



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

INVESTIGATING THE NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF WRITING
DIFFICULTIES AMONG LEARNERS AT NINTH GRADE: A CASE OF
TEJI SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

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**Investigating the Nature and Prevalence of Writing Difficulties
among Learners at Ninth Grade: A Case of Teji Senior Secondary
School**

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Abstract

The general objective of the study was to investigate the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade of Teji Senior Secondary School. Descriptive study research design was employed to address the difficulties. In this study mixed research method was used. The researcher targeted grade 9 students and English language teachers who are teaching in grade 9 at Teji Senior Secondary School. 150 sample students were taken using systematic sampling technique and five English language teachers using availability sampling method. In order to achieve the study employed, four data gathering tools were observation, questionnaire, document analysis, and interview. The observation used to explore how students practice paragraph writing and how teachers assist students to solve writing difficulties. Open and closed questionnaires used to find out students' challenges in writing. Document analysis was employed to identify features of students' challenges in writing paragraphs. Furthermore, interview was employed to find out students' difficulties in practice writing paragraphs. All data collected using different tools were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The study identified the major factors affecting the students writing skills.. These are challenges of awareness parts of paragraph, steps paragraph writing and challenges of organization, unity, capitalization, punctuation, spelling and coherence. Therefore, in order to avoid students' challenges in practice writing paragraphs, EFL teachers' should engage students in various writing activities give them different sentence, paragraph and simple essay writing tasks, feedback and also motivate learners.

LISTS OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAU- Addis Ababa University

EFL- English as First Language

ESL- English as Second Language

MoE- Ministry of Education

EnLa- English Language

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Declaration

I declare and affirm that this thesis is my own work. I have followed all ethical and technical principles of scholarship in the preparation, data collection, data analysis and compilation of this thesis. Any scholarly matter that is included in the thesis has been given recognition through citation. I solemnly declare that this thesis has not been submitted to another institution for the award to any academic degree or diploma. Brief quotation from this thesis may be made without permission provided that accurate and complete acknowledgement of the source is made. Requests for extended quotation from this Thesis in whole or in part may be granted by head of the school or department when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interest of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author of the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Because writing is an invaluable skill, students are expected to develop their writing skills. Students' English language ability in writing skill plays a great role in both contemporary academic and future careers. Hence, the key role of English language ability in writing has an important and encouraging impact on the academic achievement of the students. This is because the ability to write various genres of writing effectively through English is becoming increasingly important in our global community (Weigle, 2002).

Similarly, studies suggest that writing is one of the most important language skills to be developed by people in the academic world, especially by those who are learning English as their major area. Regarding this, Harmer (2004) states that "being able to write is a vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language" (p. 2). Weigle (2002) elucidates that "the ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important in our global community, and instruction in writing is thus assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign language education" (p. 1).

The above evidence supports the fact that high school students are anticipated to learn to write specific types of technical texts that are related to the subjects they are learning (Graefen, 1996). This includes adopting a style of writing proper to the academic subjects and genre the student is writing in. Students must also learn to apply a rhetoric that is characterized by an exact, systematic logical argumentation, and empirical rationale. According to Graefen (1996), academic writing requires students to link and synthesize diverse sources of knowledge into an authoritative viewpoint.

However, Byrne (1991) argues that writing is a difficult task for learners because it requires conscious mental effort and takes time to learn it. He classifies the difficulties into three types. The first is a psychological problem where the writer faces the problem of lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the reader. The second is a linguistic problem because writers have to express their ideas in a grammatical sense. The third is a cognitive problem in that Writing has to be taught over formal instructions where the writer masters the organization of his or her ideas in written communication.

Asmervik (1999) also points out those writing difficulties are about students' having difficulties to write a text on their own. Spelling is also a contention in consideration of those students with writing difficulties tend to write in the same way as the word is pronounced. Students who have problem with spelling often avoid words that are difficult for them. When writing they choose another word that might not be appropriate for the context, which later affects the students writing, since the student does not develop in the writing process (Graham & Harris, 2006).

However, although writing skill is considered tremendously important, a lot of studies conducted in the diverse EFL contexts strongly suggest that EFL learners, who study in different educational institutions that use English as a medium of instruction, encounter severe problems in writing skills that hampers their academic improvement (Tahaine, 2010; Rababah, 2003; Bacha, 2002; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1997).

According to Tahaine (2010), writing skill "... is needed for taking notes, describing objects or devices and writing essays, answering written questions, writing their compositions, etc." (p. 79). Like other EFL contexts, the situation in Ethiopia has also been reported poor, and high school students lack in all English skills, in general, and writing skills, in particular. Various studies in Ethiopia (Alamirew, 2005; Abebe, 2003; Awol, 1999; Geremew, 1999; Italo, 1999; Yonas, 1996; Hailemichael, 1993; Tassew, 1993; Dejene, 1990; Taddele, 1990) have shown that acquiring the writing skill seems to be hard and demanding for many Ethiopian students. As a result, students have low writing ability compared to what is expected of them.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Writing skill is more and more important nowadays that writers engage in writing work for different purposes and achieve varied benefits from it. Learners achieve different benefits to their academic purpose from developed writing skill. Becoming a proficient writer is one of the major objectives of many students, especially for those who want to become members of international business, administrative or academic communities (Tribble, 1997). Thus, as researcher (Anchalee and Pongrat, 2008; Reid, 1994; Raimes, 1983) indicated the importance of writing as it helps to activate thinking, reinforce learning, develop social networks; engaging in civic discourse, supporting personal and spiritual growth, reflecting on experience, communicating professionally and academically, building relationship with readers including friends, family, and likeminded individuals, and engaging in aesthetic experiences.

The importance of writing skills increases as students join high school since education at Secondary School requires good academic writing skills to effectively carry out their academic tasks. In secondary school, students are required to learn the core components of academic writing, rhetorical structure, lexicon, and conventions of writing in order to produce effective writing which can fit the level. These writing skills enable the students to make headway into their specialized field because they can form academic relationships within their disciplines through their academic writing ability (Hyland, 2004).

However, in Ethiopia, secondary school students have been showing low writing ability. The researcher's own teaching experience, colleagues' informal blames and empirical studies on the area (e.g. Tekle et. al, 2012; Temesgen, 2008; Alamirew, 2005; Kefelegn, 2003; Geremew, 1999 and Yonas, 1996) support students' writing skill problems. Primarily, the researcher as an English language teacher in Teji Senior Secondary School has been able to witness that most high school students of his own classes cannot write sentences, paragraphs or shorter essays effectively. Some of these students are not able to write paragraphs other than writing some phrases and clauses. In line with this, many students skip the writing part because they are unable to write effective sentences or paragraphs which are given as part of their final examination. This is also supported by other English language teachers who are teaching English language in the school. This is confirmed through the informal discussion teachers made during the teaching-learning period and at the end of the semester during the assessment.

