A STUDY OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING IN RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTORS' EXPECTATIONS AT AAU: FOUR DEPARTMENTS IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

Key Words

Students' Academic Writing

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It is obvious that the English courses (College English and Sophomore) offered in Addis Ababa University are based on the assumption that what is taught and learned in these classes would help students overcome their previous writing problems and write well in their subject area courses.

However, what may not be clear is how well students are able to use what they have learned from writing courses into their content courses writing tasks or what exactly subject area teachers expect of their students. This being the case, it will become necessary to examine the academic writing practices, features, and expectations of the Addis Ababa University subject matter instructors and their students to obtain the features of academic writing instructors require and expect.

The purpose of the study reported in this thesis, therefore, was to investigate the students' academic writing in relation to the instructors' expectations in the context of AAU. Focusing on four departments of the university and adopting a descriptive approach, the study set out specifically to (a) determine the features of good academic papers instructors expect from their students and in this regard whether the students' writing reflect the instructors' expectations, (b) whether the students' awareness of what constitute good academic writing approximate (match with) their instructors' expectations, (c) if the instructors help the students meet the writing requirements and (d) to see the extent to which instructors actually look beyond content to language errors in the students' writing. In addition, the study attempted to look at the order of the seriousness of the problems, if any, in terms of content, writing skills, and language as noticed by the instructors and experienced by the students.

Two techniques of data gathering were employed in order to obtain the data required for the study. One was a questionnaire, which was designed and distributed to both subject area instructors and their students in the selected departments. The other was interview by which information was gathered from the instructors and the students. The data gathered from the instructors and their students were then analyzed

The results of the study tend to indicate that the students were actually less successful in meeting or reflecting their instructors' expectations of good academic papers in their writing. The results also appear to show that what the students perceived as elements of a good academic paper in most cases, agree with their instructors' expectations. However, even though, the students were aware of the qualities their papers should satisfy, both the instructors and the students themselves witnessed that they had serious problems in fulfilling or demonstrating these features in their papers.

In this regard, students' problems were manifested in terms of all the good features of writing the instructors expected. In more specific terms, student writing exhibited weaknesses in lack of skills in expressing thoughts in logically organized and connected discourse (meeting appropriate rhetorical expectations), in lack of proficiency in English, in tendency to write memory dump type of writing and in lack of novelty of thought.
Also it was found that the instructors in the respective departments appeared to have paid little attention to help their students improve their writing skills. However, as the results also tend to indicate, the instructors, even though they may not appreciate the students' failure to use good English, come to accept that language errors are unavoidable and as result, appear to tolerate errors as long as the errors do not affect understanding the content students want to convey.

Finally, the results clearly indicate that both the instructors and the students ranked language as the most serious problem in the students' writing. This was followed by problem of writing skills. Content knowledge was, however, found less a problem as compared with the other elements.

On the basis of the findings of the study, recommendations were made as to how to overcome the students' failure to meet course writing requirements.
It was recommended that subject area instructors in all disciplines should make writing an inevitable part of the teaching and learning process in their courses, It was also suggested that subject area instructors and ELT teachers need to establish cooperation and conduct seminars and workshops. It was further recommended that more writing and language courses, which have specific relevance to their subject courses writing requirements should be offered.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Though the process versus product dichotomy has characterized the debate in the literature of writing, ESL researchers have generally agreed that the goal of higher level writing is to prepare students to become better academic writers (Spack, 1988; Swales, 1996; Horowitz, 1986; Johns, 1986). Attaining this goal, however, may become difficult because most often a gap exists between what students already know and what members of the academic community (instructors) expect of them (Bizzell, 1982; Johns, 1986; Spack, 1986; Horowitz, 1986). Scholars in the area also argue that failure to meet academic expectations for EFL or ESL students in writing at advanced level lie in factors such as lack of previous training in writing and L2 difficulty (Bizzell, 1982); constraints imposed by the writing tasks (Zamel,1983); lack of writing tasks awareness (Flower et al, 1990), and cultural barriers in writing (Connor, 1996).

Writing courses at universities are, therefore, based on the assumption that what is taught and learned in these courses would help students overcome their previous writing problems and prepare them to write well in their subject area courses (Leki and Carson, 1994; Johns 1986a).

However, as these authorities argue, composition instructors may not know just how successful they are in preparing students to meet their subject area writing demands or how well students are able to use what they have learned from writing courses into their

content courses writing tasks or what exactly subject area teachers expect of their students.

Likewise, though the English courses (College English and Sophomore) offered at Addis Ababa University are intended to overcome the previous writing problems students may have and to help them develop academic writing skills, still there is no concrete evidence supported by research that these courses would adequately equip the students with the writing skills they are required to meet and expected to fulfill in their respective subject area courses. Furthermore, the potential contributions of subject matter instructors in helping students handle their academic writing tasks needs to be studied and evaluated.

This being the case, insofar as the knowledge of the writer of this paper is concerned, it will become necessary to examine the academic writing experiences, practices, features, expectations and awareness of the Addis Ababa University subject matter instructors and their students. This is particularly so because without such information, as Horowitz (1986) stresses, obtaining complete picture of the features of academic writing and creating realistic writing tasks remains largely a matter of guesswork.

The study of the expectations of subject area instructors to students' writing as well as students' responses to their writing tasks is crucial. This is because even though subject matter instructors may not consider themselves as ' writing teachers', their roles as judges and evaluators of students' writing with their own requirements and seasoned

expectations become very decisive for the success or failure of students in their academic endeavors.

In spite of the need for conducting such research, to date, several of the local studies conducted in relation to writing at Addis Ababa University have mainly focused on problems related to teaching writing in ELT classes. These research topics include exploring common language errors in writing (Mamo, 1981); evaluating the effectiveness of writing teaching materials (Kiflemariam, 1988; Yonas, 1996), and provisions of feedback in writing (Getnet, 1994; Italo, 1999). Only a study undertaken by Geremew (1999) for his PH.D dissertation has investigated the nature of the requirements in writing for academic purposes.

Thus, the present study by focusing on writing beyond ELT classes in AAU attempts to investigate the academic writing practices, awareness and problems of students in relation to their subject matter instructors' expectations.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The focus of this study will be to investigate students' writing in response to the subject area instructors' academic writing expectations in the four selected departments. namely, Law, History, Sociology and Social Anthropology(SOSA) and Educational planning and Management (EDPM).

1.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this study are to answer the following questions:

1. Does students' writing reflect instructors' expectations of good academic papers?
2. Does the students' awareness of what constitute good academic writing approximate their instructors' expectations?
3. Do instructors help students meet their writing requirements and expectations?
4. To what extent do instructors actually look beyond content to language errors in students' writing? In other words, do instructors tolerate language errors?
5. What is the order of the seriousness of the problems in students' writing, if any, in terms of content, writing skills, and language as noticed by the instructors and experienced by the students?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A study which attempts to investigate subject area instructors and students' academic writing experiences/practices, awareness and expectations is hoped and expected to provide some insights which have some pedagogical implications. Accordingly, this study will contribute significant information in the following areas:

It will provide some insights in an attempt to establish firmer instructional priorities in the teaching of writing for academic purposes. Also, it will pave the way to link ELT and subject matter instructors to discuss issues related to students' writing. Moreover, the findings will contribute some information for subject area teachers to make informed decisions in their assistance and grading of students writing. Finally, since researchers

on the teaching of writing in the Ethiopian context have been quite limited, this study might stimulate further investigations in the area.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to 3rd and 4th year students in four departments and those instructors who have been teaching at this level. The researcher confined his study to this specific group, because it was felt that this would give him opportunity to investigate the issues under study in details.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis has five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which states the problems, objectives, significance of the study and scope of the research. The second chapter deals with literature review that is pertinent to the research. The third chapter of the thesis discusses the research design, the subjects, instruments and procedures of collecting data for the study. The fourth chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the data gathered in light of the research questions. The fifth chapter summarizes the main results of the findings, draws conclusion, presents recommendation and points out further research insights based on the present study. The final part presents bibliography and appendices that have been used as sources, supplements and tools for research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Basic Components in Writing

As many scholars in the area of writing argue, the issue of writing theory development should conform to some basic components and the dynamic relationships among them (Jhons 1990; Ede 1992; Kroll 1990; Berlin 1982, 1987, 1988). These authorities also believe that all approaches to writing must consider the following basic elements: The writer**,** as a person who must discover something to convey; the reader, with whom the writer would like to communicate; the written discourse **(**text) that makes this communication possible; and the language, which can be influenced by or influences the other components. In the literature of writing theories, and teaching writing, these basic components have remained the organizing principles.

In the discussions that follow, this paper tries to summarize how these basic components are viewed by different scholars who advocate different approaches to writing theories development and teaching writing. Also, based on the discussions, an attempt will be made to see the relevance, and implications of each approach in developing academic writing skills and strategies which are the main concern of the paper.

2.2 The Different Approaches to Writing and Their Views of the Basic Components in Writing

2.2.1 Controlled or Guided Writing

In essence, controlled writing does not take writing as a major skill to be developed (Rivers, 1968) and thus considered as a service activity rather than as an end in itself. The writer, in this approach is expected to be a manipulator of previously learned language structures. The reader plays the role of an editor or a proofreader, not especially interested in quality of ideas but primarily concerned with formal linguistic features. The text becomes a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items: a vehicle for language practice. There is negligible concerns for audience and unlikely to help writers develop academic writing competence (Silva, 1990)

As can be seen from the nature of this approach to writing, it is the opinion of this researcher that students who have been through this tradition are unlikely to become competent academic writers. As the case may also hold true for most students in Ethiopian context, those who come to colleges and universities through this tradition should not be expected to perform higher level academic writing

2.2.2 Current-Traditional Rhetoric

As for Silva (1990), the mid-sixties brought an increasing understanding of ESL students' needs for providing extended written discourse. As a result, the purpose of writing in ESL context changed and became the logical construction and arrangement of written discourse. In this tradition, one goal of writing was the development of

paragraph. In this regard, attention was given to various options for its development (illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, classification, definition, and so on) The other important focus was essay development Addressed here was also larger structural entities: introduction, body, and conclusion as well as organizational patterns or modes of writing like description, exposition, and argumentation (Silva, 1990).

From the perspective of current-traditional rhetoric, writing is basically a matter of fitting into prescribed patterns. In this regard, a writer is expected to be skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns. A text is a collection of increasingly complex discourse structures (sentence, paragraph, sections etc). According to Silva (1990), Horowitz (1986), and Kroll (1990) the implicit context for writing in this approach is an academic one.

Though the current-traditional rhetoric has been regularly and vigorously attacked by advocates of other theories of writing (e.g Flower 1982; Raimes 1987), its influence is clearly reflected in academic writing context. For example, instructors' writing tasks or questions dominantly employ active verbs and key terms, like, illustrate, exemplify, compare and contrast, define etc, which specify the options of development of the writing. Therefore, in academic writing context where instructors' expectations and requirements tend to depend on the specific writing tasks given, the relevance of this approach seems to be paramount to consider.

2.2.3 The Expressionist View

The expressionists, under the process paradigm, emphasize writing as a solitary activity and as an opportunity to explore one's inner feelings (Silva, 1990; Connor, 1996; Elbow, 1981). According to this approach, writers are not supposed to interact with the rest of the world through their writing; instead, through their writing, they are expected to learn about themselves. Writing is thus seen as a creative set of behavior in which the writer is the center of attention engaged in the discovery of meaning (Berlin, 1988).

For the expressionists, who contend that writing is an individual act, it is the competent writer who establishes purpose, meaning, and form (Nystrand, 1986). This view of audience parallels Ede and Lunsford's (1984) concept of "audience invoked," in which the audience in the written discourse tends to be a construction of the writer, a created fiction.

Raimes (1991b) argues how an overemphasis on the writer's role at the expense of other components has given rise to unbalanced "therapist" stance. Concerning this view, Raimes writes that the college writings that emphasize inner feelings usually are using that for example, for language production purpose, not for teaching academic writing.

Thus, this approach as can be seen from the discussion above, has less relevance with writing in academic context, in which the purpose of writing is to demonstrate subject matter knowledge with expected content and form. In other words, this approach may

not work in academic writing situation where students write not because they are inspired but rather they are required; not because they want to but they have to.

2.2.4 The Cognitivist Approach

The cognitive process approach has had more effect upon ESL research. In response to some of the criticisms against the product paradigm, the ESL field has begun to emphasize on cognitive process of writing. This approach is based on the research of composition specialists who have drawn on the theories of cognitive psychologists and psycholinguists to explore the mental procedures writers use to communicate ideas (Flower and Hymes,1977; Lay, 1982; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982, 1983). The purpose is to teach students systematic thinking and writing skills so that they can use their own composing strategies effectively to explore ideas. For this more influential group in the process paradigm, that revolutionized teaching in the 1970's and 1980's, the writer is viewed as originator of written text. The process through which the writer goes to create and produce discourse is also the most important component in the theory (Johns,1990). Though the focus of this approach is the writer's cognitive structures, and the process through which the writer goes to create text, understanding how a sense of audience is developed in the writer's mind is also a major concern.

The cognitive process can be admired for its emphasis on writing as a learning process and for its development of useful, teachable skills as can be seen from the above discussions. However, many scholars in the area of writing pose an important question

about it: Does the cognitive process approach realistically prepare students for the real academic world?

In response to this question, several scholars agree that the approach fails to adequately address some central issues in EFL and ESL writing. In this regard, Jhons (1986:251) argues, “We may be doing our students a disservice by strictly adhering to all tenets of this approach, for writing must be examined in light of the tasks which students are required to perform.” The reason why this approach is unrealistic for Jhons is that the process approach requires two conditions for students writing: time to plan and revise and student-generated meaning and form. However, she argues that time for revision may not be available for students writing in timed academic examinations. And the second condition, that is, student-generated meaning and form, is also contradictory to the writing requirements in most academic situation in which “most writing for academic classes is in response to a specific assignment or prompt (Johns,1986:253).

Another strong critic who poses a question whether this approach prepares students for academic work is Horowitz (1986a). Horowitz argues that, by overemphasizing the significance of the individual student’s psychological functioning, the approach neglects the reality of academia. He stresses that the approach fails to realistically prepare students for the real academic world. He goes on to argue that a process orientation ignores certain types of important academic writing tasks, particularly essay examinations. Thus, Horowitz writes that a process-oriented approach “gives students a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated.” (1986a:143). In essence,

he asserts that this approach neglects the socio-cultural context, that is, the realities of academia that in effect, the process approach operates in a socio-cultural vacuum.

A further criticism is that scholars like Shaughnessy (1977), Bizzell (1982), and Rose (1985) in general agree that this approach does not prepare students to grapple with the challenges of academic life but rather postpones their confrontation with the complex linguistic and rhetorical expectations of the academia.

In general, the scholars who criticize the cognitive process-orientation above tend to agree that writing in academic context should aim towards creating the conditions under which actual academic writing is performed. These conditions, as can be seen from their arguments, include real academic time constraints; students working on their own specialized subjects; students focusing on the expectations of a respective readership; and presentation of a text in an acceptable, discipline specific form.

In line with the process-approach as discussed above, the writer of this paper has the opinion that though the attempt to introduce this approach in Ethiopian context, as it has been tried in ELT courses in AAU, is admirable, its relevance and limitations in preparing the students to meet their subject area writing requirements should be examined carefully.

2.2.5 The Social Constructionist View

The 1970s have been said to be the decade that discovered the process approach and the 1980s the decade that discovered the role of social context in composing (Nystrand, 1986). In the 1980s, researchers turned to examining writers and writing in particular settings, what Witte (1983) calls “situated writing.”

In the constructionists’ literature, the writing product is considered a social act that can take place only within and for a specific context and audience (Coe, 1987). For the proponents of the social constructionist views, therefore, the language and form of a text stem from the community for which it is written. This is because for them, reality, knowledge, thought, facts, and texts are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers (Bruffee, 1986). In this regard, the social constructionists are also most closely allied to Ede and Lunsford’s (1984:156) concept of ”audience addressed,” in which ”knowledge of audience’s attitudes, beliefs, and expectations are not only possible but also essential.”

From the social constructionists perspective, therefore, knowledge, language, and the nature of discourse are determined for writers by the discourse community for whom they produce texts.

Also, as those authorities who hold the social constructionist view acknowledge, becoming an accepted member of an academic discourse community presents particular problems for ESL and EFL students.

As a result, when writers, like most ESL or EFL students, have outsider status, as Bizzell (1987) argues, the reader has the power to accept or reject writing as coherent, as consistent with the conventions of the target discourse community for they set the entire agenda and have the final word on grading papers.

As can be understood from this approach to writing, the success of students in their university studies largely depends on their understanding of the conventions of academic discourse, and the relationship between discourse community and knowledge. This further implies that students need critical training and orientations about their instructors' expectations. However, in academic situation where instructors' expectations are clearly implicit and students have no opportunity to interact with their instructors, students are likely to face difficulty in meeting the standards and the requirements in writing.

2.2.6 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

English for Academic Purposes involve a primary focus on academic discourse genres and the nature of academic writing tasks, to help students socialize into the academic context. Thus as to Horowitz (1886:789), EAP "ensures that student writing falls within…the range…of acceptable writing behaviors dictated by the academic community." Similarly, Silva (1990) argues that EAP aims at creating the conditions under which actual university writing tasks are done and involves the close examinations and analysis of academic discourse formats and writing task specifications.

Therefore from EAP orientation, writing is the production of prose that will be acceptable in academic institution, and learning to write is part of becoming socialized to the academic community- finding out what is expected and trying to approximate it (Silva 1990). The writer, should thus be pragmatic and well oriented primarily toward meeting the standards and requirements to succeed in the academia. The reader is to borrow Bizell's (1982) idea a "seasoned" member of the academic community who has developed schemata for academic discourse and clear and stable views of what is appropriate in terms of language, form, and content. The text is a more or less conventional response to a particular task type that falls into a recognizable genre.

