachers and parents were not ready to accommodate the educational needs of these children. As these children were supported by their teachers without providing the necessary and sufficient educational support the result of the support didn't bring the desired change.

6.3. Recommendations

In order to solve this problem, it is better to use the following suggestions:

- Caring about handwritten assignments.
- Employing highly qualified and trained teachers in the schools who are interested in and familiar with the art of calligraphy.
- Explaining the importance and the role of calligraphy to students.
- Teaching the calligraphy in the elementary school along with other initial trainings to children.
- Preparing appropriate art books for students.
- Emphasizing the importance of calligraphy in critical occupations such as medicine, judgment, university professors, etc.
- Employing the calligraphers for teaching the art courses in schools.
- Continuous communication between calligraphers and schools to improve and develop the handwriting and calligraphy.
- The education officials should pay attention to make academic the art of calligraphy.
- Use calm environment (the school should be less restrictive)
- Use in the morning time specially the weekends are better time.
- The school should have resources for teaching writing.
- Teachers should encourage students' parents to work collaboratively.
- Drill and fine motor activities are very important remedies for students with Dysgraphia.

- Teachers should increase their competence of writing skill
- Give a great value for training of teaching students writing
- Identify students with dysgraphia using standard screening tools
- Give the necessary support in time and
- Teachers should support these students with commitment in collaboration with their colleagues and families/parents of students.

And if teachers use the above recommendations, they will get excellent result on the students.

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Appendices

Appendix -I

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS IN IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DYSGRAPHIA.

BY MEKURIA ABRHAM

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Questionnaire prepared for teachers on the research title "teachers challenges on identifying and supporting students with learning disability in Melkam ermijachin Primary school."

Personal Information of the teacher

1. Sex: _____
2. Qualification(s): diploma _____, Degree _____, ceteficate _____, masters deg. _____
3. Field of study the subject that you teach: _____
4. Teaching experience in years _____

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is designed to elicit information for the purposes of receiving Master of Arts (M.A) in special needs education. Its main purpose is to obtain information on the challenges in identifying and supporting students with writing problem in your school. As your responses are very important for the results of this study, you are kindly requested to give genuine responses to each item of the questionnaire. The information provided by you will be strictly confidential, and will be utilized only for the purpose of academic research. I request you to kindly cooperate and respond to each item.

Thank you very much in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

MekuriaAbrham (researcher.)

Questionnaire for teachers on challenges in identifying and supporting students with writing problem.

Introduction :

Dear teacher this questionnaire is designed to collect the real research data to study the reality of identification, support and challenges of teachers found on the ground. So the researcher asked the following questions expecting true replies from you.

Instruction:

Dear teacher please choose the correct answers for the choice questions and write your own answers for essay questions on the given space.

1. Are there students with writing problems in the class you teach? A. yes B. NO

2. How do you identify students with writing problems?-----

3. Do you have enough knowledge of scientific identification tools? A. Yes B.NO

4. Did you give any support for students with writing problem? A. Yes B. NO

5. If your answer is “yes”How often you gave the support?

A. rarely B. sometimes C. most of the time

6. How do you support students with writing problem ?-----

7. How many of students’ parents help you to support these students at their home?
K. none B. some C. most

Thank you very much for your kindly response!

Amharic translation of questionnaire presented for teachers

1. በትምህርትቤታችሁ ውስጥ የመጻፍ ችግር ያለባቸው ተማሪዎች አሉን?
ሀ. አዎ ለ. የሉም
2. በተራቁጥር 1 ለተጠየቀው ጥያቄ ምላሽዎ አዎ ከሆነ እንዴት ባለ ሁኔታ ይለዩዋቸዋል?