In context of Teji Secondary School, the researcher as English language teacher in the school has observed the students are ineffective in writing. EFL learners are not active to express themselves in English through writing. This failure of students, in writing can be shown clearly by their inability to develop short paragraphs to express their ideas. It seems most learners are unable to produce short paragraphs and letters to friends. Moreover, there are complaints from EFL teachers about the students' performance. Teachers often observe that students' exercise book is filled with a lot of writing problems which make it difficult to focus on the ideas which students are trying to express. This study attempts to acquire some understanding about nature and prevalence of writing difficulties that grade nine students encounter while writing in English. Knowing about these difficulties will help in 'Making principled decision in the classroom

concerning the types of skills wish to impart and the method of imparting them (Shanklin, 1994, 147)

Shanklin, focused on the logical arrangement of sentences in a paragraph and usage of cohesive devices. He found out that students encounter some problems in their cohesion and coherence of EFL paragraph writing. Mulugeta (2014) investigated the perception and practice of assessment of writing of grade 10 teachers using descriptive survey design and qualitative method. The study revealed that even though the schoolteachers have good attitude towards assessment of writing, the result of the study indicated that different factors caused assessment of writing to be neglected area of practice. In addition, Mohammed (2015) assessed students' paragraph writing problems. The researcher identified the major paragraph writing problems students encounter. These are problems of organization, unity, adequacy, grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling. Italo (1999) conducted research on the comparison of the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback in AAU with reference to second year students and concluded that there was no significant difference between the writing performances of group one students who received feedback from their peers. It was also concluded that re-writing improves students' writing significantly. Furthermore, Muhamedamin (2015) conducted on 'Assessing students' paragraph writing problem in Bedeno secondary school with special reference to grade 10 students' in focus.' The findings revealed that students did not include three parts of paragraph when they drafted the paragraph. Teachers did not give constructive feedback for the students. He used only document analysis, observation and questionnaire as data collection instruments. He did not use interview for teachers and closed ended questionnaire for students to triangulate the information he analysed. Arguably, most of the above researchers did not deeply assess the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties in grade 9 in focus. Even though, the above-mentioned researchers have conducted research on writing and paragraph writing problems faced by EFL students none of them has addressed the current issues on the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties in detail. Using the above as research gaps the current study aimed to assess nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners in the case of grade 9 at Teji Senior Secondary School, Southwest Shoa.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade of Teji Senior Secondary School.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the nature of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade.
- To describe the prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade.
- To analyze factors that contributes to writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade.

1.4. Research Questions

- What kinds of writing difficulties are there among learners at ninth grade?
- What is the prevalence of these writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade?
- What are the factors that contribute to the writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade?

1.5. Significance of the Study

It is expected that findings from the study help to give insights on the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at grade 9. Primarily, it adds value to our knowledge on the nature of writing among learners about writing, writing prevalence and writing difficulties. More specifically, the study gave a clue for methodology specialists of Ethiopian second language teachers about writing difficulties among students. This helps them to consider strategies and other psychological and educational factors in preparing different teaching materials and pedagogical activities. This awareness may also initiate curriculum designers at the country level to think about the substantial effect of students' writing difficulties to use on their overall language performance together with other psycho-educational factors. It may also motivate students and teachers to practice writing daily. 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.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Geographically, the study was delimited in Oromia National Regional State, South West Shoa Zone, Ilu woreda Teji town which is about 55 KM far away from the capital city towards Addis

Ababa-Jimma main road. This study was also delimited to investigate the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners with sample respondents selected from ninth grade in 2022/2023 academic year. So, the study did not include essay writing and other writing genres such as report writing, letter writing, leaflet writing and the like. Due to limited number of sample size that were selected, findings from the study could not be generalized to other school and other learners who do not participate in the study.

1.7. Limitations of the study

Due to limited number of sample size that were selected, findings from the study could not be generalized to other schools and other learners who do not participate in the study and it did not include other writing genres such as report writing, leaflet writing and the like. In addition, there would be limitations that had encountered the researcher such as unwillingness of respondents to give possible responses for the questionnaires and financial constraints while conducting the research.

CHAPTER TWO:REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Writing Skill

Different scholars defined writing in various ways. Some of the most common definitions are summarized below for the purpose of this study. According to Brookes & Grundy (1998) writing is more than putting spoken language into written form. Al-Mutawa & Taisser (1989) also described writing as a complex cognitive activity which requires the completion of acquisition of the Alphabet; understanding how letters combine to form words and the relationship between the word and its meaning; knowledge of the mechanics of writing: speaking, capitalization, punctuation and other writing conventions and the mastery of the most frequent rules governing the structure of sentences. They also added the ability of combining sentences to build an effective paragraph and combining them to produce essays and formalization with transitions to achieve coherence as some of the cognitive activities under writing skill.

Similarly, Byrne (1988:1) defines writing as “the act of forming graphic symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind.” To him, writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols. Writing is a process of encoding (putting message into words) with a reader in mind (Byrne, 1988). MC Donough & Shaw (1993) also consider writing as primarily message oriented act, so a communicative view of language is a necessary foundation. These scholars indicate that writing is a meaning laden process that should be addressed to readers.

Other scholars define skills parallel to writing as a technical competence without insight or understanding or the ability for further elaboration or development. For instance, Hornby (1980) states skill as the ability to do something well. Writing skill is then defined as a technical competence to arrange and produce written form in which the writer uses certain convention of variables of linguistic aspects (word spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, etc.) to express idea, thought, opinion, and feeling so that people, as readers, can understand.

Writing is also defined as a means of exploration and innovation, and it has been considered as a vital skill in which people all over the world communicate, exchange information and conduct business promptly using writing (Kelly & Lawton, 1998). This shows that writing plays a vital role in human communication. Furthermore, the skills of writing enhance language learning as students practice with words, sentences and paragraphs to communicate their ideas. In other

words, writing skills offers students opportunities to express their thoughts and views through the language. Apart from these, writing increases students' creativity and ability to solve problems (Hedge, 1988). Thus, it gives students the opportunity to express their feelings and thought through writing. However, its mastery is not as easy as we might think because of its nature and different factors pertaining to it.

2.2 The Nature and Purpose of L2 Writing

2.2.1 The Nature of Writing

Writing has its own unique nature unlike to other language skills. As stated by Bader (2007), writing follows some principles that are unique of all which relate letters to words and words to sentences which must be well organized to have a coherent whole called 'text'. This skill or means of communication is neither innate or natural, it must be done and practiced a lot to be learnt and make use of it and its rules; therefore, the writer does not write for himself but he writes for his reader, for that the writer must clearly state his ideas to make himself understood (Bader, 2007).

Regarding this, Hedge (1988) suggested that effective writing necessitates a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information, a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning, the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis, and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers. This implies that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity for students to acquire and develop.

Correspondingly, various other scholars (Byrne, 1988; Hedge, 1988 & Heaton, 1988) stated that writing is a skill which must be practiced through experience and they attribute the difficult nature of writing to three factors: cognitive, linguistic and psychological. Regarding the cognitive aspect, writers are expected to think and process what they want to put down on paper because writing requires much more care and thinking than speaking as the audience is not present at the time of writing. The linguistic factor is related to the need to consider the accuracy of the linguistic elements in the writing activity. The psychological factor is concerned with the production of writing solitarily which may cause anxiety. Thus, compared to speaking, writing requires much more care, patience, skill and cooperation in its learning. As it is explained above

it is evidently true that writing demands a great deal of skills and technical knowhow for students to become proficient and effective writers.

In this context, Bell & Burnaby (1984) explained writing as an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts. In its physical appearance, writing is an individual activity, therefore, it is a social act that fulfills a set of communicative needs, and accomplishes particular purpose as Hyland (2003, p 27) puts it:

Every act of writing happens in a sense of both personal and individual, and it is also international and social, expressing a culturally recognized purpose, reflecting particular kind of relationship and acknowledging an engagement in a given community. In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching as students need to write down notes and to take written exams.