As can be understood from the discussions above, EAP is provided for students to make them become competent writers in their specific fields. However, the reality is that such opportunity may not be provided thoroughly for some university students, as the case may be true in AAU at least so far (Geremew, 1999). Hence, students who directly move from general writing courses to their respective departments, as the case seems to be true for students in Addis Ababa University, are likely to experience or face writing problems to meet their instructors' expectations unless special help is provided by the subject instructors themselves.

2.3 The Distinct Nature of L2 Writing

To make intelligent decisions, teachers need to have a clear understanding of the unique nature of L2 writing, of how and to what extent it differs from L1 writing(Silva, 1993). Researchers, to date, reported empirical findings comparing L1 and L2 in two

main categories: composing process and written text features. In this regard, Silva (1993) suggests that there is a need to describe the unique nature of L2 writing, to look into, for example, the social, cultural, educational, and linguistic sources of the problems.

Regarding composing processes, a number of studies(Chelala, 1981; Krapels, 1990; Schiller, 1989) show in general ways that in composing processes (planning, transcribing, and reviewing), L2 writers did less effective, at global and local levels. Also producing written text was found more laborious, less fluent, and less productive. It was reported that L2 writers exhibited more difficulty with vocabulary(Ardnt, 1987;Dennett, 1985; Krapels, 1990). Furthermore, findings indicated that, in L2 writing, pauses were more frequent(Hall,1990) and consumed more time.

In responses to essay questions, Hirokawa, (1986) reported that the L2 writers used more undefined terms, were less able to paraphrase concepts and less cognizant of expected essay answer forms. They also had more difficulty identifying the topic in the examination questions, and an appropriate discourse function for framing an answer.

In general, the findings of the research discussed above make clear that L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically difficult in important ways. Thus, these findings have important implications for assessment, and instructional procedures..

First, these findings cast doubt on the reasonableness of high expectations instructors hold for L2 writers and implies that instructors should not hold expectations that cannot reasonably be met by. This further suggests a need for fair evaluation criteria for L2 writing. Secondly, the findings suggest that L2 writers, because they have special needs, should not be forced in what Silva (1993) calls “in sink-or-swim fashion” into academic writing tasks. Thirdly, in most general terms, L2 writers may need, as Raimes (1985) suggests “more of everything.”

In conclusion, the findings strongly suggest that the unique nature of L2writing should be acknowledged and addressed by those who deal with L2 writers if these writers are to be treated fairly, taught effectively, and thus given chance to succeed in their writing related to academic endeavors. In particular, it is likely that subject instructors need to have more time and attention to strategic, rhetoric, and linguistic concerns of these writers so as to make actual writing more manageable.

2.4 Some Factors Influencing Students’ Performance in Writing

2.4.1 Instructors’ Expectations

The understanding of written communication has progressed markedly and now there is general agreement that what the reader understands from a text is dependent not only on what is contained in the text but also on his or her organized knowledge of the topic (Kusel 1986). This prior knowledge is organized into frames known as schemata, and there is substantial experimental evidence to support claims that readers rely substantially upon them in understanding what they read (Carell 1983, 1984). Carell, the pioneer researcher in this area, finds that prior knowledge of text organization known as

formal schemata influences understanding of a text. According to her, readers develop expectations about the structuring of text at every level from the morphological to the rhetorical and use these expectations to assist in the processing of new texts. As a result, if a text departs in some way from the conventional expectations, it becomes harder to understand. This is because reader's expectations of text organization are not met. Text organization from this stand point, contributes to the perceived coherence of a text; what Jhons (1986) calls "reader-considerate coherence."

Expanding this idea to include expectations of a discourse community in writing, according to the social constructionist point of view, the idea would include expectations concerning elements such as format, rhetorical patterns, language, and conventions of paragraphing etc. In this regard, the formal schemata of professors constitute external constraints that may be imposed upon students' expected requirements of a particular writing.

From this point of argument, therefore, when students anticipate and become aware of the expectations of their instructors, they naturally think of and approach their writing strategically. However, understanding such issues may require considerable knowledge not only of the content and form of writing, but also the roles of writers and readers in a particular writing situation. When students join new community of readers, as they do when they enter their fields of study, they may find it difficult to understand the demands of writing they are required to meet. In fact, they may not realize that their writing should be in response to the writing prompts and instructors' expectations unless

instructors make some efforts to help students become aware of how their instructors' expectations affect what they write.

2.4.2 Teachers' Views of Language

As mentioned earlier, in reality instructors are the only audience (readers) for whom students write. As a result, what the teachers consider to be appropriate language of their subjects and appropriate ways of using it may affect students' performance in writing. Basically, in a situation where English is a second or a foreign language for the students, it seems fair to say that writing academic papers may be particularly difficult (Kroll, 1990). This is because students must learn to create written products that demonstrate mastery over target language proficiency and writing skills which become what Silva (1990) calls a "Herculean task" given the possibilities for errors.

This being the case, instructors' tolerance of the deficiency of language in the writing of students would be very decisive for students to survive in their studies. Put it in a different way, the extent to which instructors show mark of tolerance in language errors when evaluating students' performance in writing would help students pursue their studies.

In fact, researchers have much concern about this issue and carried out studies to explore faculty reactions or judgments to written errors by ESL students (Vann, Meyer, and Lorenz, 1984; Santos, 1988 etc). Of those who made such research, Santos' (1988) study is worth considering. Santos conducted a research to find out different

subject area professors' reactions to none-native speakers' writing. After conducting the study, Santos came to understand that the professors were willing to tolerate the deficiency of language in the writing of those none-native speakers. She then concluded that professors' judgments of content and language independently may be a measure of their tolerance. The professors come to accept, if not appreciate, the fact that the writing of students would contain numerous errors of language and that it would only be punitive and probably futile, to downgrade heavily for them.

In comparing the tolerance of errors by native speakers and nonnative speakers' judgment, Santos and others also came to the conclusion that the native speakers' judgments of errors is found less serious than the none-native speakers. The interpretation made is that none-native speakers have attained high level of proficiency in English through high investment of effort in the language therefore they depend greatly on their explicit knowledge of prescriptive grammar when judging students writing (Santos, 1988; Kobayoshi, 1992).

When an attempt was made to decide on which aspects of errors instructors tend to be more serious or lenient, the researchers found that lexical error has been considered the most serious one (Santos, 1988; Khalil, 1996). The reason they forwarded for this is that such language error has an effect directly on content and the meaning is very likely to be obscured.

In conclusion, though research findings show that a lack of competence in writing in English results more from the lack of composing skills than from the lack of linguistic competence, (Zamel, 1982; Raimes,1985a), L2 difficulty (Bizzill, 1982), and instructors' views of language (Santos,1988; Khalil,1996) have also remarkable influence on students' writing performance, especially in examination situation, where the multiplicity of skills involved with constraints of time become very difficult to control and overcome language errors.

2.4.3 Time Constraints

The relationship between time and the level of performance of students in writing is an issue of discussion by several scholars. Collins and Getner (1980) observed that much of the difficulty of writing stems from a number of constraints that must be satisfied and coordinated at various "structural levels", that is, overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure and word structure. They argue that the attempt to coordinate all these requirements is a staggering job, thus the amount of time allotted to producing a writing might affect the level of mastery exhibited on any or all of the levels mentioned above.

Time may also be a key factor in producing a text with full control over such discourse features as organization and coherence. In addition, many students and teachers feel that writing under time pressure is a very unnatural situation and perhaps can not lead them to produce papers that are truly representative of their capabilities.

In response to this argument, Kroll (1990) carried out a research to measure the effects of time on writing performance. In spite of the beliefs that time constraint affects level of writing performance, her finding shows that additional time does not appear to lead to a sufficiently improved writing. She then concluded that without any mental formulations of what constitutes good writing or an awareness of the steps involved in producing it, and without students knowing how to proceed in the task of writing, time could not buy them anything.

Whatever the argument may be, however, time remains to be an important factor in influencing students' performance in writing. What is important is that students need a better understanding of the whole process of working on a piece of writing to make the time spent more productive and to give adequate time to the writing tasks.

2.5 Skills of Prompt Deconstruction in Writing: A key to Meet Writing Expectations

Horowitz states, "What one does when one writes depends on what one is given to begin with" (1986:453). Regardless of the fields and course types, in the academic world, students are frequently evaluated on the basis of writing products they produce in response to various writing prompts in various circumstances. In academic writing situation, the stimulus for the students to respond to known as a prompt (question) - is a key variable of writing (hamp-Lyons, 1987). Since students, as Ede (1992) notices, especially in academic situation write not because they are inspired, rather because they are required, the students should understand that writing takes place in a context

that they should draw upon and adhere to. This is because when teachers give questions or prompts to write on, they give students a task to do and the students are cued into the task by the instructors' task words: certain key words denote certain tasks. For these task words, there are the tasks the students are expected to do within their papers. As a result, writing prompts do not allow students much freedom: the wording of the directions in which the paper is to be written limit the students' choice.

Students, therefore, cannot ignore the contents, forms and conventions their instructors expect of them to follow and fulfill. In other words, they need to write in the context of specific situation with its own unique demands and opportunities. Obviously, they can neither be free to write nor rely on formulas or blind luck when they are required to write.

In this regard Rhodes (1993) points out that when students have good strategies about prompt deconstruction and become more reader considerate, their contents improve and their writing fluency increases. On the other hand, if students do not have such skills in understanding writing prompts, as Ede (1992) emphasizes, students may gather all evidence in the world and still fail to produce effective writing in response to the writing assignments or tasks.

And as some researchers found out, usually, students may not conceptualize the key writing task words, due to lack of awareness or understanding that their writing contents and forms are specified by the prompts provided. In line with this tendency, Winterowd (1989) observed that the most deadly pitfall in writing is wandering, not understanding

prompts, and lack of focus, direction and reader expectations from the writing prompts. Similarly, Flower, et al (1990) noticed that students reacted to the same writing assignments in strikingly different ways. These researchers attributed this phenomenon to the students' awareness, or lack of awareness of the conventions of academic discourse and the instructors' expectations, which students are required to understand from the questions.

Understanding such writing prompts and be able to determine appropriate content and form from the given prompt, however require considerable practices and training. Thus, when students join a new community of writers and readers, as they do when entering their field of studies, they may find it difficult to understand the demands of writing they are required from the prompts given. In fact, they may not realize that their writing should be in response to the writing prompts which determine instructors' expectations unless subject area instructors help students begin their writing with a sense of direction, purpose and expectation.

2.6 The Nature and Types of Writing Assigned in Academic Writing

Writing assignments in subject area courses, as examined by several researchers, are not open ended but rather quite detailed in specifying purpose, form, procedures, and contents (Currie, 1993; Horowitz, 1986; Marsella, Hilgers and McLaren, 1992).

In this regard, Horowitz (1996) studied in detail about the actual academic writing assignments, handouts and essay examinations given to students. The most striking

feature he identified was the controlled nature of much of the writing called for. He found out that there are clear instructions for how to deal with the assignments, how a writer should move from understanding the detailed requirements of a prompt to actually putting words on paper. Also content and organization are specific and there is a need to a high degree of control over the writing.

Horowitz also examined, by way of comparing and contrasting two writing tasks: controlled (academic task) versus free writing (personal writing) to see how they differ in terms of thesis statement, coherence, source of prepositional material and lexical constraints.

For the controlled (academic) writing task, the background for this task: the class readings and lectures in conjunction with the question itself make the thesis statement of the writing task transparent. Regarding coherence, the juxtaposition of different parts of the text (question and answer together) is directly and mechanically warranted because the audience's expectations are specified. And because of the prompt (question), the audience's demands are clear. For each question, there are also severe lexical constraints, created by the shared background of the audience and the writer as well as the need to respond appropriately to the prompts.

Thus the nature of academic writing is to emphasize recognition and reorganization of data and to de-emphasize invention of form and personal discovery. Generally

speaking, the academic writer's task is not to create personal meaning but to find, organize and present data according to the explicit instruction given.

However, as both Johns (1985b, 1986) and Swales (1982) provide evidence, foreign students often lack the ability to reorganize data in a way, which is appropriate to the writing task at hand. Therefore, to prepare students for university courses, it is important to have information about the nature and types of writing tasks actually required across academic disciplines and about instructors' purposes in assigning these tasks (Shih, 1986). To date, several academic writing skills and relative frequencies of writing tasks in various academic fields have been reported at undergraduate and graduate levels.

For example, Behrens (1978), analyzing survey returns from 128 faculties in 18 academic disciplines has found that essays were the most frequent types of papers assigned in undergraduate humanities and social science courses. Of the undergraduate courses surveyed, 85% had some kind of final examination. Likewise, Eblem (1985) received completed questionnaires from 266 faculties in five academic divisions at the University of Northern Iowa. The most frequently required form of writing across fields was, by far the essay test showing that writing as a mode of testing was stressed.

To find out what students were asked to write in university classes, Rose (1985) collected and analyzed 445 essays and take-home examination questions and paper topics from 17 departments at the University of California, Los Angeles. According to

this finding, most questions and topics required: (a) exposition and academic argument, (b) synthesis of information from lectures and readings rather than ideas from personal experiences, and (c) writing which fits the philosophical and methodological assumptions of specific academic disciplines. Rose (1983:111)then writes "In most college courses, students are less often asked to do independent thinking than they are required to work with assigned sources: textbooks, lecture notes, and outside reading." A research carried out by Geremew (1999) in Ethiopian context also shows that essay exams are common and given across departments at AAU.

The studies cited above indicate that many types of writing tasks are assigned in university courses and most of these tasks are controlled types which specify the procedures and the requirements. Also, writing is often required as a mode of demonstrating knowledge (e.g. in essay exams). Moreover, expository and argumentative types of writing are common.

As a result of these specific nature and types of writing, generic preparation for these tasks is difficult, if not impossible, for the students to accomplish their writing requirements (Shih, 1986). In this regard, Horowitz (1986) suggests that writing teachers can create tasks, which simulate the essential characteristics of real life university writing assignments. Besides, subject area instructors should help students develop strategies and skills to handle such tasks. However, in learning conditions where there is no either simulation of such tasks or help from subject instructors, it is likely that students face writing problems.

2.7. The Roles of Subject Area Instructors in Orienting Students with Course-Related Writing

2.7.1 The Rationale

It is obvious that students progress along a continuum from general writing skills in English to academic writing skills in their disciplines. As the students become more engrossed in writing within their discipline, however, the responsibility for linguistic and writing development must pass in turn from the general language teachers to the subject teachers. As scholars argue, this progression of responsibility rests upon the inevitable consequence of the specialized nature of texts in academic subject areas. In this regard, Kusel (1993) and Spack (1988) underscore that it is a mistake to believe that language teachers can take students far into the complexities of language use and writing demands in their disciplines and that subject teachers remain peripheral in this task. In a similar view, Horowitz 1986:789) writes:

> There is a specified range of acceptable writing behavior dictated not by the individual but by the academic community, and it is the primary responsibility of instructors (subject area instructors) to do everything in their power to ensure that students writing falls within this range.

On top of these arguments, many writing-across-the-curriculum programs now in existence, elsewhere, place some responsibility for writing instruction with instructors in all academic disciplines. A basic premise for this tendency is that “writing skills must be practiced and reinforced throughout the curriculum; otherwise they will atrophy, no matter how well they were taught in the beginning” (Griffin, 1985:402). After all, subject

teachers are particularly well placed to assist students in the sort of practical tasks for they are the audiences who ultimately can inform the students of the degree and nature of the success of their writing (Kusel, 1993).

From the arguments forwarded by the scholars mentioned above, we understand that the potential contributions of subject matter instructors in assisting students to develop specific skills of academic writing are indispensable. Therefore, instructors must be willing to spend time on orientations that promote students' good academic writing skills, by informing students how writing is assigned, prepared for, and reacted to in real academic courses.

2.7.2 Some Suggested Ways

As a solution, subject area instructors can turn to the writing-across-the-curriculum literature to seek information about how writing tasks can be formulated and sequenced; how students can be prepared for writing; and how to respond to the content of student writing (Shih, 1993). Moreover, through channels such as workshops, and seminars on writing, subject-area instructors will learn more about writing: what it is; how it can be done; how it can promote learning; and how it can be effectively assigned, guided, and evaluated.

In fact, helping students develop academic writing skills could be done in such a way that writing could be linked to concurrent study of specific subject matter. Important skills needed to handle the material must be addressed, so that the writing will not be

merely a “memory-dump” (Flower,1985: 66), writer-based, rote reciting of information but a coherent academic paper directly answering the question (Jacobs, 1984); a coherent one instead of mere regurgitation of information. Certainly, students need to become thoroughly familiar with the basic schemata for processing and communicating information in academic writing.

More importantly in this regard, is what Shih (1986:631) calls “*acculturation to academic life*” in which students are oriented to university writing requirements, academic skills, and are guided to analyze texts and get insights into compositional skills, and what Swales (1996:460) calls “rhetorical-consciousness.”

So far in this unit an attempt has been made to draw together key aspects of the growing literature in the area of writing. In the following chapters, an attempt will be made to see the relevance of these theories, findings and arguments in the context of Ethiopian, particularly in Addis Ababa University. To this end, the method of collecting and analyzing data will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects of the study

The purpose of this study, as stated in chapter one, is to investigate students' academic writing in response to subject area instructors' expectations in four selected departments of Addis Ababa University, namely, Law, Sociology and Social Anthropology (SOSA), History and Educational Planning and Management (EDPM). These departments were selected for the research purpose on two grounds. The first reason is that since these departments are under social sciences, writings are the most frequently assigned papers, particularly, expository and argumentative types of writing (Behrens, 1978; Rose, 1983; Scarcella, 1984, Geremew, 1999). Secondly, the researcher was convinced that some instructors in these departments would cooperate with him in an attempt to collect data from the instructors.