3. የጽሁፍ ችግር ያላቸውን ተማሪዎች በሳይንሳዊ የመለያ ስልቶች የመለየት እውቀቱ አለዎት? ሀ. አዎ ለ. የለኝም
4. የጽሁፍ ችግር ያላቸውን ተማሪዎች ደግፈው ያቃሉ? ሀ. አዎ ለ. አልደገፍኩም
5. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 4 መለሱት አዎ ከሆነ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ደግፈው ነበር?
ሀ. የብርቅ ያህል በጣም አልፎ አልፎ ለ. ተወስነ ጊዜ ሐ. ብዙ ጊዜ

6. የመጻፍ ችግር ያለበትን ተማሪዎን እንዴት ነበር (ምን በማድረግ ነበር ሲደግፉ የነበረው? ዘርዘረው ቢገልጹት

7. የመጻፍ ችግር ያለባቸውን ተማሪዎች ምን ያህሉ ወላጆች በቤት ውስጥ በመከታተል እርስዎን ያግዝዎት ነበር
? ሀ. ምንም ለ. ጥቂት ሐ. ብዙ

ስለ መልካም ትብብርዎ በጣም አመሰግናለሁ!

Appendix-II

Semi structured Interview questions for teachers.

The main purpose of this study is to assess Melkam ermijachin's primary school teachers challenges in identifying and supporting practice on children with dysgraphia. Be sure that your responses are keep confidential and will use only for academic purpose. So you are kindly requested to give your real responses.

Would you mind I use the sound recorder to save the information that you will give?

Thank you for your cooperation.

II. Interview date ----- time----- place -----

Back ground information of interviewee

Sex----- education ----- total service years -----

Field of study ----- school -----

III. information concerning on challenges in identifying and supporting students with dysgraphia.

1. Are there students with writing problems in your school?
2. How do you identify students with writing problem?
3. In what ways did you support students with writing problems?
4. Is there any support of parents of students with writing is difficulty at their home?
5. How often do you support students with writing problem?

Appendix -III

Classroom observation checklist prepared for teachers

School's name -----

Teacher's name -----

Subject he/she teaches -----

Grade ----- date -----

Basic points to be observed in the classroom :

1. Do teachers identify students with writing problems?

A. Yes B. NO

2. Do teachers support students with writing problems? A. yes B.NO

3. Does the teacher consider students with writing problem in his/her daily lesson pan. A. Yes B. NO

4. Do the teachers have the skill on how to support students with writing problem
A. Yes B. NO

5. Are there students who are supported by their teacher and brought good change?

A. yes B. NO

Appendix- IV

Observation checklist for selected students for 4 students to check the presence of students with writing problem (dysgraphia) specially in Amharic and English subjects

1. Personal information of the student

Name of the student -----

School's name -----

Sex----- Age ----- Grade level -----Date -----

The kinds of problems the student shows:

No.	Problems of writing	Present	Absent
	Spelling problems		
	Mixture of upper and lowercase letter		
	Inconsistent letter formations and slant		
	Irregular letter sizes and shapes		

	Unfinished cursive letters		
2	L e t t e s e q u e n c e		
	Shortage of vocabularies		
3	M e c h a n i c s o f w r i t i n g		
	C a p i t a l i z a t i o n		
	U s e o f p u n c t u a t i o n m a r k s		
4	C o h e r e n c e p r o b l e m		
	Putting coherent thoughts together on paper.		
5	G r a m m a r		
	S u b j e c t v e r b a g r e e m e n t		
	U s e o f p r o n o u n s		
	S u b j e c t a n d n u m b e r a g r e e m e n t		
6	S p a c i n g		

	Space b/n letters of a word		
	Space b/n words in a sentence		
	Miss use of line and margin		
7	Illegible handwriting		

Appendix- V

Checklist for document analysis

1. Is there a document that tells identified students with writing problem?
A. yes B. No
2. Is there any support for the problem of the student with writing problem?
A. yes B. NO
3. How teachers support students with writing problem?
4. How is the teacher's contentious assessment for students with writing problem?
A. considering the student's ability B. not considering the student's ability C. with understanding of the student's writing D. modification of the test with other format.

Appendix VI

Assessment subtests for students with dysgraphia
Herman's method of screening manual for Dysgraphia
Grade Student Handwriting Form

Student's Name: -----

Date: _____

Writing the Full Alphabet:

Handwriting practice lines for writing the full alphabet. Each row consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Sentence Copying:

Handwriting practice lines for sentence copying. Each row consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Student's Name: -----