Yet, over the years it has seemed that writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right, however, trainers and methodologists have looked again at writing in a foreign language classroom and acknowledged the importance of writing as vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for every one using their first language (Harmer, 2004).

Moreover, it is possible to say that writing is a difficult activity both in first and second language learning. Lack of interaction and feedback provision between the writer and the reader, lack of paralinguistic devices such as stress, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions are some of the writing difficulties which impose a great necessity for careful and precise completion, organization and connection of sentences (Byrne, 1988). Writing also requires formal and laborious instruction: we have to master the written form of language and to learn certain structures. So, it is good to say that writing skill is a difficult and sophisticated social activity beside its importance to the academic achievement of foreign language learners.

In conclusion, the findings strongly suggest that the nature of writing should be accepted 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 addition, the main purposes of the writing should also be very clear to both the teacher and the students.

2.2.2 The Purpose of Writing

There are different views regarding the purpose of writing. Traditionally, the purpose of writing evolved just as one of the macro skills with a purpose of engaging students with grammar, vocabulary and comprehension exercises as a means of activating students' skills in these areas. Recently, the purpose of writing is shifted to developing the composition skills in general (Ur, 1996). Different scholars (Ur, 1996; Hughey et. al., 1983; Byrne, 1988) have come up with several general and specific purposes for learning writing skills.

Writing has several general purposes for both second and foreign language learners. Hughey et. al. (1983) has set four general purposes of teaching and learning writing skills. One of the main general purposes of writing is its use as a medium of communication. Written communication is one of the formal and the most common communication styles all over the world. The second purpose of writing is its use as a means of bringing forward what we have kept in our hearts but could not verbalize. In this context, writing is taken as an instrument which helps us express our hidden knowledge and skill (Hughey et. al., 1983). Thirdly, writing is useful to judge our thoughts since it helps us critically evaluate our thoughts and understanding. This can be done in line with the different stages of writing; as we write and rewrite, we will have the chance to think and rethink over our thoughts, which can finally result in judging and advancing out thought through writing (Hughey et. al., 1983). Finally, writing is used as a means of inescapably mirroring the self. This is to mean that as we keep writing, it gives us the chance to know and evaluate ourselves since the process of writing helps writers to see their overall performance in contrast to the rest of the world. Generally, the main purpose of teaching writing skills is to make learners competent in producing quality written text.

In addition to the above general purposes of writing, there are also specific purposes of writing that have various instructional benefits. Byrne (1988:6) identified four specific purposes of writing which have pedagogical implications. These are:

- *Writing enables us to provide different learning styles and needs.*

- *Written work serves to provide the learners with tangible evidences that they are making progress in the language.*
- *Writing provides variety in classroom activities, serving as a break from oral work at the same time; it increases the amount of language contact through work that can be set out of class.*
- *Writing is often needed for formal and informal testing.*

Generally, it is good to say that most of professional communications such as proposals, memos, reports, applications, e-mails, and part of the daily activities of college students are done in a means of writing. Even if students manage to learn the material in their college classes without knowing how to write well, they may not have the ability to express their knowledge to the people who are making the big decisions. Likewise, writing skill has various purposes to Ethiopian students in general and university EFL students in particular since all of the general and specific purposes of writing we reviewed so far have a strong implication to students of EFL in Ethiopia.

2.3 Approaches to Writing

In this study, four common approaches to writing are reviewed. These approaches have their own distinct features though there are also similarities among them. The first approach to writing is the product approach to writing which gives due emphasis to the end product of writing. It was emerged before 1960s. Research on teaching writing in a second language was initiated in the late 1960s, and most early efforts were centered on techniques for teaching writing. These efforts led to the process approach, which helps students to work through several stages of the writing process. Later, more attention was paid to the nature of writing in various situations. This then brought popularity to the genre approach, which focuses on models and key features of texts written for a particular purpose. In the process approach, a teacher typically has students follow the steps of pre-writing, writing, revising, and editing before achieving the final product, and this sequence teaches students how to write. In the genre approach, samples of a specific genre are introduced, and some distinctive characteristics of the given genre are pointed out so that students notice specific configurations of that genre (Kim, 2005). These approaches are widely explored in this next section.

2.3.1 The Product Approach

During the audio lingualism era, language classes downplayed the role of writing since writing was seen as only a supporting skill. ESL writing classes thus only focused on sentence structures as a support for the grammar class. The product approach was used in order to highlight form and syntax and the emphasis was on rhetorical drills (Silva, 1990).

The product approach is a traditional approach to teaching writing in which students typically are given a model and enthused to imitate it in order to produce a similar product. It is obvious that we write to produce a text for a given purpose. The product approach to writing focuses on the end product. A particular feature of this approach is its devotion to accuracy. As it is reported by Nunan (1989, p. 36) “the teacher who adopts a product- approach makes sure that the end product is grammatically correct”. Similarly, McDonough and Shaw (1993) argued that it is a traditional way to teach writing whose focuses are on correctness and consolidation of grammar. Moreover, the teacher becomes a judge of the finished product. Tribble (1997, pp. 20-22) also said that “teachers see errors as something that they must correct and eliminate given the importance accurate language has”. In fact, for some teachers, the most important is a readable accurate piece of writing since language competence is the aim of this approach.

Similarly, Jordan (1997), Kaplan & Grabe (1996), and Hedge (1988), Raimes (1983) stated that this approach to writing is to look at instances of writing and to analyze the features of written texts; the focus is the text that the students produce and it is expected to be correct in the needed skills of writing. Relating to this, Leki (1997) notes that traditionally, when students write in a second language, the purpose of the writing activity is to catch grammar, spelling and punctuation errors.

The product approach demands that a student focus, sequentially, on model, form, and duplication. As Atkinson (2003), Jordan (1997), White (1987) and Escholz (1980) argue, in adopting such an approach not only does the very nature of this sequence provide little or no insight into the actual processes involved in managing to arrive at the final product, but the students are also being restricted in what they can write. Escholz (1980) points out that the product approach encourages students to use the same plan in a multitude of settings, applying the same form regardless of content, thereby ‘stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them.’

However, the product approach often referred to as ‘the current-traditional rhetoric’ which suffers from a number of strong criticisms that have led teachers and researchers to re-examine the nature of writing and the ways writing is taught. Prodromou (1995: 21) for example, argues that it devalues “the learners’ potential, both linguistic and personal.” The outcome of the re-assessment is the writing-as-process movement, which has led the field toward a paradigm shift, revolutionizing the teaching of writing.

Therefore, the main focus of this approach is on the end result of the composition than processes that students should crossover. In this approach, writing is assumed as an activity that starts at one point and ends up at a certain point in a linear fashion. This approach to writing appears to simplify the nature of writing ignoring the needed practice in writing. According to Leki (1997), it makes students much obsessed to avoid errors and write very cautiously and conservatively. Similarly, Hedge (1988) characterizes this change as the shift from students' writing to the student writer, preferring the process-oriented approach.

Generally, Steele (2004) summarized the process approach to writing in to four considering as a traditional concept of writing.