A total of 32 instructors and 60 students in the four departments under study were considered for the study. The instructors who received copies of the instruments were those who were involved in actual teaching of 3rd and 4th year students at the time when the research was conducted. However, no sampling was carried out in obtaining the data, as it was difficult for the researcher to approach the entire instructors (population) in the departments. Therefore, the instructors were considered and selected primarily on their willingness to participate in the study project. However, an attempt was made to consider more experienced instructors and to take equal number from each department.

Moreover, 60 students sampled from third and fourth year in the selected departments were subjects for the study.

3.2 The Research Methods

The data required for the study were collected from subject area instructors and students of the four selected departments, using two methods of information gathering: (a) questionnaire and (b) interview. These research tools were used in the study because the researcher felt that these research instruments would be more effective in generating data from the subjects about their writing experiences/practices, problems, awareness, requirements and expectations**.** To this effect, two sets of questionnaire and two sets of interview were designed and administered to the instructors and their students.

3.2.1 Questionnaire for Instructors

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to subject area instructors who were involved in giving courses to third and fourth year students of the selected departments. In line with the objectives of the study, the purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information about

a. instructors' judgment of students' success in meeting the expectations of good academic writing,
b. whether the instructors generally noticed problems in their students' papers and,
c. the order of the seriousness of the problems, if any, in the writing of the students as noticed by the instructors in terms of content, writing skills and language.

The ideas used in the questionnaire were drawn mainly from ideas obtained from some instructors under study through interviews, and related studies (Geremew, 1999; Ede, 1992) although the questionnaire itself was designed by the present researcher in line with the aim of the study

The questionnaire has three main categories and four parts with thirty two items all together. Part I was simply about personal information. Part II was intended to seek for information about the success of students' writing in meeting some ingredients of good academic papers (items 1-18). Part III was about the problems or difficulties students faced and how serious the problems were, when judged by instructors (items19-29) and part IV was about the order of the problems (items 30-32) when they were seen in terms of three broad but related elements, namely in terms of content, writing skill and language proficiency.

The respondents

The questionnaire was distributed to a total of 32 instructors in the four departments under study.

The instructors who received copies of the questionnaire were those who were involved in actual teaching of 3rd and 4th year students at the time when the questionnaire was administered. Table 1 below gives the breakdown of the number of instructors who received copies of the questionnaire and those who filled it in and returned

Department	Received	Returned
LAW	8	7
SOSA	8	8
EDPM	8	7
HISTORY	8	8

Table 1: Breakdown of the number of instructors who received and returned after filling in copies of the questionnaire.

As the figure shows, 30 of the instructors, which means 93.7 % completed and returned the questionnaire. Regarding the academic rank of the respondents, there were 10 lecturers, 12 assistant professors, 7 associate professors and 1 professor. 11 of the instructors had teaching experience of 1 to 9 years, 6 had 10 to 19 years and 13 taught for over 20 years.

3.2.2 Questionnaire for Students

A student questionnaire consisting of 19 items was designed and distributed to 60 students who were randomly selected from third and forth year in the selected departments and 58 copies were filled in and returned. Table 2 below gives the

breakdown of the number of students who received copies of the questionnaire and those who filled it in and returned.

	Received		Returned		
Department	3rd year	4th year	3rd year	4th year	Total
LAW	7	8	7	8	15
SOSA	7	8	6	8	14
EDPM	7	8	6	8	14
HISTORY	7	8	7	8	15

Table 2: Breakdown of the number of students who received and returned after filling in copies of the questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was basically aimed at investigating students' reactions to writing regarding

a. their awareness of features of good academic papers instructors expect from their writing,
b. the problems they have, if any in writing and causes of the problems as perceived by them, and
c. the order of the seriousness of the problems, if any, in their writing as they experienced them in terms of content, writing skills and language.

The student questionnaire had three categories: Items 1-5 were linked with their judgment of the importance of the items/skills provided to be successful writers or to score good grades. Items 6-13 were about problems in writing and their judgments of them as problems. Items 14- 16 are about the order of the seriousness of the problems, if any, in their writing as experienced by them in terms of content, writing skill, and

language proficiency. The last three open-ended items 17-1 9 are to find out students' general awareness of academic writing qualities, problem areas and sources of the problems.

3.2.3. Interview for Instructors

Instructors who were volunteers to take part in the interview were approached from each department (preferably more experienced) and asked to give their views in interview sessions held with the researcher. The interviews were held with the aim to

a. determine the kind of writing qualities that instructors need their students to produce,
b. identify the types of writing instructors require their students to produce, and their expectations from each type,
c. obtain information whether instructors feel responsible for assisting students to meet their expectations,
d. check their degree of tolerance of language errors in students' writing,
e. identify the major weaknesses instructors have noticed in their students' writing, and
f. obtain the instructors' views of the order of the seriousness of the problems of students' writing in terms of content, writing skill, and language as noticed by them.

To obtain the required information in this regard, semi-structured questions were designed and a total of 8 instructors from the four departments, two from each, took part in the interview.

3.2.4 Interview for Students

To further elicit and crosscheck information from students, interviews were conducted. To obtain the required information in this regard, semi-structured questions were designed. Accordingly, a total of 8 students from the four departments, two from each, took part in the interview sessions.

In general, after the questionnaire and the interview were designed, the pre-testing of the instruments was carried out to see whether the items could generate the expected data or not, and based on the information obtained, the instruments were refined further and distributed to the subjects.

3.3 Procedures for Data Analysis

As can be seen from the preceding discussions, two techniques were used in obtaining data for the study. This means that the data vary according to the method employed. As a result, different procedures for analysis were employed to arrive at the required results.

The analysis of the data from the instructors' and students' questionnaire was carried out using descriptive statistics. These are mainly frequency counts and percentages. The results of the interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the data generated from the questionnaire and interview as discussed in chapter three. Accordingly, this chapter has four sections. In section one, the analysis of the instructors' questionnaire will be presented. Then students' questionnaire will be taken up and presented. The results of instructors' interview will be discussed in section three. Finally, section four will present the analysis of students' interview.

4.1 THE RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INSTRUCTORS

One source of data used for this study, as discussed in Chapter Three, was questionnaire for instructors. One purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information from instructors in the four departments under study to find out whether their students succeed in meeting their writing expectations. Also, the questionnaire was intended to find out the extent of students' problems in writing, if any, as well as the degree of the seriousness of the problems as perceived by the instructors in terms of content, writing skills and language proficiency.

4.1.1 Success of students in reflecting instructors' expectations

One of the questions that the instructors were asked in the questionnaire was to indicate the success of their students in meeting their expectations In this regard, instructors were asked to indicate how successful students were in meeting their writing

expectations. Here, the instructors were provided with a list of 18 items under three-sub-categories to indicate the extent to which students were able to meet each requirement. As pointed out earlier,(in Chapter Three) the different categories of skills or items listed in the questionnaire have been generally developed from features of good academic papers elicited from the instructors under study through interviews; from Ede's (1992) ingredients of good academic papers; and Geremew's (1999) findings of skills instructors considered important for students in writing academic papers.

A. Subject matter Knowledge

It is obvious that one major area of success in writing is having ideas to communicate to audience. This is particularly so in academic writing where good understanding and demonstrating of content is highly expected and the purpose of writing is mainly meant for. Following are three main items as to content knowledge of students, and instructors were asked to indicate the success of their students in fulfilling these qualities.

Items	Very Successful		Successful		Less Successful		Not Successful At all	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.Demonstrate good understanding of the subject matter	6	20	20	66.6	4	13	-	-
2.Have good originality of ideas and novelty of thoughts	-	-	6	20	18	60	6	20
3. Papers show adequate understanding and use of information from assigned sources	1	3.3	9	30	17	56.7	2	6.7

Table 3: Instructors' Responses Regarding Students' Success in Meeting Content Expectations

As can be seen from Table 3 above, instructors were asked to indicate how successful students were in meeting subject matter knowledge expectations. In response to the general understanding of the subject matter, the majority of the instructors felt that their students demonstrate good understanding. As can be seen from the Table, 26 out of 30 instructors (above 80%) responded that their students were very successful or successful in demonstrating good understanding of subject matter knowledge when writing. However, the instructors indicated that most of the students were less successful or not successful at all in having originality of ideas in their writing. As can be clearly seen from the table, 25 out of 30 instructors (about 80%) indicated that students were not successful in satisfying this quality. Also, the instructors indicated that the students were less successful in including ideas from assigned sources in their writing.

One possible reason for the students to tend to meet instructors' expectations in terms of content may be that, in most cases, when students write in academic context, they mainly depend on previous class lectures, discussions and assigned readings (Horowitz, 1986; Rose, 1983).Thus, though, scholars in the process paradigm (e.g., Flower, 1985; Zamel, 1982, 1983; Raimes, 1985) argue that writing is usually more difficult because ideas vanish when one sits to write, this may not be true in academic writing where ideas could be remembered from previous readings, and preparations for writing

Another important implication is that students' lack of originality of ideas could be due to their tendency to memorize facts as they were to be during readings and preparation for

writing from their exercise books and reading materials. For example, when the instructors were asked to indicate the problems of students' writing, the tendency to write memory dump type of writing was indicated as a serious problem (see Table 6 below). This view was also corroborated by one instructor who responded in the interview by arguing as to why students fail to have their own ideas in writing,

> Students come to colleges and universities, not even thinking about what they want or feel, but always told who said what and who argues in what manner … This has shuttered students not to let out their opinion, not to voice their argument, not to debate against established theories [SOSA 1]

B. Rhetorical skills.

The second sub-category of the items consists of skills related to writing abilities. In this regard, the purpose of the items is to check if the students meet the rhetorical expectations of instructors. 'Rhetorical skill' is understood here as those features of writing which include organization, transitions, coherence, conclusions and so on (Leki and Carson, 1994 cited in Geremew, 1999) and analyzing the wording of writing assignments to determine appropriate content and organizational pattern suited to the specific writing tasks and expectations (Ede,1992).

	Very Successful		Success-full		Less Successful		Not Successful	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%

4 Papers are focused to the questions, assignments or topics	2	7.1	20	71.4	6	21.4	-	-
5.Understand the wording of writing assignments and determine appropriate organizational pattern sited to the specific assignments.	1	3.6	14	50	13	46.4	-	-
6.The introduction forecasts the paper's organization	2	7.1	17	60.7	9	32.1		
7. Develop the main ideas in coherent manner in the body and complete the discussions in the conclusion	-	-	13	43.3	16	53.3	1	3.3
8.Papers have clear central ideas that relate directly to the assigned topics	3	10.	9	31	16	55.2	1	3.4
9. Organize their ideas into academic type of writing as required	2	6.7	7	23.3	20	66.7	1	3.3
10. Indicate relationships among ideas using a varied range of transitional devices	-	-	8	27.6	16	55.2	5	17.2
11. Each paragraph has one main idea clearly developed	1	3.4	10	34.5	11	37.9	7	24.1
12. Show systematic discussion, and consistent argument	-	-	6	21.4	20	71.4	2	7.1

Table 4: Instructors' Responses Regarding Students' Success in Meeting Rhetorical Expectations

As can be seen in Table 4 above, instructors were asked to give their opinions about points related to rhetorical skills. As can be seen from the Table, the instructors indicated that, in most cases, the students have been successful in understanding writing tasks, and instruction of assignments, at least when starting up their writing. Items 4, 5, and 6 deal with how students are able to respond to a given writing prompt, and as it is shown in this regard, for each item, at least above 60% of the instructors felt that the students were successful. Even though the students show good start up in response to the writing tasks, they have been less successful in developing their papers in a coherent and organized manner, however. As can be observed from the Table, Items 7-12, which are related to coherence, organization, paragraph development and the like, are rated as less successful.

Another important point that could be noticed from the Table is that many instructors, 20 out of 30, indicated that the students were less successful in organizing their ideas into academic type of writing as required (66.7%) and in showing systematic discussion and consistent arguments

(71.4). Furthermore, as Item 11. shows students were found less successful or not successful at all in developing a single idea in a separate paragraph. This is in agreement with one instructor's observation as he mentioned in the interview session "They try to write long paragraph, patching sentences together, and carrying several ideas in one paragraph rather than explaining a clear cut idea in a paragraph way." [Hist 1]

Students' tendency to wander from what they are asked to write on was also observed by one instructor who gave his observation during the interview session. "At times students start up with a very good statement, that is pertinent and relevant to the question asked, but end up in narrating stories that are, by any means not related to the original question asked."[SOSA1]

As is seen from the responses of the instructors as to the students' success in determining how appropriate discourse is organized and related in a given text type or according to the purpose of writing, the topic, and the nature of the task being carried out, students were generally found less successful.

C. Language

It is obvious that one quality that is important in writing is good command of the target language. In this regard, what the teachers consider appropriate language of their subjects and appropriate ways of using it may be part of their expectations and this definitely affects students' performance in writing. Therefore, the instructors were also asked to indicate how successful their students were in meeting their language expectations in terms of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, mechanics etc

	Very Successful		Successful		Less Successful		Not Successful at all	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
13. Write grammatically correct sentences	-	-	8	26.7	18	60	4	13.3
14. Use a wide range of vocabulary	-	-	4	13.3	20	66.7	6	20
15. Select effective, appropriate words and phrases	-	-	6	20	18	60	6	20
16. Papers are essentially free from mechanical errors	-	-	6	20.7	12	41.4	11	37.9
17. Detect and correct any violation of conventions of grammar, diction, style and mechanics	-	-	4	13.8	19	65.5	6	20.7
18. Write varied sentence types		-	3	3.3	23	76.7	4	13.3

Table 5: Instructors' Responses to Students' Language

As can be clearly seen from the Table, nearly all the instructors responded that their students were less successful in their language proficiency when writing. More than 18 out of 30 instructors indicated that the students were less successful for all items related to language. When we consider each language aspect, students were rated as less successful in using a wide range of vocabulary and writing varied sentence types by the majority of the instructors (66.7% and 76.7% respectively.). One observation that can be seen from the Table is that many of the instructors felt that the students were not

successful at all to write any sentence free from mechanical errors. Why the students fail to avoid such mechanical errors at this advanced level was also considered as something irritating and surprising by the instructors as they expressed their views in the interview session.

4.1.2 Students' problems in writing

The second main category of the instructors' questionnaire was concerned with finding out the degree of seriousness of the problems in students' writing as perceived or noticed by the instructors. To this end, instructors were asked to indicate how serious a specific writing problem was based on a list of possible writing problems provided to them in the questionnaire. The items included in this category are those writing problems observed to have appeared in students' papers by the instructors who were approached through interviews and other related findings as indicated earlier. The instructors indicated the level of the seriousness of the problems according to the scale given**.**. The purpose was to see how serious the problem is for each item as judged by the instructors who filled in the questionnaire.

	Very Serious		Serious		Not serious		Not A Problem	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
19. Failure to understand the questions or assignments for writing	-	-	10	34.9	14	48.3	5	17.2
20. Lack of understanding of the subject matter	-	-	9	30	12	40	9	30
21. Tendency to write memory dump types of papers	5	17.2	15	51.7	8	27.6	1	3.4
22. Lack of conceptual understanding of key terms in the writing assignments to determine content and form	4	13.8	10	34.5	13	44.8	2	6.9
23. Lack of clear linkage among the paragraphs	6	20.7	13	44.8	8	27.6	3	10.3
24. Low proficiency in English	11	36.7	15	50	4	13.3	-	-
25. Details are randomly put into papers with no focus on topic	3	10	14	46.6	9	30	4	13.3
26. Failure to present reasoned arguments and strong support	4	13.3	17	56.7	9	30	-	-
27. Failure to determine appropriate organizational pattern suited to the specific assignments	5	18.5	11	40.7	9	33.3	2	7.4
28. Tendency to use more undefined terms and words which they do not know the meanings clearly	3	10	13	43.3	8	26.7	6	20
29. Tendency to write long paragraphs, putting several ideas into them	12	40.3	13	43.3	3	10	2	6.7

Table 6: Instructors' Responses to Students' Problems in Writing

As can be understood from the Table above, understanding writing assignments and subject matter knowledge are not observed as serious problems of students by the majority of instructors. These two items are rated by more than 19 out of 30 instructors,(above 65%) as not serious or not a problem at all. These judgments of the instructors for items about failure to understand writing questions and lack of understanding of the subject matter as less serious problems tend to support their judgment of the students as successful on the same items (SeeTables3and 4).

Another observation that can be made from Table 6 is that students' tendency to write memory dump types of papers (Item 21) is considered by the majority of the instructors, 20 out of 30, as a very serious or serious problem. One possible implication of this might be that it could be due to this tendency of memorization that the students were judged by the instructors as less successful in their originality of ideas (Table 3, Item 2).

Furthermore, when we see items 23, 25 and 27, all deal with organization of ideas, many of the instructors indicated that the students have serious problems. This can be considered as an indication that the students have problems in organizing ideas as required since the instructors rated the students as less successful for similar items(table 4, Items 4-12)

Low proficiency in English and tendency to write long paragraphs by putting several ideas into them are indicated as the two most serious problems as 26 and 25 of the 30 instructors rated them as very serious or serious problems respectively. Still these could be taken as an indication that the students have failed to meet language and rhetorical expectations of the instructors as items related to organization were also rated by the majority of the instructors as less successful (See Table 4)

4.1.3 Seriousness of problems in terms of content, writing skill and language

One of the objectives of the study as stated in Chapter One is to see the degree of the seriousness of the students' problems in writing of, if any, as noticed by the instructors in students' writing in terms of content, writing skill and English language proficiency. To this end, the instructors were asked to show how serious the problems were as they observed them, from most serious to least serious one. The Table below shows their seriousness in this regard.