Date: _____

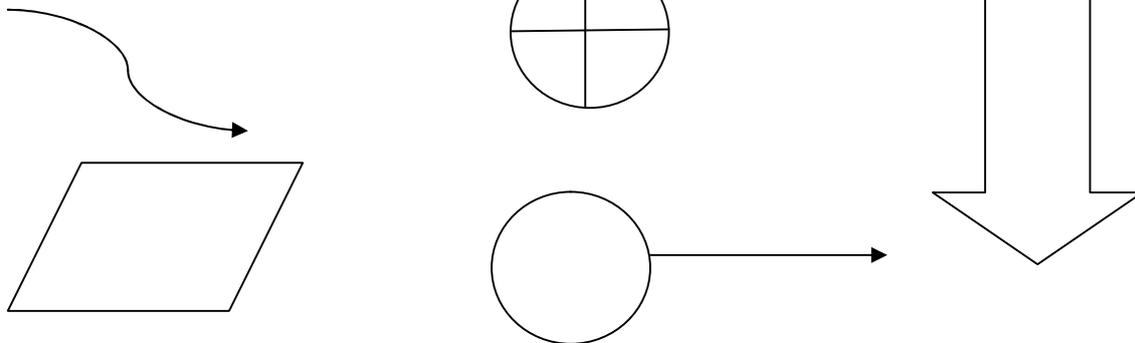
Dictation Sentence:

Handwriting practice lines for dictation. Each row consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Spelling:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Copying Shapes



Appendix VII

How do teachers Score the Assessment?

Directions Once test is completed, compile data on to your KISD Classroom Handwriting Data form. (Once completed, give KISD Classroom Handwriting Data Form and KISD Student Handwriting Form to the Reading Specialist on your campus.)

1. Writing the Full Alphabet: Indicate on the KISD Classroom Handwriting Data form the number of letters written in one minute. Do not count or penalize the student for omitted or incorrect letters. Divide the letters written per minute by 5 to obtain a gross word per minute rate (WPM).

Example: A b c d e f k l mo qr st v = 15 letters per minute or 3 WPM.

2. Sentence Copying: Indicate on your KISD Classroom Handwriting Data form the number of letters written in one minute. Do not count or penalize the student for omitted or incorrect letters. Divide the letters written per minute by 5 to obtain a gross word per minute rate (WPM).

Example: The quick brown fox = 16 letters per minute or 3.2 WPM.

3. Dictation Sentence: Indicate on your KISD Classroom Handwriting Data form the number of letters written in one minute. Do not count spaces or penalize the students for omitted or incorrect letters. Divide the letters written per minute by 5 to obtain a gross word per minute rate (WPM).

Example: I hav ate boks abot jugel = 20 letters per minute or 4WPM.

4. Spelling: Indicate on your KISD Classroom Handwriting Data Form the number of words spelled correctly. Example: 1/5 for one word spelled correctly or 4/5 for four words spelled correctly.

5. Copying Shapes: Indicate on your KISD Classroom Handwriting Data form the number of items below that the student accomplishes. Answer “yes” or “no” to each of the following criteria:

3 out of 5 shapes are copied correctly. The shapes should not have “ears” at the corners. So the researcher was tried to identify the students by the above tool and the questions asked were as follows:

Write all alphabets of in English language (dictation time given: 1minute)

Re-write the following sentence “The fast brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs.”
time given: 1minute/Write after you listen for grade2 : I will eat all the hot dogs for lunch.(time given 1minute)

For grade 3 : I have eight books about jungle animals in my classroom. (time given 1min.)

For grade5 and above: Today I will go to the museum to see the Egyptian exhibit. We will study the mummies.

Listen and write the words.

For grade 1 and 2: up , can , He , five,& make were asked to dictate.

For grade 3 and4: little, house ,water , fresh,& Saturday were asked to dictate. pictures of parallelogram, zigzag arrow, circle with left arrow, a circle divided into four parts, and arrow showing down were asked to copy.

The questionnaire asked for teachers by the researcher.

1. Are there students with writing problems in the class you teach? A. yes B. NO

2. How do you identify students with writing problems?-----

--

3. Do you have enough knowledge of scientific identification tools? A. Yes
B.NO

4. Did you give any support for students with writing problem? A. Yes B.
NO

5. If your answer is “yes” How often you gave the support?

A. rarely B. sometimes C. most of the time

6. How do you support students with writing problem ?-----

7. How many of students’ parents help you to support these students at their
home?

A. none B. some C. most