Stage 1: Familiarization

Stage 2: Controlled writing

Stage 3: Guided writing

Stage 4: Free writing

2.3.2 The Process Approach

Traditionally, writing was seen as a process of achieving accuracy. Students were expected to write for language improvement and correctness of grammar items. Now a day, learning to write is viewed as a process which involves a series of steps writers go through to reach at the final product. More specifically, the process approach has emerged as a reaction against the product approach where Sadek (2007, p. 232) pointed out that “this approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing process”.

The process approach focuses on how a text is written instead of what is written (the final outcome). As noted in Hyland F. (2003), the process approach has a major impact on understanding the nature of writing and the way writing is taught. Research on writing processes has led to viewing writing as complex and recursive – not linear. The process approach, therefore, emphasizes the importance of a recursive procedure of pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising.

The most important principle of process pedagogy is that writing is the result of a very complex, highly individualized process. Before process pedagogy, writing classes generally ignored the writing process. Teachers assigned papers, graded them, and then handed them back. They attended to the product - its clarity, originality, and correctness - but they did not attend to the writing process. They did not attend to the writers themselves (Horwitz, 2008).

The idea behind process writing is not to detach writing entirely from the written product and to merely lead students through the various stages of the writing process but “to construct process-oriented writing instruction that will affect performance (Freedman, S. et al, 1987). To have an effective performance oriented teaching program would mean that we need to systematically teach students problem-solving skills connected with the writing process (Seow, 2002).

The process theorists of the sixties and seventies took issue with this approach to teaching writing. After all, well-written essays don't fall from the sky (Horwitz, 2008). Process theorists believe that writing can be understood as the result of several steps in a complicated process. Furthermore, they feel that these steps - which include pre-writing, writing, rewriting, and all their attendant strategies - can be talked about and modeled. In short, writing as a process can be taught.

Now a days, there is a relative consensus among writing scholars that writing is by its nature a process in which a number of operations go on simultaneously (Hedge, 2000; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; White & Arndt, 1991; Hedge, 1988). White & Arndt (1991) explain the process approach to writing as one that takes apprentice writers through the various stages when producing a piece of written work. McDonough & Shaw (1993) remark the usefulness of intervention at all stages of writing, not just at the end in the process of writing. From these, it is possible to see that the focus is on the means in the process of writing, not just to be obsessed

with the final product. The argument for the process approach is that if the stages that are considered in the writing process are well addressed, the product will take care of itself.

Regarding this, Rivers (1987) states that in the process approach, you look at how to generate, organize, express and draft ideas. When we compare the process and product approaches, the process approach seems closer to answering the needs of the EAP teacher, subject tutor, and student. Moreover, if the aim of EAP is to develop a non-native student's understanding of the actual processes involved in composition then one can discount the product approach as 'process cannot be inferred from a product any more than a pig can be inferred from a sausage' (Murray, 1972). However, prior to such a shift taking place, research should perhaps investigate whether the process approach offers any insight into the actual processes employed by native writers.

Hedge (1988) describes the process of writing as consisting of three major activities or group of activities. These are pre-writing, writing, rewriting and editing. In the pre-writing phase, the writer contemplates two important issues: defining the purpose of writing (function) and deciding for who the writing is for (audience). In the writing phase, the first draft is made after some brainstorming activities. Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first, and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later. In the rewriting phase, revision is done to assess what has already been written and decide on clarity, completeness of information, coherence, etc. The editing stage is the final activity and consists of reading through and trying to make the final readjustments (Hedge, 1988).

In the process approach to writing, teachers' role is to assist students develop feasible strategies for getting started. Those strategies are "Finding the topics, generating ideas and information, focusing, and planning structure and procedure" Sadek, (2007, p. 232). This means that teachers should become facilitators rather than assessors in order to students develop those strategies mentioned above with easiness. For instance: drafting means writing several multiple drafts, revising means adding, deleting, modifying and rearranging ideas, and editing means looking at vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics.

Furthermore, it is important to make student aware of how to get started by encouraging them to start, think and produce ideas. Also, allowing time for the process is essential so that students can discover new ideas, sentences, words, etc. as they plan and work through the initial drafts. This

shows that process writing is a way of creating, discovering, and extending meaning (Tsui, 1996).

Although the process approach has been generally well and widely received, it is not without its critics especially in the late 1980's by several researchers (e.g. Matsuda 2003; Furneaux, 1999; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Horowitz, 1986). Some of the critics on process approach are briefly discussed below.

The first criticism is that, as we've said, the process approach is recursive, i.e., not a linear process but a complicated task which goes through different stages. The writer must follow a sequence of the writing steps; he can move between them. In other words, a good writer goes backwards and forwards at whatever stage in composing a text in order to make changes either about style, content, or how to appropriately address his/ her audience. But there are process models which are linear and do not match what successful writers usually do. At this point, it is worth mentioning that teachers must encourage learners to revisit the stages of this approach before the final product (Sadek, 2007).

The second criticism made by Horowitz (1986) who is critical of process-oriented approach to teaching writing, stating that a process-oriented approach gives students a wrong impression of how university writing will be evaluated outside of the language classroom. The approach over emphasizes the individual psychological functioning and neglects the socio-cultural context. Horowitz (1986) claims that writing multiple drafts will not lead to the ability to write in-class examination essays quickly and fluently and that this approach does not teach a variety of types of formal writing necessary in an academic setting (reports, annotated bibliographies, etc.). According to him, the inductive approach of process writing is suitable only to some writers and for some purposes; some students are better motivated to write by external motivators (such as grades) than internal motivators.

Some other scholars also question whether the process approach realistically prepares students for academic work which is the most essential for them especially during exams. Accordingly, Sadek (2007) indicated that the process approach does not let students get variety of activities in the academic circle in which students' writing will eventually be exercised. He also suggested that the process approach ignores certain types of central academic writing tasks, mainly essay

exams. In other words, the process approach does not teach learners how to write examination essays.

There are other criticisms by Grabe & Kaplan (1996) who stated that one of the first critiques appeared in the 1980's claiming that the process approach lacked a theoretical base due to its recent introduction at that time. Nonetheless, throughout time, it has developed considerably and offers an extensive review of the evaluation of process approaches. When coming to evaluation, teachers usually judge just the product at hand; this is the case at the university level where students are judged only about the final product in the written expression module. As it is pointed out by Furneaux (1999, p. 60) who claimed that "writing is ultimately judged by content, not process, teaching students to express their ideas is important, but an exclusive focus on this could lead to writer-based texts which might actually be inappropriate or wrong".

In short, Steele (2004) summarizes the features of the process approach to writing in eight essential stages. These are:

Stage 1: Brainstorming

Stage 2: Planning

Stage 3: Mind mapping

Stage 4: First draft

Stage 5: Peer feedback

Stage 6: Editing

Stage 7: Final Draft

Stage 8: Evaluation

2.3 Models of L2 Writing

In this part, three general and eight specific models of L2 writing are discussed. These models are designed based on the several approaches to teaching/learning writing skills. In order to have a better understanding into L2 writing, it is useful to describe how L1 writers approach and then perform a writing task. The models examine different elements of the writing process, such as the task, its environment, the writer and the audience; as well as provide an explanation of the relationship between these elements and the way they interact with each other. Thus, they

facilitate the understanding of the cognitive processes, the knowledge needed and other underlying factors that are easier to understand (Weigle, 2002). The theoretical models presented below shed light on the main cognitive processes and social contexts that writers follow when producing texts.