	Degree of Seriousness of problem							
	V. Serious		Serious		Not Serious		Not a problem at all	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
30. Knowledge of Subject matter	-	-	2	6.7	28	93.3	-	-
31. Writing Skills	3	10	26	86.7	1	3.3	-	-
32.English language proficiency	25	83.3	3	10	2	s6.7	-	-

Table 7: Seriousness of Problems in Students' Writing in terms of content, writing skill and language

As clearly seen from the Table, the instructors indicated the items in such a way that English language proficiency stood first as a problem. In other words, 25 instructors, that is, 83.3% indicated that it is a very serious problem as compared to content information and writing skill. Next to language, writing skill is also indicated as a serious problem by the overwhelming majority of the instructors- 86.7%. Knowledge of subject matter has been judged as the least serious problem (93.3%) among the three related elements compared. This result was also supported by the views of instructors who took part in the interview.

It would be unexpected and may be surprising when language appears to be a more serious problem than writing skills or content knowledge for those students who are at this advanced level (3rd and 4th year). In this regard, though research findings show that problems in writing result more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence (Zamel,1982; Raimes,1985a), the findings here tend to support Bezzill's (1982) idea that linguistic barrier is more a problem for L2 writers, even at advanced levels.

4.2. Analysis of students' Questionnaire

Student questionnaire, as discussed in Chapter Three, was one of the data gathering tools for this research. The main purpose of gathering information from the students was to see their understanding (awareness) of academic papers in line with their instructors' expectations. In other words, it was to check how far they understood and were aware of the features of good academic papers as seen from the view point of their instructors' expectations.

4.2.1 Skills/knowledge students felt important to be successful writers (

Item	Very Important		Important		Of little importance		Not important at all	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1 Vocabulary knowledge	31	55.4	23	41.1	1	1.8	1	1.8
2 Grammatical knowledge	26	44.8	25	43.1	7	12.1	-	-
3. Organizing ideas clearly and logically	50	86.2	8	13.8	-	-	-	-
4. Knowing and demonstrating subject matter	32	55.2	22	37.9	3	5.2	1	1.7
5. Text management strategies (e.g. brainstorming,, outlining, .drafting, revising and editing etc	16	27.6	32	55.2	7	12.1	3	5.2

Table 8: Students' judgment of the importance of some skills/knowledge to be successful writers

As Table 8 above shows, the students were asked to rate the importance of the skills/knowledge indicated for them to succeed in academic writing or to score good grades. It can be seen from the Table that the overwhelming majority of the students thought that all the items described here were very important or important for them to be successful writers. Another observation that would be made from the Table about the students is that they made significant difference as to the importance of each item. In this regard, organizing ideas clearly and logically, which has to do with rhetorical skill, was considered very important by the overwhelming majority of the students, 50 out of 58 students (86.2%). Vocabulary and subject matter knowledge were also considered very important or important by equal number of students (54 for each). It could also be noted from the Table that grammar and text management strategies were important but considered by the majority not as important as, for example, organization, subject knowledge and vocabulary knowledge.

From this observation, it is possible to say that the students have good awareness about writing in general and the requirements that should be fulfilled in producing good papers. However, it is not clear why, for example, the majority of the students considered text management strategies as less important, for it is true that good organization is possible when one has good text management strategies.

4.2.2 Students' problems in writing

	Very serious		Serious		Less serious		Not a problem	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
6.Failure to understand questions or assignments	1	1.7	1	1.7	29	50	27	46.6
7. Lack of understanding of the meanings of key words in writing questions or assignments	-		3	5.3	37	64.9	17	29.8
8. Time constraints	6	10.2	27	47.4	20	35.1	4	7
9 Failure to understand instructors' expectations in general	7	12.1	20	34.5	28	48.3	3	5.2
10. Failure to know the content of the subject matter	1	1.7	2	3.4	34	56.6	20	35.1
11. Not knowing instructors' grading criteria	15	26.3	16	28.1	21	36.8	5	8.8
12. Lack of good language proficiency	2	3.4	18	31.1	30	51.7	8	13.9
13. Failure to recognize the specific demands of writing tasks at hand	5	8.9	16	28.6	27	48.2	8	14.3

Table 9: Responses of Students about Problems in Writing

Table 9 above indicates items related to writing problems. As the table shows, the majority of the students indicated that they did not have very serious problems in the items about understanding writing tasks and instructions. As can be seen from the Table, Items 6,7 and 13, which are all about writing tasks and understanding writing questions, are rated either as less serious problems or not problems at all by the majority of the students. The students' responses that they have less problems or no problems in understanding writing tasks and instruction substantiate the instructors' judgments that their students were successful in determining what to write and how to write from the given writing tasks. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the students indicated that failure to know what to write is either less a problem or not a problem at

all for them. This view of the students again supports the instructors' judgment that their students were successful in demonstrating good understanding of subject matter (See Table 4).

Also, as can be seen from the Table, time constraint is considered as a problem by many of the students. This could be an indication that , as scholars argue (Hall, 1990; Collins and Getner,1980), time is usually a concern of writers, when writing is, specifically, carried out under time pressure. Students also indicated in the open-ended question that they had time constraint in writing in examination context, especially to rewrite their papers.

Moreover, failure to understand instructors' expectations from the writing task, and not knowing instructors' grading criteria, are rated by the majority of the students as very serious or serious problems. This would imply that the students may have some problems of recognizing their instructors' expectations from the writing tasks as the instructors may not inform them about their expectations, as the students made clear in the interview.

One important point that could be said from the data is that contrary to the instructors' observations that their students had serious language problems (Table 6) and ranked it as the most serious problem compared to content and writing skill (Table 7), the majority of the students, 38, out of 58, above half of the respondents (51.7%) considered English language as a less serious problem in their writing. However, the

students again considered English language as their serious problems as they indicated in the open-ended questions and in the interview. Thus, in this regard, though the students seem to have conflicting views, their responses in the interview, open-ended and in the seriousness of problems (Table 10 below) indicate that actually the students experienced very serious language problem in their writing.

4.2.3 Seriousness of problems in students' writing

The students were also asked to indicate how serious their problems were regarding the three related elements in writing, namely, content, writing skill and language proficiency to see if their experience of these elements as problems agree with their instructors' observations.

	Degree of Seriousness of Problem							
	Very Serious		Serious		Not serious		Not a problem at all	
Item	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
14. Knowledge of Subject matter	-	-	15	25.9	43	74.2	-	-
15. Writing Skills	42	72.4	16	27.6	-		-	-
16. English language proficiency	46	79.3	12	20.7	-		-	-

Table 10: Seriousness of Problems in Students' Writing

As can be seen from Table 10, the students tend to rank both writing skill and language proficiency as their very serious problems though a slight difference is observed as the number of students who indicated English language as their very serious problem is a bit greater.

It can be also said that, while the instructors tend to consider language problem as the most serious and by far more severe than writing skill, the students, as their responses to the open-ended questions and interviews also substantiate, language and writing skills are considered as very serious problems, which almost equally affect their writing performance.

4.2.4 Responses to open-ended questions

Students were also asked open-ended questions to give their responses related to the features (qualities) their instructors expect from good papers; the main problems they have, if any, in producing written work and, the causes of the problems as they perceive them. In this regard, students provided their responses in written form. Below is the summary of their responses:

Regarding features their instructors expect from good academic papers, qualities such as, good organization of ideas, knowledge of subject matter, good command of English(in terms of vocabulary, and grammar), brevity of ideas, and legibility were included by the students. Qualities like acceptable formats, having good rote memorization, and good summary ability were mentioned as important qualities by some of the students

When we see the frequency counts of each feature listed, the skills of organizing ideas clearly and logically (good organization of ideas**),** which have to do with rhetorical skills was presented by most students (46 times, 76.3%). Points related to knowledge of subject matter and language were also mentioned by many. Brevity of ideas and

legibility were also indicated by several respondents as qualities expected from good academic papers.

In response to problems in writing, the students included the qualities they mentioned above again as problems areas for them to fulfill in their writing. .Of these, the following were the major problems: failure to organize ideas clearly and logically, language problems, of which, lack of vocabulary knowledge was counted most, time constraints, lack of precision (brevity), spelling errors, and lack of writing skills in general. Also how to start the writing, restriction of pages and lines were included as problems. Lack of subject matter knowledge was also indicated as a problem though the frequency counts was very less.

The third open-ended question was concerned with finding out causes of writing problems that students anticipated in their academic writing. To this end, the students identified the following as main causes of their problems in writing: lack of basic training in writing, poor English background because language courses were not offered effectively, lack of self-initiatives in writing, and problems related to writing courses at university level.

4.3 Results of Instructors' Interview

One source of data used for this study, as discussed in Chapter Three, was the instructor interview.

Two instructors from each of the four departments under study gave their views about students' writing produced in response to their course/field requirements. The instructors were approached by this researcher prior to the interview sessions in order to ask for their willingness to be available for interview. Those who agreed to take part were then told the purposes of the interview. No criteria for selection were used except that preference was made for the views of the more experienced members in each department. Responding to the questions, the instructors told this researcher about:

a. the features of good academic papers in their courses[fields],
b. the types of writing they demand students to produce, and their expectations from each type,.
c. Whether they feel responsible for assisting students to meet their expectations,
d. Their degree of tolerance of language errors in students' writing,
e. the major weaknesses they have noticed in their students' writing, and,
f. their views of the seriousness of the problems in terms of content, writing skill, and language as they noticed them in the students' writing performance.

This section thus presents the analysis of the data from instructors' interviews.

4.3.1 Features of good academic papers

Law: In the faculty of law, instructors see students' qualities of writing in terms of their reasons, and arguments. They expect consistent, coherent and strong arguments from their students' papers. The merits of good papers, according to the instructors are, therefore, reasons, strong and consistent arguments and analysis of issues with good language. In this regard, one instructor articulated:

> We do not have such different styles of writing. We simply give students to make analysis…It is simply a type of analysis, a type of resolving controversies, confronting the students. It is a paper of arguments based on facts, issues to arrive at certain conclusions. [Law 2]

They also stressed that good command of the target language is very important to meet the qualities mentioned above. In this regard one instructor expressed how the other qualities depend on good language as follows:

> You can successfully put the substance if you have good language. You may have good organization if you have the language. You can have good analysis if you have good language. So language is one of the qualities that should be considered in the evaluation of good papers [Law 2]

SOSA: In the Department of SOSA**,** the instructors have four yardsticks to evaluate a paper as successful or good academic paper. One important quality is novelty of thought. When writing their senior essays, term papers, or group papers students are expected to look out into social problems which are new. Also instructors require their students to be good in their language, specifically, in vocabulary when they write up their papers. They expect very decent and more appropriate words that give the right meaning of what students intend to argue or deliver to their audiences. Another point that they see very important is the issue of coherence or the flow of argument. One instructor responded:

> It is not only enough to have some ideas to work on, and good words to write up but we need to have coherence of ideas ,

> argument that should flow in a consistent manner, in a manner that tells us the extent of debate….[SOSA1]

The issue of convincing ability is another quality of a good paper. Arguments in senior essays, term papers or any other writing should be arguments based on a formulated hypothesis- a motion of an idea. In this regard an instructor responded

> If at the end of the day the student cannot prove his argument, or disprove at least, then the entire exercise of writing up of papers I think end up in vain or in a futile exercise [SOSA1].

Therefore, in the department of SOSA, novelty of thought, good command of language, coherence and convincing abilities are four requirements that make a paper successful or good academic paper.

EDPM (Educational Planning and Management): The features of good papers written in their department include: good introduction, focusing on the objectives of the papers and the rational of the papers. This will be followed by the main body of the paper which is discussing the issues in detail and throughout the way, they also check the originality, the logical analysis and argument of the paper, and finally the paper should have condensed summary followed by concluding remarks and suggestions

History: In History Department, the expectations of instructors of good papers is that first of all, each paper has to have a theme or themes that the student wants to express to his reader or audience. Also in case of term papers and senior essays, it has to have evidence, foot note, and reference materials, with a complete bibliography. The format

of writing a paper is also one quality of good papers as the instructors stressed.. Whether a paper is short or long, as the instructors pointed out, it does not really matter much, but they really consider [expect] whether the student has understood the subject matter, and explained it in a very systematic way to show them that he has understood the whole thing and others can understand his writing. Specifically, term papers need full reading, and understanding of the reading,. For senior essays, good research on documents from oral informants, understanding and analysis of issues, are highly appreciated. Finally, they expect that all these should be done in a clear language..

4.3.2 Types of writing instructors ask students to produce, and their expectations from each

Law: In the faculty of law, senior essays, term papers and essay exams are types of papers assigned to students to produce. For each type, they mentioned that they do not have as such different expectations except that the levels vary. They generally require students to make analysis and arguments.

However, they emphasize that their expectations vary according to the situations of the writing. For example, they do not expect the same level of performance from papers of different types and written in different contexts. Regarding this an instructor responded:

> For senior essay, since it is the whole years commitment, my expectation is higher. I expect the students to treat their topics in detail and comprehensively. In exam types, it will be difficult to expect qualities of papers that are equal to senior papers for the time is very short. Also it is an exam atmosphere, so my expectations in these situations are different [Law 1]

They also believe that the levels of expectations of students' performance should actually be average. They argue that students' problem in English in general affects their performance in writing. They feel that though the medium of instruction is in English, students communicate outside classes in other nationality languages. They understand that their English background is poor, too. In general, they guess that because of language problems, their expectations are on the average. as one instructor said, "... If we go back to high school, their English background is poor.. such circumstances could not make us expect high and we should not expect high performance" [Law 2]

SOSA: Students in SOSA are generally required to write up essay types of exams, term papers, and senior essays. In this department, there are two related fields: anthropology and sociology. In anthropology, which has a program only for postgraduate students, there are two types of writing. One is ethnography type, in which a pure description of a given culture or society is made. The second one is ethnology for which a comparative study of cultures are made. So description and comparison are the two kinds of writing in anthropology. Students are required in term papers to go out, observe or interview and then write a clear description of what they have observed. In sociology, unlike in anthropology, students are required to collect quantitative data and then write analysis about the data. Moreover arguments on theoretical debates are common.

Regarding their expectations, instructors responded that they do not expect essay exams, and term papers to be as strong and as evaluative as the senior essay. In case

of essay exams, they require students to debate on and analyze issues to see how much they have grasped the subject matter. However, the expectations for senior essay kinds are higher and different. One instructor has described this as, “When we come to senior essays, it is not only describing, but students should be able to integrate theories with data collected, so the expectation is high, so the level is different. [SOSA2]. In a similar tone the other instructor said:

> The senior essay is a type where you really intend to evaluate the efforts of the department upon the prospective graduates. So there is a great deal of expectations from each individual student. In other words, we want them; we anticipate them to be good vocabulary wise, in novelty of thought, in coherence, and in its convincing ability. (SOSA1).

Instructors in SOSA generally agree that the levels of expectations of students’ writing performance should be an average one. They understand that most of the students who have come and joined the university, in recent years, are pupils who have been victims of poor language training in high schools so what they expect from these students are average. As to this issue, one instructor has described the situation as follows:

> That severe failure in language education, I know have brought down the skills and capacities of most university students, not to perform to a greater level.. In face of such situations, we do not expect our students to perform in flying covers. So my expectations are average. If these are my expectations, then I can evaluate how successful my students are related to my expectations.[SOSA 1]

In general, instructors in SOSA tend to come to realize that their students' performance in writing cannot be up to the standard expected because of the poor training the students have undergone. Another instructor regarding this responded, "…the level of writing is not up to the standard.. The high schools they came from do not have rigorous kind of training, even in the university. So we do not expect much in terms of language, in terms of analysis and in terms of organization. [SOSA 2]

EDMP: Instructors in EPDM also mentioned that they require their students to write different types of papers. They have term papers, and senior essays. In general, they ask students to write research and project oriented papers. They responded that their expectation for each type and the qualities they seek from each type of paper is almost similar. As to this point, an instructor responded, "In each type, our expectations are originality, clarity, and systematic discussions." They further said that some of their students are very successful since they have very good English background to express themselves. However, they underscored that most of the students find it a great problem to communicate their ideas using English language. In general, they underline that their students' capacity in writing is average. And they strongly agree that most of the students have problems in communicating their ideas in English.

History: The types of writing assigned in history department as mentioned by the instructors are senior essays, essay types of exams, term papers and short notes. The general expectation [for each type] is that each type of a paper should try to explain cause and effect relationships of historical events; chronology has to have clear time

frame at the same time students are expected to include the five W's and one H's of historical events, i.e. Why? When? What? Where?, who? and How? of the historical events. They want students to show in a detailed way the historical forces behind every event. They also like students to relate these historical events to the contemporary world, the life within, and the activities people do. Whether it is short note or long essay, it has to express an idea, complete idea on that topic.

Instructors in history department expect their students to be up to the standard In this regard one instructor stated, "I expect student performance to be quite competitive and therefore in the university I teach I go for quality in most cases.".[Hist 1]. They also regret that students nowadays fail to meet their expectations of high standard as the same instructor expressed his grievance

> … students in the earlier period used to keep up with the quality of education and their English was not that bad, but in recent years we have serious difficulties in understanding the students themselves and really wonder whether we are understood by the students.[Hist 1]

4.3.3 Whether instructors feel responsible to help students meet their expectations

Law: Instructors in the faculty of law think that every discipline has its own peculiar features of writing. They say that every field has its own technicalities or its own jargons in writing. They also believe that though students learn general English in ELT classes, they need professional languages and skills of writing that they should get from their subject area instructors. However, they argue that subject instructors would help

students improve their language proficiency and writing skills in indirect ways. Regarding this, one instructor said

> …with the objectives of teaching his subject area, he has to assign readings and he has to give them the possibility of speaking and arguing. This I think can enable students to improve their language. So a subject area instructor has some contribution…so it is an indirect one that we contribute.[Law 2]

SOSA: First of all, instructors from SOSA tend to have different views about the idea of who should help students improve their writing skills. One instructor believes and argues that teachers who are responsible in teaching and showing how papers should be written are research writing methodology and language teachers. He said "since I am not teaching methodology, what I look for is subject matter rather than the language and the writing." [SOSA2] The other instructor, however, strongly believes that instructors in each field should have some responsibilities for helping students improve their writing skills. He pointed out this necessity by saying

> …their language and writing performance also have got to do with their professional excellence. So I personally feel that we have to do something. I do not know what right this moment, but something in order to increase, and upgrade the language and writing proficiency of our students.[SOSA 1]

However, these instructors agree that there should be organized efforts to assist the students to improve their writing. skills, because they have come to realize that unless such help is available, students' success will be affected. One instructor responded,

"Yes, there is a need for a more broadened institutional efforts, by subject professors, by the departments to do something about the problem."[SOSA1] Moreover, the instructors admitted that their department has not done any thing so far in this regard. An instructor responded: "Sadly, we have not done what we were supposed to do…. First we never felt that teaching pupils, arming and equipping them with proficient English is our responsibility." [SOSA1]. The other instructor also supports this idea ***"...***there is no that kind of thing in our department at least now. In the department, there is no such different efforts to teach writing" [SOSA2]

EDPM: The instructors in EDPM do not think that instructors in different departments in general and in their department in particular are responsible in improving their students' language and writing skills. In this regard, one instructor responded

> I do not think that subject area teachers be responsible for the language students use in their writing because first we do not have the time. If we focus on correcting and helping students use good English, we may lose the essence of the subject matter. Secondly, since we are not language specialists to help students improve their writing, we may not be capable enough to give the right preparation. [EDPM 2]

However, they expressed that though it is not their responsibility to make students improve their English languages and their writing skills, they mentioned that they advise the students to improve their languages and writing ability.

History: Instructors in this department recall that in earlier days they used to do that when students were smaller in number: twenty, thirty or forty in class, but nowadays they cannot do it. One instructor expressed how it is not possible to do it now because of the student population

> Teaching one hundred students in a class, I found it to be very difficult. I could not assign papers, for instance for 100 4th year students I was teaching this year first semester, but nevertheless, I feel that there is something missing because of the teacher-student proportion. I cannot correct all the papers but I would have liked to do so and that would make a difference. [Hist 1]

Another instructor has also agreed that it is their responsibility to assist, but he argues that it is difficult to do. He said" Yes, but it is an uphill battle." [Hist2]

4.3.4 Degree of tolerance of language errors in writing

Law: Instructors from the faculty of law underline the fact that their expectations of students' performance in writing vary from one situation to another and their tolerance of language errors too. They said that depending on what type of paper they are evaluating, their level of tolerance of language errors varies. An instructor, for instance, mentioned his views as follows:

> … depending on what type of paper I am reading, I am looking at, my expectations also differ…. My language expectations will also depend on that. So for instance in research papers (senior essays) I do not want to see problems of language. But in exam situations, I tolerate students' error of language. [Law1]

However, the instructors mentioned that they tolerate errors to the extent that the errors do not affect message of the content students want to convey to them. In this regard an instructor responded, “Errors that make me misunderstand the substance cannot be tolerated.. I can tolerate if I can understand the substance…., not for the mere fact that the student has made language errors that I will be irritated. [Law2]

SOSA: Instructors in this department have different views about language errors, too. One instructor responded that he is more interested in content than in language so he tolerates errors. .At the same time, he also stressed that the degree of his tolerance has certain limitations.

> We know that the students do not have good background. We do not expect them to be British or American. We tolerate English problems to some extent, but when it is too much and when it is difficult to read at all, to read and understand the essence, the subject matter, then it creates a problem. [SOSA2]

For the other instructor, every error makes him irritated. He mentioned that students should perform in a standard manner. He stressed that, especially using words inappropriate ways, abusing the meanings of words for the sake of telling the instructor that they know some good words to use them here and there, in hotchpotch manner, is something he never tolerates. This instructor has nothing to tolerate. He said, “So as much as I can, I try to rectify any language errors that I see in my students’ writing. There is none that I say I can tolerate.”

EDPMC: In general, instructors in EDPM understand that many of the students’ performance in English is full of problems. One instructor said “there are many

intolerable things which occur and which we observe in students' writing." [EDPM 1] However, they stressed that in spite of their observations of so many language errors, they make a distinction among those errors and they said that there are errors which they tolerate and do not tolerate. In this regard an instructor responded:

> I do not have the capacity to tolerate very serious grammatical errors, spelling errors that make the whole sentence vague and ambiguous…I am not referring to some slight grammatical errors. and small spelling errors. I am referring to serious grammatical errors and spelling errors which make the discussions vague and ambiguous. [EDPM2]

History: Instructors in history department first identified the common language errors which their students usually should not commit and the types they get irritated if committed. One instructor has identified the problems and the errors which he cannot tolerate as follows: "I really get irritated when I find a sentence that does not satisfy the system of writing in English." [Hist1] Another instructor further added:

> Language errors that should have been cancelled in Freshman or Sophomore courses annoy me most, i.e. basic errors, failure to observe agreement in number and subject-verb and tense structure e. g simple past "they did not wanted"

They also underscored that they show degree of tolerance in language errors out of necessity. They responded that errors are common in their students writing and they have to tolerate, because unless they tend to have excuses for the students' language, they know that many of the students may fail. As to this tendency of instructors, one teacher said, "If we strictly follow language expectations, I think many students may not

pass. Definitely, we tolerate language errors. This is out of necessity." [Hist 1] However, they pointed out that their degree of tolerance of errors is conditional .They never tolerate errors, for instance, when students write their final senior essays. One instructor responded

> But any way, in the final analysis when students write their essays, I do not tolerate errors. I make very clear and critical corrections in their final essays because it is going to be printed, it is going to be read by others and I do not usually want students' mistakes to be seen by others.

4.3.5 Major weaknesses instructors noticed in their students' writing

Law: The instructors in law generally responded that weaknesses are common in the students' papers, For example, instructors in this department underscore that there are specific writing conventions in their field and most of the time students have problems in satisfying these conventions.

> In writing, when we deal with certain problem, we shall identify issues then will go to reasoning, after reasoning, we will go to conclusions. This is the conventional way of disclosing a legal case. But students may follow a different way. They begin with the issues, then come again to facts, then with a meager reasoning, with out concluding that reasoning may raise another issue. So we may find unorganized papers. So it is difficult to say they can meet the writing conventions.[Law1]

The main problems the instructors have identified are students' failure to follow accepted writing conventions in law, grammatical errors. Also, failure to understand writing questions due to language problems is common.

SOSA: Instructors in SOSA also addressed the major problems they have observed in their students' papers. The instructors in general noticed that their students' weaknesses have been seen in all aspects of the features of a good paper they mentioned earlier. Thus, one limitation of students is their failure to come up with new ideas when students are requested to do so. One instructor mentioned this problem as follows:

> When students are requested to think of something new, the first thing to get terrible with is what to think about, what sort of topic they should raise the sort of agenda they should write about. [SOSA1]

The other problem identified is the issue of being inundated with the words of other scholars when writing their papers The same instructor has described this problem

> Pupils come up with topics, immediately run to the library and see how much and how far have been written about that topic. Suddenly, they feel themselves overwhelmed and there is nothing to write about…with such an idea, they sit down to write and, start copying from books, journals and articles and come up with volumes of articles, where you do not see them, where you do not read them arguing.

The third weakness observed by the instructors in this department is a problem of coherence of ideas, so organization is very weak. The instructors witnessed that students, when writing their papers, write in disorganized manners. An instructor mentioned this situation as, 'Even then when you hear and read a number of authors,

grafted in a manner one consequent with another, the coherence problems come up. So coherence as I see is a very problematic issue." [SOSA1}

The other serious problem noticed by instructors in this department is related to language. The students' language is very weak except for few students.. Moreover, the instructors blame the students for not following instructions and failing to know what is required in their papers.

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Instructors in the department have stressed that, there is established tradition that instructors [scholars in the field] and even students who join the department, should follow. They also underline that this tradition should be followed by their students. However, the students usually fail to meet this tradition as one instructor responded "if this is the tradition we expect our students to follow, I doubt if our students are equipped with that standard". Another instructor also added that it is only a few students who meet that convention.

> …I ask what kind of methodology they use, what kind of paper they should write what kind of introductory theme, conclusion, what kind of English they use, the expectations in general, and then when the papers come, I do not see students following instruction and fulfilling the criteria.

EDPM: Instructors in this department identified some problems and all of them tend to be related to language problems. Poor grammar, spelling errors, ambiguity in their sentences, wrong use of words are addressed as weaknesses of students.

The instructors in general believe that their students do not have as such problems in identifying what is expected in their papers. However, they cannot produce good papers because of the language problems they face. One instructor mentioned this as

> Interestingly, most of them know what is expected or required in their papers. But the problem is that they could not communicate their ideas in English since their English ability is limited. They know what is asked of them, they know what is expected of them, but they find it very difficult to communicate their ideas in English.[EDPM]

History: Instructors in history department witness that they have observed different limitations in their students' writing performance. For example, one instructor described the major weaknesses as follows:

> There are, you know, several flaws in writing. They try to write long paragraph, patching sentences together, and carrying several ideas in one paragraph rather than explaining a clear cut idea in a paragraph way and make arguments, historical arguments in their writing. And at the same time they try to use terms or words that they do not know the meanings clearly. Whenever they put in tough words which they do not understand, they think that they have written good things and they have become good intellectuals so to say by using a kind of *"*bombastic words*"* which when I read have no anything in it.

Moreover, grammatical structures, spelling, long and confused sentences, poor legibility have been identified as main weaknesses.

4.3.6 Instructors' judgment of the seriousness of problems in writing in terms of content, writing skills and language in students' papers

Law: Instructors in the faculty of law first underlined that these elements are related in one way or another, especially language and writing skill(organization). When they rank them as problems, for them the major problem is language followed by organization and the third is content. For example, one instructor mentioned how English language is a hindrance for the students in writing as follows:

> …their problem is to express their position. Had the language been Amharic, they would have expressed it very well. Since the language is English, you see the content but not well explained and well organized.
> So in my case, the first problem is language and then some how related to language is organizational problem [Law1].

Another instructor similarly responded "The most difficult aspect is obviously the language problem. This is I think the highest problem. The second is writing skill, and the last substance." [Law 2]

Instructors in this department agree that, content is not as such a serious problem for their students. They felt that the students have the substances in many cases, and the problem is that they do not tell how they can answer that. One instructor said, "Every student has a minimum understanding of the content" [Law 1]. Another instructor responded in a similar tone, ".They have the raw materials but they cannot tell us." [Law 2], So the language and organization problems are very serious as can be seen from the instructors' views.

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SOSA: Instructors in the department of SOSA also agreed that the most serious problem is language and they underscored that due to this problem, other aspects of the writing would be affected heavily. In response to this issue an instructor reacted:

> . The most serious problem is problem of language. In terms of language most of the students are weak, probably 75% cannot construct a single sentence without errors…. If the language is poor, their writing skill is distorted and the whole thing becomes bad.[SOSA 2]

Another instructor added "When you go through the writings ups of senior essays, term papers, and group papers of our students, for all the problems and the impediment, language is the first problem." [SOSA1]. They also told this researcher that the second is the problem of writing skill. As far as content is concerned, they noticed that the students, in most case, have something to say. Below is the observation of one instructor in this regard:

> …but as far as message is concerned, at times in a very distorted manner, our students due press to show the reader, the audience that they have something to tell, they have something to relay, to deliver to the audience. So I do not think it is a problem of message to tell, instead it is a problem of having appropriate channel, the appropriate medium which is the language itself, in order to properly tell out their stories. their ideas.[SOSA 1]

EDPM: Instructors in this department agreed that the most serious problem in their students' writing performance is language followed by writing skills. An instructor responded

> …language is a serious problem. And then writing…. If they have good English language, if they know the techniques of writing, I think they will communicate their ideas. They do not have problems of content. Their problem is how to use appropriate language, and how to organize their ideas in good writing. So I could put them in order: The first serious problem is language, the second writing and the third one content. So long as the two conditions are fulfilled, the students are able to write good papers.

History: Instructors in history department first and foremost have made clear that in their students' papers they give more attention and high grade for content followed by organizations and then language. Therefore, the content, the organization and the language are their concern in order of importance. Also as they noticed, the most serious problem the students suffer from is inappropriate use of the language. In this regard an instructor said, "The language is a serous problem. Language is very serious because, the language, the way they use does not help to express the content." [Hist1] They further stressed that language and writing skills are serious problems, even for better students. An instructor has mentioned this tendency of the students as:

> For poor students, poor content is the main problem but their language is poor also. Better students in terms of content often produce papers poor in terms of English proficiency and writing competence. [Hist 2]

According to them next to language is a writing problem, especially problem of organization. One instructor has expressed this problem as follows:

> they know the content, they miss, of course, organization and in a way organization is a problem. What should come first comes last,

> and that should come last may be in the middle and they miss the target.

As mentioned above all the instructors claimed that their students fail to satisfy their fields' writing expectations. This might be attributed to the instructors' failure to create such awareness as one of the instructors succinctly summarized and the students elsewhere in the interview session mentioned.

> Honestly speaking, I doubt if department chairpersons or instructors have thought sincerely to tell their students what they want from their students when they write. For instance, if you ask me, if ever I told my students that I would grade or evaluate them in these yardsticks I mentioned earlier, I have not. But it is not by arrogance, but may be by ignorance or negligence and I feel that we have to do that because there is nothing wrong in doing so…The other is that so many instructors make teaching a magic formula. They would not tell their students what they expect from their papers. Instead they keep them in a blind spot. Students come up with their efforts, and yet submit their essay work, , written up in a manner that they do not know how the teachers are going to evaluate next.[SOSA1]

4.4 Results of students' Interview

A total of 8 students from fourth and third years were randomly selected from the four departments under study and were asked to give their views about their writing. The purpose of the interview was explained to the students and they were asked to respond to semi-opened questions (please see the interview questions attached at the end here), and their responses were tape-recorded and transcribed.

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain additional information from students about their views in terms of

1. The importance of writing for their academic success,
2. their awareness of features (qualities) their instructors expect or require from good papers,
3. whether they know the criteria by which their papers can be evaluated,
4. whether they feel that their instructors should help them, and,
5. their views of content, writing skill and language as problems

The analysis of the students' interview was thus carried out along these categories. The following is the result of the analysis of the data.

4.4.1 The importance of writing for academic success

In response to the ways in which writing is important in their academic endeavor, the students gave their views and all strongly agree that writing is very important and decisive in their efforts to achieve success in the academia. The students felt that writing is the main way or channel by which they communicate with their instructors and the instructors have opportunity to evaluate the extent to which they have understood the course content they learned. Writing, in other words, is a means by which students get evaluated whether they have been successful or not in their studies. They strongly attach its importance to succeeding in scoring good grades in examinations. In this regard one student from history said " Unless we do have the skills of writing, we lose all

the marks we need to achieve. Unless we write no other option, alternative to get mark." [S6] In a similar tone a student from SOSA responded

> .. the writing skill is crucial to be successful in exams, even if I understand the question, if I do have a problem of explaining my ideas to him, it has an effect on my grade. I think it is so important and crucial, in getting success in academic situations. [S1]

In fact, some of the students extended its importance to their future success in their careers. In this regard a student from SOSA said " The ability to write is very important because, in the future I expect that I have to write research papers, I have to write report in the work area." [S3]

In general, they argue that the ability to write is the only means to survive in the academia. In this regard a student from EDPM expressed, "without writing of my senior essay, term papers and in examinations, I can not achieve successful grades, without writing, nothing else is done." [S5]

4.4.2 Awareness of features instructors expect from their papers

Students were asked to give their views about the qualities their instructors expect from their academic writing. In this regard, the students mentioned that the following are features of good papers as they perceive or guess: Knowledge of subject matter, precise and comprehensive writing, good coherence, including facts, including teachers' golden words which they taught in classes, presenting in short manner, good hand writing, and good English. And of the features included here, good organization is believed to have great importance by all the students. In this regard one student from

SOSA responded, “the first one and most important is organization” [S1]. In a similar tone a student from Law expressed,”Especially when we write term papers, and in exams, we have to put the points coherently.” [S2].

The students who mentioned the features mentioned above, however, underlined that these writing features were what they guessed as good qualities of a paper, not qualities they come to know from their instructors.

4.4.3 Whether they know the criteria by which their papers are evaluated

The students who tried to mention some of the qualities a good writing should consist of were also asked how they have come to know these elements. In this regard, most of them said that they employ different techniques to discover their instructors’ expectations of a good paper.

Some said that they try their best to know their instructors’ expectations and grading criteria by asking other students (both their seniors and classmates). In this regard a student from the faculty of law said:

> I know from those students who would score good grades. I observe their methods of writing and their grades and try to correlate these with the expectations of the teachers and say these are the ways or points the teachers expect. [S2]

The other students said that they usually ask their instructors after they have received their papers. They responded that whenever they receive their

papers, they are used to going to their instructors and ask how they evaluate them. In this way, the instructors tell them the elements they have missed.

However, some of the students underline that it is very difficult for them to understand the criteria because their instructors never tell them the points they consider most important during their evaluations. In this regard one student from history department expressed his grievance in this way: " Oh we do not know... they never told us. Oh it is forbidden. When we asked them they tell us, it is the duty of the instructors and it is forbidden to tell students." In a similar tone a student from EDPM expressed his idea" I do not really know on what criteria they evaluate our papers, because the criteria they use are not announced to students in class.

4.4.4 Whether they feel that subject area instructors should help them improve their writing

Also students were asked if they expect some help from their subject area instructors in their attempt to improve their writing skills. In this regard, the students seemed to have different views as to the contributions of their subject area teachers.