2.3.1 General Models to Writing

There are only few models of writing which have not been adequately addressed by the experts in the area. It is in recent decades that some scholars have been trying to explore few of the models to writing. In this part of the review, three models of writing are briefly reviewed.

2.4.1.1 The Cognitive Model to Writing

The cognitive model to writing is one of the models commonly used in writing researches. It considers writing as problem solving, goal setting, and decision making activities that play out in the mind of the writer as he/she plans, translates thought to print, and revises. According to Flower & Hayes (1981) at the beginning of composing, writers start to write with defining the rhetorical problem of writing the particular piece of text. The writer then creates a hierarchical network of guiding goals that help to direct the development of the text. Good writers are directed by high level rhetorical goals (Hayes, 1996; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981) that “give direction and coherence” to the moves made in writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p.379). In the process of writing, writers also develop specific objectives which give “concrete meaning” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 381) to their top-level goals.

The cognitive model to writing supports the principles of the process approach to writing under two major psychological theories. Flower & Hayes (1980) explains these two theories as first writing is not simply a matter of translating preconceived ideas into text, but also involves creating content and tailoring the way this is presented to the needs of the reader. He viewed writing as much a matter of discovering or inventing the thought to be expressed in the text as it is a matter of expressing it in an appropriate and convincing way. He also expressed the second view as writing involves a complex interaction between a wide range of different processes, and it places extremely high demands on the limited capacity of working memory. Thus, he suggested the importance of passing through different stages for effectively managing the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

2.3.1.2 The Social Model to Writing

The social view of writing sees writing as a meaning-making social activity (Halliday, 2004; Street, 2001). This model views learning to write as a process of bringing cultural norms and social practices together. Thus, writing is considered as a social activity in which social goals are performed through contributing in a communicative event or genre for the purpose of achieving some social goal (Paltridge, 1997; Swales, 1990). The writing then will be effective, if the social goal is achieved through the performance of a pattern of generic discourse moves or practices accepted as standard by the discourse community in the circle. If we view texts as genre, our attention will be directed to the “social givens” (Kress, 2003, p.98), that is, the social functions of and the relations between writer/speaker and reader/listener that shape the text.

It is thus obvious that the goal-setting and decision-making activities are essential for the social context in which a text is written and in which it will be read. The goals a writer sets for telling a text is formed by and responds to the writer’s and reader’s social-cultural context (Kern, 2000). The thinking operations that guide the writing have to take into account the socio-cultural norms of the writer and reader. Hence, the cognitive theory of writing will be later developed into one that takes into account of the socio-cultural dimension of writing (Kern, 2000; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Flower, 1994).

2.3.1.3 The Socio-cognitive Model to Writing

The socio-cognitive model is a relatively recent model to writing which was designed with a purpose of introducing a new comprehensive writing model by blending the cognitive and social models to writing. This blend of the social and cognitive views of writing (socio-cognitive model of writing) thus considers writing not only as goal setting and decision making activities that play out in the mind of the writer as he/she plans, translates thought to print, and revises (Flower, 1994; Flower & Hayes, 1981), but also a social act which involves devotion to the process of generating and construing meaning through texts (Kern, 2000).

Socio-cognitive approach considers language learning from an interactionist perspective which gives much emphasis to social interaction which occurs in the language learning environment. It also views language learning as learner’s internal mechanism to interact with linguistic and social environments (Ellis, 1994). It also supports the principle that language is not acquired for the sake of acquiring it, but to perform social actions (Atkinson, 2002).

A socio-cognitive model suggests an answer to the blames that have been raised of the exclusive application of cognitive and genre approaches. It supports the process-genre approach to writing as it brings the process of writing and the social factors together as a means of complementing the limitations of the cognitive and social models to writing. The cognitive model to writing has been criticized for its depiction of writing as unsocial activity secluded from the social-cultural factors that shape writing and readers' response to texts (Hyland, 2002; Bizzell, 1992). The social model to writing, on the other hand, has limitations in its potential to be overly prescriptive (Sawyer & Watson, 1989) and possibly kill creativity through its presentation of genres "as molds into which meanings are poured" (Hyland, 2002, p. 22).

There are few studies of socio-cognitive intervention in writing that bring an indication of the effectiveness of using the cognitive strategies in association with social strategies in writing (Chandrasegaran, 2013, Chandrasegaran & Yeo, 2006; Graham et al., 2005). In Graham and others study, third grade low-performing students were taught the two characteristics two genre kinds, and they were guided through the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes of goal setting and self-monitoring. As a result, students came to produce better essay than ever (Graham et al., 2005). This result might be taken as a good lesson about the importance of using implementing the two models as a means to improve students writing. Research into the efficacy of teaching genre-related cognitive strategies has been carried out in a Singapore secondary school, not in expository writing but in narrative writing. Similarly, Chandrasegaran and Yeo's study (2006) conducted their research on Grade 9 students writing performance implementing the socio-cognitive model to writing. These students were explicitly taught two narrative genre practices in character depiction (epithets and ideational tokens judiciously). More significantly, a positive change was also observed on students writing outcome. These encouraging results suggest that the socio-cognitive model to writing has a positive impact in improving students' writing performance. Lately, Chandrasegaran, 2013 conducted studied the effect of the socio-cognitive model to writing on the pedagogy of writing. He worked on how to apply the socio-cognitive model considering the contribution of the two models to writing (cognitive and social models) to improve students writing practice. A positive implication was forwarded regarding the effect of the socio-cognitive model to writing on students' writing performance.

2.3.2 Specific Models to Writing

2.3.2.1 *The Hayes and Flower Model*

This model involves three main cognitive processes that play a role in written language production: planning, translating and reviewing. Planning consists of organizing, goal setting and generating; these steps are closely related to the writer's knowledge of the topic and strategies which enable him to organize thoughts coherently.

According to Hayes & Flower (1980), the writer retrieves relevant information from long-term memory and transforms it into language during the translating phase. Translating in the model means retrieving thoughts from memory and turning them into language. Finally, the text is reviewed to improve it in the translation phase with the help of reading and editing skills. The order of these processes is not linear, the writer can go back to some stages to improve the text, but most probably the steps follow each other starting from goal setting through planning, production to revision. These three main cognitive processes in the Hayes & Flower (1980) writing model are closely related to the writer's long-term memory, where the knowledge of the topic and the audience is stored, and there are writing plans from which the writer can choose. When the writer is assigned a task, the task environment contains the topic, the audience and motivating cues with the text produced so far. The model cores on the role of planning and revising, and less attention is paid to sub-processes. However, the recognition of the excursiveness of the writing processes is important and has served as a basis for further research.

2.3.2.2 *The Hayes Model*

Hayes's (1996) model discusses the processes of writing from two perspectives: the task environment and the writer. In the model the focus is rather on the individual, whose motivation, working and long-term memory, and cognitive processes are examined in detail. Weigle (2002) explains this model as the task environment comprises physical and social factors, which are the people involved including audience and the text, and the medium of writing. The role motivation and affect play in the model is considerable and they are related to the cognitive processes of text interpretation, reflection and text production. It means that the individual's success in performance depends on motivational factors.

Hayes's (1996) model elaborates that the information about the task and topic is stored in long-term memory, whereas working memory stores three types of information: verbal, coded and

conceptual. These also interplay with cognitive and motivational processes at different stages of text production. The other important feature that is highly relevant to assessment and instruction is that there are several reading types involved in the writing process: reading to evaluate, reading source texts and reading instructions. It follows that if the writer does not comprehend written texts properly, he cannot perform writing tasks (Weigle, 2002).