Some of the students do not believe that their instructors have any responsibility for helping students improve their writing and as a result they never expect any help. For example, a student from the faculty of law said**, "**I do not expect this from my law professors. This is the one from the language department." [S2] A student from SOSA also agreed with this view as he said, "Actually I do not expect they are not language

teachers and that is my problem, I have to improve my writing by myself." [S1] Similarly, a student from history responded, "Of course, it is not their primary purpose. They are teachers of the past activities, not English teachers."[S4]

On the other hand, some students strongly believed that their subject instructors should help them and they feel that this will bring significant changes if the instructors do so. In this regard a student from SOSA said, "I want them to equip us, just to inform us the good ways of writing, or organizing our essays or writing. But they, of course, do not do that at all." [S1]. A student from history shared this view when he responded, "I think they should help us. A teacher should teach his student not only the academic content, but the language of that content." [S6]

In spite of the different views of students as to their subject area instructors' contribution to their writing and their agreement that the majority do not do that, they do not deny that some of the instructors help them in one way or another. Some felt that some of their instructors help them, specifically, when they assign term papers and when there is essay type of exams, but never do it in their classes intentionally to equip them to become good academic writers**.**

4.4.5 Skills or knowledge students feel they are lacking

The last question that was forwarded to the students was whether they lack some skills or knowledge in their writing. In this regard they were told to consider, specifically, the elements of writing skills, Language proficiency and content knowledge.

In this regard, all of the students mentioned that subject matter knowledge is not as such a problem for them. When they give reason why they do not lack this point, all of them agree that previous reading and memorization help them remember the content of their topics. In this regard a student from history said, “The content is very easy. ..you can get it from reading now and then, from memory now and then, so no problem for the content. But we do not have the writing skill.” [S4]

Many of the students responded that both writing skill and language are skills they really lack. They felt that in these areas they have tremendous problems. When they ranked them in order of seriousness as problems, the problem of good command of English stood first as a major problem they faced. A student from history responded”In content, I do not have any problem, but the language; we face many problems, especially using English as effectively as we are expected.” [S6] However, some felt that it is their lack of good writing or composing competence which makes them become less successful in their writing.

4.5 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major results of the data are summarized as follows:

In general, as can be seen from the instructors’ responses, the features of good academic papers are similar across departments. Included as features of good academic papers, among others here are: complete treatment of a given topic, originality or novelty of ideas, good organization, logical and consistent arguments, good command of language, and acceptable formats.

The results of the data also show that the types of writing instructors require or assign to students are the same across the departments. These are, essay examinations, term papers and senior essays or research papers. However, instructors in each department, as can be seen from the results, tend to focus on some modes of writing rather than others. For example, in the faculty of law, argumentative type is very dominant. In history, argumentative and narrative type tend to be more common while in SOSA, description, comparison and argumentation are emphasized.

The instructors were also found holding different levels of expectations for the different types of writing they assign to their students. For example, the results appear to show that instructors' levels of expectations in terms of language, organization, novelty of thoughts etc, in essay exams and term papers, are different from senior essays. In other words, the instructors agreed that they do not expect high performance in essay exams and term papers, but in senior essays, their expectation is higher in all elements that a good academic paper should satisfy.

Similarly, the students were able to list the features of a good academic paper. As the results indicate, they were also able to include more or less all the elements their instructors included as good features of an academic paper. In this regard, qualities such as, good organization of ideas, knowledge of subject matter, good command of English (in terms of vocabulary, and grammar), brevity of ideas, and legibility were included by the students. Qualities like acceptable formats, having good rote memorization, and good summary ability were also included as important qualities by

the students. The students who mentioned the features of good academic paper, however, underlined that the writing qualities they included were just what they imagined or guessed as good qualities of a paper, not elements they come to know or learned from their instructors.

The students were asked how they come to know these elements or qualities a good writing should consist of. In this regard, the responses of the students indicated that they employed different techniques to discover their instructors' expectations and evaluation criteria. Major techniques students used, among others, were asking senior students, classmates, and their instructors.

The success of students in meeting or reflecting instructors' expectations and the common weaknesses instructors noticed in their students' writing performance were investigated. The results show that the students were found less successful in meeting their instructors' expectations. It was also found that the students exhibited weakness in all areas the instructors included as good features of academic papers. In more specific terms, students' writing performance was found exhibiting problems in terms of rhetorical skills, in originality of thought, in expressing their thought in logically organized and connected discourse and in proficiency of English. However, they were found some how good at understanding and demonstrating subject matter knowledge. The instructors also stressed that, according to their observation, due to the students' lack of good command of English, the other qualities of the papers, that is, the organization and the information content have been heavily affected. In this regard, the instructors tend to

believe that the main cause of their students' failure in writing is the upcoming of academically unprepared students to their departments, specifically, in writing skills and English language proficiency.

Similarly, the students were asked about problems they experienced in their writing, their success in meeting instructors' expectations, their awareness of what constitute good academic writing, and what their instructors expect from their papers. The results were cross-checked against the instructors' responses on the same points (expectations). The results indicate that the students experienced problems in all the features they thought were qualities of a good academic paper. Specifically, in this regard, failure to organize ideas clearly and logically, lack of good command of English language, time constraints, lack of precision (brevity), spelling errors, and lack of writing skills in general were found students' serious problems. Also, the students attributed these problems (failure to be good writers) to their poor English back ground, lack of basic training in writing skills and lack of personal efforts and less attention given to writing by themselves.

Particularly, the findings from the instructors' judgments of the seriousness of students' problems in three related elements in writing, namely, content, writing skills and language proficiency indicate that problem of language was observed as a very serious problem students faced. Next writing skill was observed as a serious problem. Though the instructors may not mean that students have no content problem, they witnessed that, in most cases, their students do not run short of ideas. They corroborated that,

even though it is not up to the standard expected, the students usually try to due press to show them that they have some message to communicate.

The students' judgments of the seriousness of the problems in terms of content, writing skill and language proficiency were also surveyed, the results indicate that both writing skill and language were skills the students really lacked. They felt that in these areas they had tremendous problems. When they ranked them in order of seriousness as problems, however, the problem of good command of English tended to be a very serious problem they face. But they also felt that their lack of good writing or composing competence made them become less successful in their writing. Lack of subject matter knowledge was included as less a problem by the students, too.

Thus, though their point of attention may vary, both the instructors and the students tended to agree in their judgments of the seriousness of problems in these three related elements. As can be seen from the results, both the students and the instructors ranked language as a very serious problem. The next one for both was writing skill. Content knowledge was ranked last, and as the results of both instructors and students indicate, content is not considered as a serious problem though this does not mean that the students have not exhibited any content problems in their writing.

As can be understood from the results of the findings, the instructors had different views whether students should be helped by their subject area professors to improve their academic writing. or whether they feel that helping students improves their writing was

their responsibility. What is clear from the instructors views, however, is that though they disagree as to their responsibility, all of them witnessed that there are no organized efforts, at least, at department levels, to carry out the responsibilities of helping students become well acquainted with the writing requirements and expectations of their specific field. But this is not to deny the fact that some instructors may help their students in some ways.

Similarly, the students were found having different views as to their subject area instructors' contribution to their writing improvement. Again they all agreed that their instructors actually do not help them intentionally to equip them to become good academic writers**.**

As can be observed from the instructors' responses concerning language errors in writing and their degree of tolerance, it can be said that almost all the instructors showed some degree of tolerance of errors which, in fact, emanates out of necessity when evaluating students' writing performance. They also expressed that the types of errors which irritate them are those minor errors which students should not commit at this advanced level. However, the instructors underlined that errors that distort or affect the substance or essence of the ideas are not tolerable.

In this regard the instructors appeared to be more sympathetic with the students' errors. They tended to believe that their language background in general and their training in writing in particular have not prepared the students to perform well in writing. Thus, it

seems that the instructors have come to accept, though they may not appreciate it that they should show some degree of tolerance of students' language errors unless the errors affect the meanings or ideas the students want to communicate. However, they do not appear to have such tolerance of language errors in one particular type of writing- in senior essays.

In response to the ways in which writing is important in their academic endeavor, the students strongly agreed that writing is very important and decisive in their efforts to achieve success in the academia. They felt that writing is the main way or channel by which they communicate with their instructors and the instructors have opportunity to evaluate the extent to which they have understood the course content they learned. In other words, they strongly attached its importance to succeeding in scoring good grades in examinations.

Thus, as can be seen from the responses of the students on different points, it appears that the majority of the students have the awareness that writing skill is important for their success in their academic endeavors. They also seem to have good awareness of the criteria or qualities a good academic paper should consist of or fulfill and the requirements that should be satisfied in producing good papers. In other words, they tend to recognize what elements a good paper should include to be accepted by instructors. Specifically, they thought that organizing ideas clearly and logically and good command of English are the most important aspects of a good paper. However,

they also considered these aspects as their most serious problems in producing written work.

The results also indicate that though the students were able to identify (were found aware of) the qualities expected from their papers. They, however, appeared unable to demonstrate or perform those features of good academic papers, about which they have had good awareness, in their papers. At this juncture, one important point that should be raised is how the students fail to demonstrate the qualities they were aware of?

As the results of both the instructors and the students show, they have problems in meeting the writing requirements by demonstrating the skills. What should also be noticed from the results is that the students underlined that it was through their own efforts that they became aware of the qualities. Also, it was acknowledged that the instructors some how informed them in one way or another. In this regard, for example, it can be said that in exam contexts, instructors tell students what they should fulfill so as to score good grades in their writing through what is known as 'manner of presentation' (Geremew, 1999). This may also help these students to be able to identify the qualities. Also as they are students in advanced level, they could come across these ideas. However, all these may not necessarily lead them to demonstrate the required skills unless the students practiced them deliberately. In other words, identifying the elements at awareness level may not mean that the students can perform these skills in their writing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

In this descriptive study the following five questions were asked:

1. Does the students' writing reflect instructors' expectations of good academic papers?
2. Do the students' awareness of what constitute good academic writing approximate (match with) their instructors' expectations?
3. Do instructors help students meet their writing requirements and expectations?
4. To what extent do instructors actually look beyond content to language errors in students' writing? In other words, do instructors tolerate language errors?
5. What is the order of the seriousness of the problems in students' writing, if any, in terms of content, writing skills, and language as noticed by the instructors and experienced by the students?

In line with these questions, two techniques of data gathering were devised. In other words, in order to achieve these objectives, data were gathered from instructors and students using questionnaire and interview and were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis as presented in chapter four. The major findings using these techniques are reported below.

1. In order to see if the students' writing reflect the instructors' expectations, instructors were asked to judge their students' success and problems both in questionnaire and in the interview sessions. Students were generally found less successful in meeting the writing requirements and expectations of the instructors, specifically, instructors' expectations in terms of writing skills and English language proficiency.

2. To see the students' general perception (awareness of) what constitute good academic writing, and what their instructors expect from their papers, their views were also gathered and cross-checked against the instructors' expectations. The results seem to indicate that the students were able to identify (were found aware of) the qualities expected from their papers. However, they also appeared unable to demonstrate or implement those features of good academic papers, about which they have good awareness, in their papers.

3. So as to find out whether the instructors help their students handle their subject area writing, both the instructors and the students were asked. The results showed that, first of all, both the instructors and the students appeared to have different views as to the responsibility of instructors to help students improve their writing skills. However, as a whole it was found out that the instructors in the different departments appeared to have paid little attention to help their students improve their writing skills though it is possible that some instructors may individually help their students.

4. In order to see the extent to which instructors tolerate language errors in their evaluation of students' writing, the instructors' views and practices were elicited. As the results tended to indicate, the instructors, even though they may not appreciate the students' failure to use good English, come to accept that language errors are unavoidable and as a result, they tolerate errors as long as the errors do not affect understanding the content students want to convey.

5. Finally, both the instructors and their students were asked to give their judgments of the seriousness of the problems exhibited by or facing students as they observed them in terms of content, writing skill and English language. The results clearly indicated that both the instructors and the students ranked language problem as the most serious problem in the students' writing, followed by problem of writing skills. Content knowledge was found less a problem as compared with the other elements.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of this study, then, there are different types of problems students face in producing academic writing and in this respect, the results show that students fail to meet their instructors' expectations in the university. In this regard, the major problems are lack of the necessary writing skills and good command of target language in carrying out the writing tasks adequately.

It appears then that there is a gap between what is required of the students and what students actually can do in order to meet those requirements. What is more, as the

students and the instructors witnessed, the students have missed the “basics of writing” in particular and English language in general because of their past poor background and poor training. Also, as results show, not enough is done to bridge the gap in terms of helping students develop their academic skills. Thus it appears that more should be done in this area since success in university studies is closely linked with writing ability.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Subject area instructors witnessed that students exhibited weaknesses in their ability to produce papers which meet instructors’ expectations in subject area courses. Weaknesses were partly attributed to students’ deficiency in writing skills and in English language proficiency for academically unprepared students are coming to their departments. It thus seems necessary for subject area instructors in all disciplines to make writing an inevitable part of the teaching and learning process in their courses, recognizing that writing is an inevitable requirement for students to succeed in their courses.

2. It also appears to be important to establish cooperation between teachers of English and subject area instructors and conduct seminars, and workshops concerning their students academic writing. As a result, the English teachers’ general goal of strengthening students’ writing skills will become subject area instructors’ more specific goal of training students to handle the tasks of their disciplines.

3. From the results of the findings, it seems that for many students, writing courses in the university appear to be their first, perhaps only experiences with certain types of writing, particularly longer texts in English. It can be said that learning in the university is essentially becoming an initiated member of an academic community. In order to be able to maintain this membership, students then are required to learn the requirements and the expectations of the academia. This in other words means that students need to possess both the writing skills and linguistic skills that are necessary to carry out the variety of academic tasks Thus, one or two writing courses in university are unlikely to prepare these students for their subject area writing. This may imply that it is vital to offer more writing courses, which have specific relevance to their subject courses writing requirements.

4. As noticed from the results, the students as well as the instructors felt that students' training in writing courses in particular and in English language courses in general had been meager or nonexistent to accomplish their goals in writing assignments across the curriculum. In such a situation, it is difficult to assume that students can meet what is required of them to the level expected. It seems then that in order to help students learn and become successful in the university, one thing that is needed is to help them become aware of the purpose for and ways in which language is used in communication in the academic community. It is thus recommended that more language courses should be designed by collecting information from students and subject area teachers about what difficulties they

encounter and what specific courses they need as they move from writing classes to their writing demands in content courses.

5.4 Further Studies

As the present study is an attempt to see how students' writing performance meet instructors' expectations, there might be some aspects which have not been adequately and critically dealt with. Hence, further comprehensive and rigorous research is recommended, particularly on:

I. The potential contributions and possible limitations of subject area instructors for preparing students to handle university writing tasks in particular,
II. Subject area instructors' responding behavior to students' writing assignments.
III. The distinct nature of the writing tasks in each department, in relation to the academic writing requirements.
IV. The nature of the writing tasks in composition classes and their relevance to the subject area writing requirements

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Appendix A: Instructors' Questionnaire

Dear Instructor

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data for research purpose about your 3rd and 4th year students' success and problems (difficulties) in academic writing skills in response to your expectations and course(s) requirements. Please note that your genuine responses are extremely important in this regard.

Thank you in Advance

I. Please complete this section by providing information about yourself.

a. Department: _____
b. Academic rank: _____
c. Teaching experience: _____

II. How successful are your students in fulfilling the following points (under A, B & C) in their writing. Please answer these questions with respect to the course(s) you have been offering and to all students in your courses (by writing the appropriate number in the corresponding box).

Key:	Very successful	= 4
	Successful	= 3
	Less successful	= 2
	Not successful at all	= 1

A. Content

1 Demonstrate good understanding of the subject matter [ ]

2. Have good originality of ideas and novelty of thoughts [ ]

3. Papers show adequate understanding and use of information from assigned sources [ ]

B. Writing skills

4. Papers are focused to the questions, assignments or topics [ ]
5. Understand the wording of writing assignments and determine appropriate organizational pattern suited to the specific assignments [ ]
6. The introduction forecasts the paper's organization [ ]

7. Develop the main ideas in coherent manner in the body and complete the discussions in the conclusion [ ]
8. Papers have clear central ideas that relate directly to the assigned topics [ ]
9. Organize their ideas into academic type of writing as required [ ]
10. Indicate relationships among ideas using varied range of transitional device [ ]
11. Each paragraph has one main idea clearly developed [ ]
12. Show systematic discussion, and consistent argument. [ ]

C. Language

13. Write grammatically correct sentences [ ]
14. Use a wide range of vocabulary [ ]
15. Select effective, appropriate words and phrases [ ]
16. papers are essentially free from mechanical errors [ ]
17. Detect and correct any violation of conventions of grammar, diction, style and mechanics [ ]
18. Write varied sentence types [ ]

III. Please indicate (by writing the appropriate number in the corresponding box) the extent to which the following are problems or difficulties that you observe in the writing of your students.

Key: Very serious = 4
Serious = 3
Not serious = 2
Not a problem = 1

19. Failure to understand the questions or assignments for writing [ ]
20. Lack of understanding of the subject matter [ ]
21. Tendency to write memory dump type of papers [ ]
22. Lack of conceptual understanding of key terms in the writing questions or assignments to determine content and form [ ]
23. Lack of clear linkage between each section of the paragraphs [ ]
24. Low proficiency in English [ ]

25. Details are randomly put into papers with no focus on topic [ ]
26. Failure to present reasoned arguments and strong support [ ]
27. Failure to determine appropriate organizational pattern suited to the specific assignments [ ]
28. Tendency to use more undefined terms and words that they do not know the meanings clearly [ ]
29. Tendency to write long paragraphs, putting several ideas into them [ ]

III. As you have noticed your students writing, do they have any problems in the following three elements of writing?[Yes, No]. Please indicate the seriousness of the problem if you have agreed that they have problems in these areas. using the following scales

Key: Very Serious =4
Serious = 3
Less Serious = 2
Not a problem at all = 1

30. Knowledge of subject matter [ ]
31. Writing skills or proficiency [ ]
32. English language proficiency [ ]

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out your writing awareness, writing skills and writing problems. In this regard your genuine responses would be very much important for the success of this research. Therefore, I kindly request you to complete the following questions with the necessary information.

Thank you in advance

I. Please complete this section by providing information about yourself.

A. Department: _____

B. Year : _____

II. How important are the following points(items1-5) for you to be successful in your writing (to score good grades in your writing)? Please write the number in the corresponding box

Key: Very important = 4
Important = 3
Of little importance = 2
Not important at all = 1

1. Vocabulary knowledge [ ]
2. Grammatical knowledge [ ]
3. Organizing ideas clearly and logically [ ]
4. Knowing and demonstrating subject matter [ ]
5. Text management strategies(eg brainstorming, planning, Outlining, drafting, revising, and editing) [ ]

III. To what extent do you have problems or difficulties in the following areas when you write in your courses.(Please write the number in the corresponding box)

Key: Very serious = 4
Serious = 3
Less serious = 2
Not a problem at all = 1

6. Failure to understand writing questions or assignments [ ]
7. Lack of understanding of the meanings of key words in writing questions or assignments [ ]
8. Time limit or time constraint in classroom writing [ ]
9. Failure to recognize instructors' expectations from the writing tasks [ ]
10. Failure to know the content of the subject matter [ ]
11. Not knowing the grading criteria of my writing [ ]
12. Lack of good proficiency in English [ ]
13. Failure to recognize the specific demands of writing tasks at hand. [ ]

IV. As you have experienced, do they have any problems in the following three elements of writing?[Yes, No]. Please indicate the seriousness of the problem if you have agreed that you have problems in these areas.

Key: Very Serious = 4
Serious = 3
Less Serious = 2
Not a problem at all = 1

14. Writing skills [ ]
15. English language proficiency [ ]
16. Knowledge of subject matter [ ]

V. Please try to give your answers for all of the following questions by writing in the blank spaces provided (Please list your ideas clearly and precisely).

17. Could you list the good qualities or features of writing your subject area instructors expect from your papers?

18. What are the typical problems you have in producing written work? (Please list them)

19. What do you think are the sources (causes) of these problems? (Please state if any)

Appendix C: Questions for Instructors' Interview

Dear Instructor

The purpose of this interview is to gather information for research purpose about your 3rd and 4th year students' academic writing awareness, skills and problems in response to your expectations and course requirements. Therefore, please answer these questions with respect to the courses you have been offering and with all students in your courses

1. What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?

2. What are your expectations in each type? Are the features similar or different for each?

3. Do you believe that subject area instructors should be responsible for helping students improve their academic writing skills?

4. To what extent do you tolerate language errors in your students' writing? Which language errors make you get irritated? Why?

5. What are the major weaknesses or limitations of the writing produced by students in line with your course requirements and expectations?

6. What are the order of your students' problems in terms of content, writing competence and language proficiency?

Appendix D: Questions for Students' Interview

Dear student

The purpose of this interview is to find out your academic writing awareness, writing skills and writing problems. In this regard your genuine responses would be very much important for the success of this research. Therefore, I kindly request you to respond to all the questions.

1. Do you think the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?

2. What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers?

3. Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?

4. Do you think that your subject area instructors can help you improve your writing skills?

6 Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?

Appendix E: Transcript of Instructors' interview (the cassette is available**)**

Key : I= Interviewer
R= Respondent

Law [1]

I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?

R: Well, in our case, as our school is a law school, we need see students' qualities of writing in terms of their reasons, and arguments, consistent arguments, and organizational wise, we need to see, in my case as I teach senior students, I expect strong argument and coherence.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?

R: Well, regarding types of writing for final year students we have senior essay. The other is term paper, and essay types of exams.

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?

R Well, my expectations for each type of writing is different. For example, for senior essay, since it is the whole years commitment, my expectation is higher. I expect the students to treat their topics in detail and comprehensively. In exam types, it will be difficult to expect qualities of papers that are equal to senior papers, the time is very short. Also it is an exam atmosphere, and embarrassing so my expectations in these situations are different.

Well, my general expectations actually is average because, we do not give training to students about academic writing. Though the medium of instruction is English, students communicate outside classes in other nationality languages. I see there will be a problem of English language. We do not know how they were trained before they join the department. So because of these, our expectations, my expectations is on the average. Because we see if they are native speakers of English, the expectations would be high. Now except class discussions, even class discussion is some times in Amharic, outside class discussions, in dormitory, in cafeteria, in all situations, they discuss in other languages other than English, so such circumstances could not make us expect high.. Students also do not use English outside classes. They use Amharic or other nationalities languages. If we go back to high school, their English background is poor, so my expectations of students' performance in English is an average, because students' discussions in dormitory, in cafeteria, in all situations is other than English. So we should not expect high performance.

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students to improve their academic writing?

R: I think that is appropriate because every discipline has its own peculiar features of writing. May be at freshman levels, instructors in language classes will try to train students to speak and write in English in general ways. But when we go to a particular field, every field will have its own technicalities or its own jargons.. Though students learn general English at freshman levels, they need professional languages and skills of writing that they should get from their instructors. In our case, for the courses which

need typical writing, there are independent instructors assigned to these courses and the instructors know what should be injected to the students in these course. So in these courses, students are encouraged to write in that way, to understand the standard.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
R As I told you earlier depending on what type of paper I am reading, I am looking at, my expectations also differ. So when I read senior essay papers, I will be irritated if the subject and the verb do not agree. But when I am reading exam papers, I will tolerate even spellings and things of that kind. What I get irritated most is when a student writes a small letter after full stop. At that stage, student by extinct should not make such mistakes my language expectations will also depend on that. So for instance in research papers (senior essays) I do not want to see problems of language. But in exam situations, I tolerate students' error of language. One thing that irritates me too much is to see small letters after full stop. Such minor errors which should be committed at this level irritates me.
I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: There might be weaknesses except we give our own excuses for that, otherwise even the minor things, problems of subject-verb agreements are there, still some of the students' handwriting is very terrible, the content and the forms, language problems are there, illegible papers are submitted.

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: All of them are related in one way or another. But especially language and organization are very much related. In my opinion, I would like to put that the major problem is language. The second problem is organization and the third could be content. As I told you their problem is to express their position. Had the language been Amharic, they would have expressed it very well. Since the language is English, you see the content but not well explained and well organized. So in my case the first problem is language and then some how related to language is organizational problem. Every student has a minimum understanding of the content. So the language and organization problems are very serious

Law [2]
I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: I think the merits of good papers in our department is the facts and laws, organized with substantiated. The second is the organization, and the third is the analysis. And these are dependent on the language. You can successfully put the substance if you have good language. You may have good organization if you have the language. You can have good analysis if you have good language. So language is one of the qualities that should be considered in the evaluation of good papers.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: We do not have such different assignments or styles of writing. We simply give students to make analysis based on the given practice and law so that it is simply a type of analysis, a type of discussions, a type of resolving controversies, confronting the students. It is a paper of analysis based on facts, issues to arrive at certain conclusions.
I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: well that is clear there is no special thing for law students than others. Some to succeed, some to fail, because some are clear in thinking and some are not clear in thinking. Some have good command of the language construction, some are weak. So the answer may be both, some succeed, some fail.
It should be based on your experience. Based on your experience. What types of students are coming to the faculty, so I make references to last year before last year and I try to evaluate this year students. My expectations are generally based on my previous experiences and expectations I have had. It should not be from the vacuum that one expects and says it is high or low. It should be simply from your experience and students you have now. If I have best students my expectations will be higher, when I have low students, my expectations may be lower.

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students improve their academic writing?
R: Well, that is yes and no. yes because instructors have objectives in improving the thinking of his students, the writing of his students and that is one means of teaching the subject area. so with the objectives of teaching his subject area he should teach them how to write, he has to assign readings and he has to give them the possibility of speaking and arguing. This I think can enable students to improve their language. So a subject area instructor has some contribution to their students to improve their language capacity simply by giving students opportunities of raising questions and answering questions, arguing in classes and presenting their papers. All these contribute to improve their language, but one instructors who has the objective of teaching subject matter should not take assignments to improve the sole objective of improving the language capacity of the students, so it is an indirect one that we contribute. I do not think he has the obligations in improving the language capacity of the students, so he has the obligation of assisting but not direct obligation of teaching the language.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
R: Errors that make me misunderstand the substance cannot be tolerated. A student wants to tell me some thing positive may write something negative. In that case if you I understand, what he wants to say I may be irritated. Otherwise students generally have language difficulty that I can tolerate if I can understand the substance. But in case I cannot understand the substance, because of his failure to make proper expression of language that is very difficult to tolerate because the substance is affected, not for the mere fact that the student has made language errors that I will be irritated. It is simply when he distorts the fact he presented to me that makes me irritated.

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: Well, the main one is simply grammatical errors, constructions. Some do not seem to be able to construct simple sentence such as "he is a student" these are simply trivial, some have such difficulty. The serious problem is grammatical errors, even failure to understand writing questions could be due to language problems.

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: The most difficult aspect is obviously the language problem. This is I think the highest problem. The second is skill, and the last substance. The serious problem students are facing is the language. I can say, the least problem is the substance. They have the "raw materials" but they cannot tell us. This is always proved after exam papers of the students are corrected, students come to complain. They come, see their papers and they ask as to why such grade is given to them with respect to the question. They tell me that they want to say this, which is not actually said. So the first problem we misunderstood each other is that one says he has said this, but I tell him that he has not said this, so the first problem that raise is the language problem. The skill is obviously one. They have the substances in many cases they know, but they do not tell how they can answer that

Sociology [1]
I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: Well, in my department, my own view of a good or a successful paper should constitute the following
Most importantly, it should have novelty of thought. Students while doing their senior essay papers, term papers, or group papers are always expected to look out into social problems which are new and try to see those problems to analyze those problems, from established theories in sociology, in a noble or a new manner, so the novelty of thought is something. The other which comes following an idea to work on is the issue of vocabulary. We expect a very decent and a more large size vocabulary. Vocabularies or words that give the right sense to what pupils intend to say, to argue or to deliver to their audiences. And English luckily is a very good language that has quite a bulk of words to mean different things at different times in a different sense. It contextualizes our understanding and we also expect our students to be good in vocabulary when they write up their papers. So we expect our students to be good in vocabulary wise when they write up their papers. Well another point that I see is very important is the issue of coherence or the flow of argument. It is not only enough to have some ideas to work on, and good words to write up but we need to have coherence of idea, argument that should flow in a consistent manner, in a manner that tells us the extent of debate, the extent of discourse that took place by people by scholars or theoreticians from one side or another, from one perspective or another when a paper is done in an exhaustive manner in a very cogent, and convincing manner, we say the paper is written up. Last but not least is the issue of convincing ability. Arguments in senior essay, term papers or any other studies, in my opinion, should be arguments be based on a formulated

hypothesis. Hypothesis is a motion if an idea that a sociologist frames and intends to prove while collecting data both, secondary and primary data. If at the end of the day the student cannot prove his argument, or disprove at least , then the entire exercise of writing up papers I think end up in vain or in a futile exercise. These four issues or yardsticks are very significant to evaluate a paper as successful or good academic paper.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: well, we assign a number of responsibilities to our students in most cases. Now we face a problem with student population so that teachers cannot give them papers. Otherwise they write up term papers, group papers, senior essays. These are the types of assignments we give to our students..

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: Well, the senior essay a type is a type where you really intend to evaluate the efforts of the department upon the prospective graduates. So there is a great deal of expectations from each individual student when it comes to senior essays. . In other words, we want them, we anticipate them to be good vocabulary wise, in the novelty of thought, in coherence, and in its convincing ability. Whereas term papers, and group papers are not expected to be as strong and as evaluative as the senior essay. Term papers and group papers what we would want to know is whether the student is keeping an eye on social problems, is an attendant to on overriding social problems, whether he or she tries to see those problems from the perspective that is scientific, from an established sociological perspective. And, of course, write up their thoughts in a very extensive and convincing manner. Also I am one of the young men who have managed to bear the burden of still giving subjective, sort of essay types of questions despite the government insistence in flooding us with large number of students, and what I expect in essay exams are, first and foremost, I want them to be precise and concise. Precision to the question that I have asked. The other is the coherence, or flow of idea when pupil write up essay answers. At times students start up with a very good statement, that is pertinent and relevant to question asked, but end up in narrating stories that are, otherwise, by any means not related to the original question asked. This brings about a very distorted, not meaningful, but a very large paragraph that will not value the student effort. It is not writing too much, but writing precisely and coherently.

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students improve their academic writing?
R: Sadly, we have not done what we were supposed to do regarding your question. First we never felt that teaching pupils, arming and equipping them with proficient English is our responsibility. Partly it is our responsibility, because when they graduate from this department, they will be graduates from sociology department. When they go out and join the job market, when they get interviewed, when they write up reports, proposals, projects, then they are writing as a professional. So in a way their language performance also has got to do with their professional excellence. So I personally feel that we have to do something. I do not know what right this moment, something in order

to increase, upgrade the language proficiency of our students. Otherwise, I also fear that that this has to start not only from primary schools, and secondary schools. It has to start even from the family.
When we come to the department effort, the department instructors have independent initiative. If you take mine, I personally lend out m books to my students to read it not only sociology books, but any other books I have in m hands. I see this increase the vista, the horizon of students, and even their language capacity. Yes, there is a need for a more broadened institutional efforts, by subject professors, as you mentioned, by the departments to do something about the problem, the language problem.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
R: Well, all of them get me irritated, because if you have something to do, you have to do it in a standard manner. When you speak English you should not think in Amharic. Stating sentence with because annoys me. using words inappropriate places, abusing the meanings of words, for the sake of telling the instructor that they know some good words to use them here and there, hotchpotch , that is some thing I do not tolerate. It is better not to know words than using them in the wrong way. So as much as I can I try to rectify any language errors that I see in my students' writings. There is none that I say I can tolerate.

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: The first problem in students writing is the problem of not coming up with an idea that they think is new idea. This comes because as I said earlier pupils come to colleges and universities, not even thinking about what they want or feel, but always told who said what and who argues in what manner. But when they arrive at certain juncture and when we request to think of something, literary the first thing to get terrible with what to think about , what sort of topic they should raise, the sort of agenda they should write about. The second problem is the issue of sitting down and jotting down their ideas in a manner not inundated with the words of other scholars. Pupils come up with senior essay topics, students immediately run to the library and see how much and how far it has been written about that topic. Suddenly, they feel themselves overwhelmed and there is nothing to write about, it belittles their contributions, with such an idea, they sit down to write and literary, start copying from books, journals and articles and comes up with volumes of articles, where you do not see them, where you do not read them arguing. There is another problem. Even then when you hear and read a number of authors, grafted in a manner one consequent with another, the coherence problems come up. It emerges. Unless otherwise you have your own established frame work, it will be very difficult to bring to merge the writings and contributions of quite a number of scholars in a coherent manner. So coherent as I see is a very problematic issue. When we grade relatively, the issue of language vocabulary wise, the issue of coherence by far outweigh as problems. And the issue of novelty of thought and ideas which are convincing.

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?

R: well I think the language element ranks first as a problem. When you go through the writings ups of senior essays, term papers, and group papers of our students, for all the problems and the impediment, I personally believe that it is the first problem. Second the writing skill needs to be improvised. It is also a problem. But as far as message is concerned, at times in a very distorted manner, our students are due press to show the reader, the audience that they have something to tell, they have something to relay, to deliver to the audience. So I do not think it is a problem of message to tell, instead it is a problem of having appropriate channel, the appropriate medium which is the language itself, in order to properly tell out their stories right out, their ideas.

Sociology [2]
I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: The features of good papers in the course I am giving it varies from course to course, but the main thing I see is a paper should have good ideas about the subject matter. It is not just only ideas but it should be written well, well written stylistically, and logically coherent kind of papers, grammatically correct kind of things. The other thing is the paper should contain introduction, it should engage the reader with interest, there should be a body and then conclusion that would bring the whole things together. That kind of paper I usually expect from my students.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: In anthropology we usually do two types of writing. One is ethnography which a description or analysis of a given culture or society, one culture or one society .and the second one is ethnology which is a comparative study and culture. In the second one we are interested in theories but in the first one, we are interested in pure description and analysis of a given culture. So description and comparison are the two different kinds of writing. Students are required to go out observe and then describe an event so in term papers I usually use the description of an event. Go out observe interview and then write clear description of what they have observed. When we came to thesis, we usually expect our students to integrate the empirical data with theoretical debates. It is not only describing, but students should be able to integrate theories with data collected, so the thesis is more like, you know the expectation is high, so the level is different. In case of essay exams, we require students to debate on and analyze issues to see how much they have got the subject matter .Term papers, clear description of what they observe. The expectation for thesis kinds are higher than the term papers.

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: It depends on who the student is and what background he or she had before coming here and even here. There are some successful students who really follow a kind of format you expect from them. And there are students who fail to really full fill this kind of requirements. We do not expect all students to be that kind, and we do not assume that

all our students are weak. Some are good, some poor we have this mixed kind of experience.