2.3.2.3 The Krashen's Model

Krashen's (1984) point of view is that the process of writing as a private activity may be broadly seen as comprising four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing. The stages are neither sequential nor orderly. In fact, he suggested that many good writers employ cursive (non-linear) approach. Writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation, with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages.

He goes on to suggest that, in addition to these four basic stages mentioned above, there are three other stages which are externally imposed on the students by the teacher, namely responding, sharing, evaluating, and post writing. Process writing in the classroom is highly structured and organized as it requires the orderly teaching of the process skill, and thus, it may not give way to a free variation of writing stages mentioned earlier. Teachers often plan appropriate classroom activities that support learning specific writing skills at every stage (Krashen, 1984).

Krashen (1984) stated that planning or pre-writing encourages and stimulates students for getting started to write. It includes brainstorming and clustering. Then, it comes to the drafting stage where the focus is on the fluency of writing not on the grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. Another sub-stage is responding. It intervenes between drafting and revising. It is the teacher's quick initial reaction to students' drafts then, comes the revising stage. When students revise, they review their written productions on the basis of the responding stage. It is not only checking for language errors (editing). At this stage editing, which is the fourth basic stage and includes evaluation, the teacher edits grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, etc. Finally, post-writing as an external stage which is imposed by the teacher like responding and evaluation, it is a platform for recognizing students work as important or worthwhile, and it may be used as a motivation (Krashen, 1984).

2.4 Writing Strategies: Definition and Classifications

Different scholars have been defining and classifying writing strategy in several ways. There are also a range of studies on the different aspects of writing strategy. In this sub-section, literatures are reviewed on the concept and classifications of writing strategy.

2.4.1 What is Writing Strategy?

A number of researchers have defined the concept strategy in various ways, such as Stern (1983) states that strategy “is best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving learning techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behaviour, more or less consciously employed by the learner” (Stern, 1983, p. 405). Cohen (1998) defines strategy as a “process which consciously selected by learners and which may result in actions taken to enhance the learning or the use of the second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall and application of information about the language”. Again, Rubin (1981) expresses strategy as “operations or steps used by a learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information” (Rubin, 1981, p. 5).

More specifically, writing strategy is defined as “the sequence in which a writer engages in planning, composing, revising and other writing related activities” (Torrance et al., 2000, p. 182). The study of strategies is part of a research movement called “process writing”, which aims at gaining insight into the mental processes that writers engage in while composing. Within the process tradition composition is viewed as a goal-oriented, cognitively-demanding, problem-solving task (Hayes, 1996; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981). According to these researchers, writing strategies in their general view are seen as those procedures employed by the writer to (i) control the operational management of goals, (ii) compensate for the limited capacity of human cognitive resources and (iii) overcome the problems that writers pose to themselves.

2.4.2 Classification of Strategies

To classify writing strategies, it is useful to see the different schemes used in the L1 and L2 fields in the previous studies. There are studies in the L1 field which classified writing strategies into a five-factor structure that considers the relationship between writers’ beliefs on writing and the strategies that they employ: elaborative, low self-efficacy, no revision, scientist and task-

oriented (Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007). Others use a two-dimensional structure to describe strategies: the first stage concerns the stage in the writing process at which writers decide content (Galbraith, 1992), while the second concerns the extent to which writers explore and reformulate their ideas and text (Hartley & Branthwaite, 1989). In the L2 field, some scholars (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994) have formed a three-factor structure including planning, formulation or transcription and revising, which have been identified with the three macro-writing processes. Some others have created a four-factor structure: planning, monitoring, evaluating and resourcing, which are metacognitive strategies themselves (Victori, 1997).

More recently, researchers have used a six-factor analytically-created composing strategy taxonomy, which includes memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, social and affective strategies (Khaldieh, 2000) and it is based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomic approach. The current study was conducted based on the six-factor analytically-created composing strategy taxonomy for the researcher of this study found this taxonomy inclusive and appropriate to the context of the study. The current study was conducted on English majoring university students who are expected to use various strategies of language learning in general and writing strategies in particular. Thus, this classification is found to be relevant to the subjects as well as the overall context of this study since the study investigates students' belief about writing and their writing strategy use in relation to their writing performance.

2.4.2.1 Memory Strategies

Memory learning strategies of writing include placing new words into a context, using key words, and structured reviewing. Placing new words into a context consist of applying words that have been heard or read into a meaningful context as a way of remembering them. For example, learners may construct a sentence using the new words (Cabrejas, 2012). In a general language context, memory strategy help students link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve profound understanding. Oxford (1990) lists various memory-related strategies that enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms), while other techniques create learning and retrieval via sounds (e.g., rhyming), images (e.g., a mental picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word), a combination of sounds and images (e.g., the keyword method), body movement (e.g., total physical response), mechanical means (e.g., flashcards), or location (e.g., on a page or blackboard). Memory

strategies have been shown to relate to L2 proficiency in a course devoted to memorizing large numbers of characters and in L2 courses designed for native-English speaking learners of foreign languages (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

2.4.2.2 Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are useful tools in assisting students with learning problems. The term “cognitive strategies” in its meekest form is the use of the mind (cognition) to solve a problem or complete a task. Cognitive strategies may also be referred to as procedural facilitators (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), or procedural prompts (Rosenshine, 1997). According to Rosenshine (1997) a cognitive strategy aids to support the learner as he or she develops internal procedures that empower him/her to do activities that are complex. These strategies are seen as personal strategies that enable students to process and transform information. They further infer an operation of the task through the effective use of the language to “actively engage in the knowledge acquisition process” (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995, p. 170). According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies can be recognized by the use of a dictionary (which can also appear as a social strategy), organizing information, reading out loud, analyzing, summarizing and reasoning. Weinstein & Mayer (1986) identify three types of cognitive strategy: organization strategies, which reorganize information to be learned to make it more meaningful; rehearsal strategies, which include the repetition of the information to be learned; and elaboration strategies, which link new knowledge and previously acquired information (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995).

2.4.2.3 Meta-cognitive Strategies

Meta-cognitive strategies are learning strategies which include activities such as planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating. In the context of writing, it includes the process of planning and organizing ideas and making more well-versed choices about strategy use to facilitate writing (Ching, 2002). They also refer to the global skills of the students that reflect their self-awareness concerning their level of understanding and degree of motivation. Schmitt (2002) considers them conscious processes used by learners to manage their language learning. According to Wiles (1997), meta-cognition is defined in terms of “self-management ... the ability ... to plan, monitor and revise, or ... control ... learning” (p. 17). Such strategies are classified by Ehrman & Oxford (2003, p. 317) and they include planning on writing, goal setting,

preparing for action, focusing, using schemata, activity monitoring, assessing its success, and looking for practice opportunities.

2.4.2.4 Affective Strategies

Affective strategies “serve to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes (for example, strategies for reduction of anxiety and for self-encouragement)” Cohen & Dornyei (2002, p. 181). These strategies may be negative or positive. The use of negative affective strategies includes “avoidance, passiveness, difficulty in concentrating, and showing lack of concern” (Shapira & Lazarowitz, 2005, p. 75), and may eventually lead the students to abandon the task. The aim of strategy-use training is, thus, to eliminate the use of negative strategies. Positive strategies, on the other hand, include “anxiety alleviation ... calming or self-relation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, listening to music, laughing ... and self-rewarding” (p. 75). For example, if the student is going to write about a job interview, he/she has to focus first on the information that should be included rather than on the grammatical errors that might emerge.

2.4.2.5 Social Strategies

Social strategies are learning strategies which are used to develop consciousness of and emotion for others. They include the activities learners elect in order to interact with their classmates, or to help them challenge learning difficulties. Among these activities, Cohen and Dornyei (2002) mention: asking questions, cooperating with others to complete a task, and peer revision. The communication between readers and writers has a potential impact on stimulating thinking, assisting the writing process and improving writing as a whole (Shapira & Lazarowitz, 2005). Regarding this, Nystrand (1986) investigated the influence of peer response on writing among college students. He found that students’ performance developed significantly when they replied to comments from their peers. Some improved their thinking, while others performed only editing activities.

2.4.3 The Relationship between Writing Strategy Use and Writing Performance

It is the view of the socio-cognitive theorist to investigate the relationship between writing strategy use and writing performance. Writing strategy is one of the factors which affect the writing performance of students (Mu, 2005). Scholars in the area (Mu 2005; Beare, 2000; Victori, 1995; Raimes, 1985 and Zamel, 1982) stated that writing strategies is the variable that separates effective writers from less effective writers. For instance, Maarof & Murat (2013) showed that secondary school ESL learners were average users of writing strategies. The study

identified the while-writing strategy as the most frequently used writing strategy while it found the revising strategy as the least used one. It was also showed that the low proficiency and middle learners used varied types of strategies. This result implies that students should be motivated to use a variety of writing strategies to write better. Similarly, the cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies were identified by Ridhuan & Abdullah (2009) as the most frequently used writing strategies. This study also found that the high achievers differed from the low achieving ones in the extent of strategies used. Other similar studies revealed analogous findings (Lan & Oxford, 2003; Sasaki, 2000; Kaylani, 1996; Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Philips, 1991) that indicated the propensity for capable learners to use more strategies efficiently than less proficient learners.

Similarly, some other scholars (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Wharton, 2000 and Yang, 1999) found that the social and affective strategies are among the most frequently used writing strategies. Wharton (2000) found that social strategies were the most frequently used strategies among the university students, followed by compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, memory strategies and affective strategies. In Magogwe & Oliver (2007) study, students mentioned the social and metacognitive writing strategies as their most favored strategies, respectively, followed by cognitive strategies, memory strategies and compensation strategies. This study did not include the affective strategies in its framework. However, Lan & Oxford (2003) put the order of the most frequently used strategies as follows: compensation strategies, affective strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies and memory strategies. Similarly, Yang (1999) ranked the compensation strategies as the most frequently used strategies while other are ordered as follows in their decreasing order of strategy use frequency: social, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and memory strategies.

2.5 The Concept and Nature of Beliefs

Words such as knowledge, perception, and beliefs are used differently within the researchers, depending on varying hypothetical orientations. According to Thomas & Harri-Augustein (1983) beliefs about learner capacity and personal models of their own processes were more vital to understanding the individuals' learning performances than generally accepted theories of

learning; these personal “myths” explained more about individual differences in learning than such psychometric measures as intelligence or aptitude (Thomas & Harri-Augustein, 1983).

White & Bruning (2005) applied this model to writing. They defined writers with high transmissional beliefs as those who see writing primarily as a means of transmitting authoritative knowledge to readers with minimal injection of the writers’ own views and thoughts. By contrast, they saw writers with high transactional beliefs as those who think writing is a means of integrating what they learn about a topic with their prior knowledge or applying what they learn from authorities to issues of personal importance. The authors developed the Writing Beliefs Inventory to measure these transmissional and transactional beliefs.

2.5.1 Students’ Language Learning Beliefs and Its Relationship with Strategy Use

Research on the beliefs about language learning since Horwitz’s pioneering study in 1985 has shown that some of these beliefs held by learners have damaging effects on their learning. However, there is still a great shortage of research that investigates the beliefs of learners and especially on those who are foreign-language major students. Recent research on the beliefs of second and foreign language learners’ beliefs has examined different learning settings in different cultures (Benson & Lor, 1999; Wen & Johnson, 1997; Wenden, 1986; Horwitz, 1988). These research studies have collected and analyzed data on learners’ beliefs in different ways and they were mainly done with those learning foreign languages.

2.5.2 The Relationship between Beliefs about Writing and Writing Performance

Unlike such theoretical developments, historically, researchers in the field of language teaching and composition made their focus on the methodological issues and classroom practices of learning and/or teaching varied skills (Pajares and Valiante, 2006). However, it seems today that the focus has also been diverted to the boundaries of psychological variables and language teaching and learning. Following this, self-efficacy was considered to influence linguistic performance in general and writing achievement in particular (Millis, et al., 2007; Hampton & Mason, 2003; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Zimmerman and Bandura, 1994). Findings (Pajares and Valiante, 2006) show students’ beliefs about their own writing processes and competences are influential in their ultimate success as writers. Accordingly, it is possible to say the task of writing cannot be detached from self-efficacy beliefs, as the traditionally think, plan and write procedures are devoid of such psychological matters.

One overt truth about writing in schools and colleges is that everyone is capable of writing; however, the level of success may vary depending on each student's belief about his/her own capabilities to effectively communicate through writing (Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Valiante, 2006). This suggests that even though students may potentially write and transmit message, it will probably be less likely for them to achieve their communicative goal unless they believe they can do it right.

Regarding the effect of students' beliefs about writing on their writing performance, various studies have been conducted locally and abroad. To start with, let us review abroad studies. In one of their studies, Shell, Murphy & Bruning (1989) investigated the relationship between undergraduate students' writing and reading self-efficacy and their writing and reading achievement. They constructed a scale for writing self-efficacy which measured the students' skills in different writing tasks (e.g. writing a letter and an essay) and students' skills in writing components (e.g. spelling and parts of speech). Their writing achievement was obtained from the students' scores on an essay and the scores were given holistically. The results showed that the writing self-efficacy (both task efficacy and component efficacy) had a significant predictive power on writing achievement.

2.6 Major Factors Affecting Students' Writing Performance

Generally speaking, students' academic knowledge and achievement is affected by various factors including gender, age, teaching faculty, students schooling, father/guardian social economic status, residential area of students, medium of instructions in schools, tuition trend, daily study hour and accommodation as hostellers or day scholar. Many researchers conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing students' academic performance in general and writing performance at different study levels. In this paper, the major factors affecting students' academic and writing performance are reviewed into three broad categories. These are: socio-educational, psychological, and linguistics factors.

2.6.1 Socio-educational Factors

It is impossible to see language separating it from the culture since they are highly integrated and have lots of things in common. Thus, it is important to analyze the challenges in writing through the eyes of the socio-cultural factors. According to Brown (2007), culture is strongly important

in the learning of a second language. Therefore, some of the cultural factors are briefly discussed as follows.

A number of studies (Pedrosa et.al, 2006; Reddy & Talcott, 2006; Jeynes, 2002; McDonald et.al, 2001; Pearson & Johnson, 1978) have been conducted in the area of students' academic success and these studies identified various factors that affect the academic performance of the student at school, college and even at university level. As a result, students' effort, previous schooling, parent's educational background, family income, self-motivation of students, age of student, learning preferences and entry qualification of students have been mentioned as the major socio-cultural factors influencing students' academic performance.