I think overall, when we talk about undergraduate students the level of writing is not up to the standard. It is very low, low probably this is because they do not come from very good background. The high school they came from do not have rigorous kind of training starting from the elementary to the high school and even in the university. So we do not expect much in terms of language in terms of analysis and in terms of organization. There are few students who arte good and up to the expectation. But most of the students, some times very much disappointing and we ask ourselves some times why we require these students to write B.A thesis. Some copy previous good thesis and present to their professors, plagiarism is one common problem. In that case, overall, I do not think it is good type and successful. There are a lot of problems. There are pupils who even can not express themselves let alone write thesis. Probably, I do not know in the future what will be good is to require outstanding students do thesis, others to do like field work. It is a very good exercise every body should pass through that process, but the result, the outcome we get is not that really much satisfactory as far as I am concerned

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students improve their academic writing?
R: Ya, not all teachers , but you know in our case, teachers who are responsible in teaching writing methodology are really expected to show students how papers should be written, the content of paper, what paper should contain, how to collect information etc. In my case, if I am teaching methodology, I believe I am responsible to do that.. not only methodology, some times when we give courses like writing course I grade students' papers, I usually comment what they should do in writing, message of language, what should come first, , what comes next, the organization of things. I usually comment their papers how should be written, but in most cases, I believe it is up to other instructors like Sophomore English teachers who are teaching methodology and courses that are relevant to writing papers since I am not teaching methodology, what I look for is subject matter rather than the language and the writing. And there is no that kind of thing in our department at least now. I had people talk about extra curricula things, but there is no program or assigned curricula to teach writing.. In general university meeting, people suggest how to improve the students' writing, how to improve speech and other things. Still now it is not incorporated into the curricula. In the department, there is no such different efforts to teach writing. I as a teacher when I give assignments and return the assignments by commenting, but there is no a program or any other attempts made in my department.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
R: Usually in our case in culture description of culture, we are very much interested in subject matter, more than English. There are degree to which we can tolerate the language. We know that the students do not have good background, we do not expect them to be like a British or American. We tolerate the English problems to some extent,

but when it is too much and when it is difficult to read at all to read and understand the essence, the subject matter, then it is then , it creates a problem and we really require them to improve the language in one way or another. I do not know how but it is not tolerable when you do not understand what students want to say. About their subject matter. There is such kind of hindrance it becomes irritating but as I said we do not expect them to be British or America. There are smaller things which irritates me, small grammars, is, was, I are and you is. We face that kind of things .this is not something expected of this level students. Some times they can not even construct simple sentences. That things really irritate and sadden .simple things that could be learned in high school.

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: One important thing as I told you already is language. Their language is very weak and except for few students. The other thing is they do not follow instructions. They fail when they do not follow instruction and they do not know what is required. That is one of the reason they fail. And the other thing is when you come to their paper writing, some of the papers do not make sense, not coherent, coherent in following one another's idea. It is a hotchpotch thing. The kind of organization is very weak

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: I think in terms of content, if they are given a good instruction, a good guide about how to write their assignment, then in that case, most of them follow that. The most serious problem is problem of language. In terms of language most of the students are weak, probably 75% they cannot construct a single sentence without errors. The thing is they may have concept, they may have ideas, but they do not have good language to express that idea. Unless they express that idea, then the writing skills become bad, or their content will not be good. So for me, the serious problem is language and then even the writing skill comes next, then the content. If they follow instruction, their content is ok. If the language is poor their writing skill is distorted and the whole thing becomes bad.

I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: The features of good papers written in my department particularly in my field of study include: Papers must have introduction, focusing on the objectives of the papers and the rational of the papers. This will be followed by the main body of the paper which is discussing the issues in detail and throughout the way, we also check the originality, the logical analysis and argument of the paper, and finally the paper should have condensed summary followed by concluding remarks and suggestions.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: We ask our students to write different types of papers. We have term papers, and we have senior essays. In general. We ask students to write research oriented papers and project oriented papers.

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: In each type our expectations are originality, clarity, systematic discussions.

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students improve their academic writing?
R: In general, I do not think that subject area teachers be responsible for the language students use in their writing because first we do not have the time. If we focus on correcting and helping students use good English, we may lose the essence of the subject matter. Secondly, since we are not language specialists to help students improve their writing, we may not be capable enough to give the right preparation. Even though we do not have the time and the responsibility to help them write good papers using good English, we still advise our students to improve their language and writing ability through reading. And to carry the experience they gained in their research coursework that they developed how to write the introduction, develop the body from literature review. These are the only advice we do for our students since we are not in a position to give them pure and exclusive and specific advice in English language and writing.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
In general, there are many intolerable things which occur and which we observe in students' writing. Particularly I do not have the capacity to tolerate very serious grammatical errors, spelling errors that make the whole sentence vague and ambiguous. I am not referring to some slight grammatical errors. And small spelling errors. I am referring to serious grammatical errors and spelling errors which go outside the context of the discussion, which make the discussions vague and ambiguous.

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: Poor grammar, spelling errors, ambiguity in their sentences, wrong use of words. These are major problems. I repeat, poor grammar, spelling errors, ambiguity in their sentences and wrong use of words. These are major problems I observed.

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: As I told you earlier, language is a serious problem. And then writing and content. If they have good English language, if they know the techniques of writing, I think they will communicate their ideas. They do not have problems of content. Their problem is how to use appropriate language, and how to organize their ideas in good writing. So I could put them in order: The first serious problem is language, the second writing and the third one content. So long as the two conditions are fulfilled, the students are able to write good papers.

History(1)
I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: It is a very good question. Features of good papers, first of all, each paper has a topic, the selection of the topic has to be within the course content, course description, and it has to be very clearly explained in a clear language, expressing the theme or themes or thesis if you may like that the students want to express or explain to his reader or audience. So the language has to be clear, it has to explain the subject matter, to the point, it has to have particularly in our field, history, evidence, foot note, and reference materials, with a complete bibliography. In other words, the form or format of writing a paper is also one of the quality of you know good paper. So simply by again and again writing one thing and explaining things in a redundant way does not make the paper good or containing a good features. Whether the paper is short or long, it does not really matter much, but I really consider whether the student has understood the subject matter, and has explained it in a very systematic way to show me that he has understood the whole thing and others can understand from his writing is what I mean the features of good papers.

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: The types of writing which are commonly assigned are essays, essay writing, trying to explain cause and effect relationships, in a historical event, and as history is concerned, chronology also has to have clear time frame, and at the same time students are expected to write short notes, explaining, you know, five W's and one H, I e How, Why When What Where, and who. We want students ,I personally want students to explain in a detailed way the questions that are forwarded to him by really highlighting cause and effect and showing the historical forces behind every event and I would also like students to relate these historical events to the contemporary world, the life within in, the activities we do, so whether it is short note or long essays, clarity has to be maintained, and at the same time it has to express an idea, complete idea on that subject matter, on that question.

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: Up to now in my experience over 25 years in this department, with plus and minus give and take, the majority of the students are successful. I have found excellent students, medium students and also those who do not cope with the subject matter. I found in my experience, roughly speaking three fourth of the students I have taught have been successful.

I: Do you think that subject area instructors should help students improve their academic writing?
I. Do you think that subject area instructors should help students to improve their academic writing?
R: In earlier days we used to do. But now we used to do that when assigning papers., when students were smaller in number, twenty, thirty or forty in class, but nowadays teaching one hundred students in a class, I found it to be very difficult. I could not assign papers, for instance for 100 4th students I was teaching this year first semester, but

nevertheless, I feel that there is something missing because of the teacher-student proportion. . they are overwhelming in number, I cannot correct all the papers but I would have liked to do so and that would make a difference.

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors when you evaluate your students' writing?
R: For example, students make spelling errors, they write their piece with no full stop. A sentence has to begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. I really get irritated when I could not find a sentence that satisfies the system of writing in English.
As far as history is concerned, the tendency nowadays is to look for historical facts and historical interpretations and not to worry about the language.. Otherwise, almost half of the students make it if we strictly follow language expectations, I think many students may not pass. Definitely, yes this is out of necessity. They really make mistakes. But any way, in the final analysis when students write their essays, I do not tolerate errors. I make very clear and critical corrections in their final essays because it is going to be printed, it is going to be read by others and I do not usually want students' mistakes to be seen by others.

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students' writing?
R: There are, you know, several flaws in writing. They try to write long paragraphs, patching sentences together, and carrying several ideas in one paragraph rather than explaining a clear cut idea in a paragraph way and making arguments, historical arguments in their writing and at the same time they try to put so many ideas in one passage. That is what I see as students' weaknesses. And at the same time they try to use terms or words that they do not know the meanings clearly. Whenever they put in tough words which they do not understand, they think that they have written good things and they have become good intellectuals so to say by using a kind of "bombastic words" which they do not know and when I read have no anything in it.

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: When you come to exams, you know, the organization, and the content are very important, because as I have already indicated to you I looking at specific and wholesome evaluation, I look at the content and the organization and give it the highest mark but as far as language is concerned there is a slight tolerance in correcting examination papers but as I have told you when correcting senior essay papers come , I look at every sentence, including the content, the organization and the language.. Therefore, content and the organization and the language are my concern.
When we see the problems, the language is a serous problem, language is very serious because, you know they have some content in it but the language, the way they express it, does not help to express the content. Next comes the organization, it is a writing problem, what the students suffer from is use of inappropriate language they know the content, they miss of course organization and in a way organization is a problem. What should comes first comes at last, and that should come last may be in the middle and

they miss the target. But in the whole theme what makes them miss the target is the use of the language in their writing has really been the language problem.

History(2)
I: What are the features of good or successful academic papers in your course(s)?
R: Term papers need good, and full reading, understanding of the reading, good presentation, and technicalities e g end notes. For senior essay, good research on documents and from oral informants, understanding and analysis of issues, good presentation and technicalities

I: What types of writing are students required to produce in your department?
R: term papers senior essays and essay exams

I: What are your expectations in each type? Are the levels of your expectations similar or different in each type?
R: Term papers need good, and full reading, understanding of the reading, good presentation, and technicalities e g end notes. For senior essay, good research on documents and from oral informants, understanding and analysis of issues, good presentation and technicalities

I. Do you think that subject area instructors should help students to improve their academic writing?
R: Some very good, most average and some poor by the grades given some high/average/low. Achievement depends on ability, motivation and hard work, but all differ among students
I am not sure what they mean. I look for the features described above and events accordingly. Senior essays are always evaluated by more than one staff member. good reading, understanding and good presentation and technicalities for term paper and senior essay

I: To what extent do you tolerate language errors?
R: I mark down for really extensive language errors. Language errors what should have been cancelled in Freshman or Sophomore courses annoy me most, I e basic errors, failure to observe agreement in number and subject-verb and tense structure eg simple past ”they did not wanted” etc.

I. Do you think that subject area instructors should help students to improve their academic writing?
R: Yes, but it is an uphill battle

I: As you noticed so far what are the major limitations or weaknesses in your students’ writing?
R: Grammatical structures, spelling, long and confused sentence, poor legibility

I: How do you judge the seriousness of the problems of your students' writing in terms of content, writing skills and language?
R: For poor students, poor content is the main problem but their language is usually poor also. Better students in terms of content often produce papers poor in terms of English proficiency and writing competence.

Appendix F: Transcript of Students' Interview (the cassette is available**)**

Key: I= Interviewer
R= Respondent

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R: Of course, my answer is yes. And for the question in what ways, in order to just my ideas to the teachers, I have to briefly write my opinions or ideas. Therefore, the writing skill is crucial to be successful in exams, even if I understand the question, if I do have a problem of explaining my ideas to him, it has an effect on my grade. The teacher do not get me what I do want to say, and even I may write what I do not want to say because of lack of writing skills. Therefore, I think it is so important and crucial, in getting success in academic situations

I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers?
R: In my case, the want our essays to be well-organized, flow in a manner. First we have to introduce our ideas, and then content sequentially and how to conclude and most of them tell us that our papers would be more interesting if we organize it well and give you good mark. Therefore, the first one and most important is organization. The second one is the content, how they are more strong. Also not going around the bush. How we are able to tell our ideas in short manner, how we shortly explain our ideas.
I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings**?**
R: I can learn the criteria of their evaluation of good papers just from the grades I incur, and the second one is they by themselves tell us what our writing is to be

I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: This is somewhat subjective. In my case, I want them to equip us, just to inform us the good ways of writing, or organizing our essays or writing. But they of course do not do that at all. But there are some instructors who when they give us term papers and exams of essays, they say I want you to write in this manner or that mention this, but intentionally they do not want to professionally tell us our writing skills to be like this or that**.**

I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: Of course I do have problems and from the three. According to me, it is writing skills as to me. Regarding the language problem, I think it is not a such serious as the writing skills. Lack of subject knowledge, I do not have that much problem

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R: I think writing skill is very important in my field. Above all, our field requires extensive writing skills. we do a lot of term papers, exam are done in writing. for all these, we require writing skills-they are very important
I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers

R: Knowledge of subject matter, is very important. In addition, precise and comprehensive writing method is very important. They judge it as one criteria. These are the only ones.

I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?
R: I know these in two ways. Directly and indirectly. Some times, in one way or another they tell you, and indirectly, I know from those students who would score good grades., how they write. I writer their methods of writing with their grades and we correlate these with the expectations of the teachers and say these are the ways or points The teachers expect

I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: I do not expect this from my law professors. This is the one from the language department
I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: I would say that I have a serious problem with language proficiency. As to the writing skill, I organize it well and the knowledge of the subject area, I acquire it by reading. My problem is the proficiency of the language, how to communicate with my instructors and as to the rank of these elements, my serious problem is the language, second the writing skills and last lack of the subject area knowledge.

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R**:** The ability to write is very important for my subject studies, because, in the future I expect that I have to write research papers, I have to write report in the work area. It is also important for academic purpose, because, in my department, some of the exams are subjective. In the subjective type, we have to write. Our instructors expect us to write in best English. If they do not understand us what we are saying, for that specific question, they do not give us or evaluate my writing carefully. So I Imagine that good writing skill is important, specially in exams to get good evaluations**.**

I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers
R: Our instructors, especially, expect from us, good subject coherence, good coherence. Especially when we write term papers, and write in exams, we have to put the points coherently and one point is to explain that point in simple English, in brief English. Some time they expect good hand writing.

I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?
R: I have some behaviors. When I got grade, at the end, I go to my instructor and ask them how they evaluated me. Then they tell what my problems are . they tell me that I did not include these and that points. In this way I try to increase my understanding of their criteria.

I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: Actually I do not expect . They are not language teachers and that is my problem, I have to improve my writing by myself. Only research instructor tell us how to write research papers, the use of language in writing, but not seriously. They tell us on the way of instructing, not to increase our knowledge

I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: especially, I lack writing skills and language proficiency. Knowing subject area is not that much a problem, especially, in my case. I have language problem, especially vocabulary and the like. Writing . when I rank them therefore, language proficiency is the most serious one, then writing competence, and finally subject area

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R: My answer for this question is exactly yes. Because it is important to succeed in writing. without writing of my essay, examinations etc, I can not achieve successful grades, it is very important.

I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers
R: Of course, in our department, they are searching for only the facts, done in the past. Of course, they always give grade for writing which is expected from the student. The qualities are all the rules.

I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?
R: There is no clear determination. Mostly, we gave our assignments, they saw it, and mostly they do not want to show us, where our difficulties or shortages are to make us stronger.
I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: Yes, indeed. They have to show us such kinds of things. Of course, it is not their primary purpose. They are teachers of the past activities, not English

I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: I do have some problem on the writing skill. The content is very easy. You wasted more than four months, so you can get it from reading now and then, from memory now and then, so no problem for the content. But we do not have the skill. We read now and then, but do not write now and then. We write a term paper, mid exam and final exam. Out of these we do not have any writing skill. So I do have a problem of writing skill. Language is not a problem. You can express your idea in any words. So in terms of problem, I rank them writing skill. The second one is language and the third the content.

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R: Really it is very important since writing is one of the skills of the language. Without writing, nothing else is done and as a result, since the students attending in one class are many, therefore, teachers should attain their ability through writing because of lack of time and other problems.

I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers
R: By the way this depends on individual instructors. As I have seen before, the quality they see, most of the time if the written matter is related to their opinion, this is the first. The other criteria may be their golden words, they taught in classes

I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?
R: I do not really know on what criteria they evaluate our papers, because the criteria they use did not announce to students in class. Even though they back some papers to us since the activity by itself is subjective, then we can not determine how they evaluate. The qualities expected, I think is that hand writing should be readable, content that an individual write should relate to the topic given and also it should be evidential. This is up to me. This answer is not regarding what they told us.

I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: Of course, they tried, but it is not enough. Yes, of course, their responsibility is not enough, may be because of the curriculum, their background.

I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: My problem is language, since our background is the feeding system. Many students, including me have language problems. So the rank is that language problem is first, then writing skill and finally content.

I: Do you think that the ability to write is important for success in your studies? In what ways?
R: Yes, indeed, writing skill has importance in our department, especially, in history, it is subjective type. Unless we do have the skills of writing, we lose all the marks we need to achieve. Unless we write, no other option, alternative to get mark.

I: What do you think your subject area instructors expect from good academic papers
R: Oh we do not know. I think they may include the content, good English, and grammatical linkage of a paper, may be good criteria for grading.. they never told us. Oh it is forbidden. When we asked them the told us, it s the duty of the instructors and it is forbidden to tell to students.

I: How Do you know the criteria by which your subject area instructors evaluate or grade your writings?

R: Oh we do not know. I think they may include the content, good English, and grammatical linkage of a paper, may be good criteria for grading. They never told us. Oh it is forbidden. When we asked them the told us, it s the duty of the instructors and it is forbidden to tell to students.

I: Do you think that your subject area instructors should help you improve your writing skills?
R: I think they should help us. A teacher should teach his student not only the academic content, but the language

I: Which skills or knowledge do you think or feel are you lacking? Writing skills? Language proficiency? Lack of subject area knowledge?
R: In content, I do not have any problem, but the in the language, we face many problems, especially using English as effectively as we are expected, especially in spelling. This is because, our instructors did not write any thing on the black board. They simply stand up in front of us, tell us something throughout the semester. So we face problems whether we spell the words correctly or not, we write as we guess and when we write in the exams, we face spelling problems. Then the writing and the content.