The first and common factor affecting students' writing performance or academic performance in general is students learning experience. It is obvious that the students who showed better performance in lower classes could also performed better in their future academic years at degree level. Regarding this, Pedrosa et.al (2006) in their study on social and educational background pointed out educational background has a significant influence on students' academic performance. There are also some researchers who disagreed with this view point, for instance Reddy & Talcott (2006) argue that students' previous academic achievement has little to do with their future academic performance. In their research on the relationship between previous academic performance and subsequent achievement at university level, they found that students learning or studying at graduate level and the score secured did not predict any academic achievement at university level. Pearson & Johnson (1978) also observed that on the whole grade association of only 0.28 between graduate level marks and university degree achievement. This general view can also show us the positive and negative relationship between writing performance and socio-cultural factors.

The second socio-educational factor is parents' socio-economic condition which includes parents' academic and professional qualification, revenue and occupational affiliation. It is also associated with academic gain of students. Many studies revealed that students' academic performance is dependent upon parent's socio-economic condition. Thus, students from higher social economic backgrounds will perform better than students' from low social economic backgrounds. According to Jeynes (2002), social and economic status of students is generally determined by combining parents' qualification, occupation and income standard. In relation to

this, a study by Graetz (1995) indicated that socio-economic background has a great impact on student's academic performance. Similarly, Considine & Zappala (2002) reported that higher level success has a positive impact on future academic performance. Likewise, it is conceivable to relate the impact of socio-economic background with students' performance in writing since students strong writing background will have a positive effect on their future writing performance.

The third socio-educational factor which affects students' academic performance in general and their writing performance in particular is the type of educational institution where students got their previous education. The educational environment of the school one attends sets the parameters of students' learning outcomes. According to Considine & Zappala (2002), school environment and teachers expectations from their students have a strong impact on students' performance. Most of the teachers working in poor schools or schools run short of basic facilities often have low performance expectations from their students and when students know that their teachers have low performance expectations from them, hence it leads to poor performance by the students. Other scholar (Sentamu, 2003; Kwesiga, 2002) agreed that students' performance can be influenced by the school in which they studied. They also argue that schools influence educational process in content organization, teacher and teaching learning and in the end evaluation of the all.

Lacks of well-designed approaches to teaching writing skills is the fifth socio-educational factor affecting students' writing performance. This is due to the different views of writing in language teaching. Lee (1997) argues that the different language teaching approaches, which emerged over the years, have placed different emphasis on writing in language teaching. When new teaching approaches emerge to rectify the inadequacy of the previous approach, teachers who are the implementers of the new teaching approach may maintain their views and perceptions about teaching writing according to the previous teaching approaches. This is especially so when teachers are advocates of the previous teaching approaches either through their experience as language learners or language teachers. These views and perceptions will shape their beliefs about English language teaching, which will subsequently influence their planning and instructional decisions (Lee, 1997; Reid, 1993). This has a great impact on students' writing performance as well.

In general, students' prior experience, economic background, previous academic performance, the kind of institutions where students attended their previous education, lack of a well design approach to teaching writing and inappropriate or reduced use of writing strategies are reviewed as the major factors affecting students' writing performance under the socio-education category.

2.6.2 Psychological Factor

Psychological factors are one of the major factors affecting students' academic performance, particularly their writing performance. Learning to writing is a difficult and complex process. According to cognitive theory, communicating orally or in writing is an active process of skill development and gradual elimination of errors as the learner internalizes the language. Indeed, acquisition is a product of the complex interaction of the linguistic environment and the learner's internal mechanisms. With practice, there is continual reformation as learners shift these internal representations in order to achieve increasing degrees of mastery in L2 (McLaughlin, 1988).

The factors related to the writers internal factors can also be known as the psychological factors. Brown (2007) elucidates that the affective factors -which become the psychological factors that will affect the students writing skill are: self-Esteem, attribution theory and self-efficacy, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion, and motivation. Thus, in this review, some of the psychological factors such as beliefs, attitude, motivation and self-efficacy are reviewed to show their relationship with writing performance.

One of the major psychological factors affecting students' writing performance is students' belief about learning writing. This helps to know what students think about what good writing is and what good writers do, including the effectiveness of various writing strategies and processes. It addresses issues related to writers' beliefs about themselves with respect to their ability to write, their beliefs about writing tasks and skills as well as the procedures involved in performing these tasks and skills well. Various scholars in second language writing (Millis, et al., 2007; Hampton & Mason, 2003; Pajares, 2003; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994) conducted studies which show the impact of students' beliefs about language learning on their writing performance. Similarly, Self-efficacy belief is also taken as one of the affective factors as part of students' beliefs about learning writing. It predicts writing performance but also has far-reaching effects. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect perceived usefulness of writing and writing apprehension, both of which are key factors in terms of writing performance (Pajares & Valiante, 1999).

Writing attitude is another psychological factor that needs to be researched. Students at any educational level have their own attitudes towards writing. Studies (Knudson, 1995; Pajares et al. 1999) have discovered that attitude could highly influence how individuals approach foreign language learning including learning writing skills. It is considered that students with positive attitude usually advance more rapidly in foreign language learning since student's attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, thus become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy (Brown, 2000). Attitude can be viewed as a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing, idea, person, situation, etc. Therefore, it is important to investigate students' writing attitude to determine if students' attitude towards writing influences their writing performance.

This idea is supported different scholars (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997; Hayes, 1996) that writing motivation can shape the development of writing performance, and that it plays a prominent role in the development of writing performance. Writing is inherently difficult for the writer because they hold numerous lower- and higher-order psycholinguistic processes that are situated within a dynamic motivational state. Hidi & Anderson (1992) stated that writing is a relatively high-cost activity in terms of effort- a positive motivational stance may be difficult to attain. How authors motivate themselves differs widely, but motivation is presumably a necessary ingredient for attaining writing success (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; McLeod, 1987). It has also a strong connection with several psychological components such as beliefs, interest, perceived task value, attitudes, goal orientations, and attributions for success and failure. Therefore, motivation is one of the most affective psychological factors, which plays a vital role on students' academic performance in general and writing performance in particular.

In summary, we have seen so far that psychological factors have determinant roles on the development of students' academic performance. Thus, it is possible to say that writing performance can be highly affected by various psychological factors either positively or negatively. Among the various psychological factors, belief, self-efficacy, attitude and motivation are briefly reviewed in this study to show their influence on writing performance. It is also good to remind that motivation is the most affective and determinate factor, which affects other psychological factors as well. One of the main focuses of this study is to explore students' beliefs about writing and correlating it with writing performance. Thus, a belief is a

psychological factor which is explored in this study as one of the independent variables which may affect students' writing performance.

2.6.3 Linguistic Factor

Linguistics factors are among the major factors affecting students' writing performance. In writing, producing writing that is linguistically accurate is one of the most notorious difficulties for second language learners (Hinkel, 2002; 2004). Linguistic accuracy in writing includes mastery of sentence construction, agreement, tenses, word order, articles, pronouns, nouns and prepositions are very difficult for students to acquire and master. If students have limitations in correctly using these linguistics aspects, their writing performance will lay under question mark. According to Raimes (1983) the skills in writing, particularly writing in L2 is difficult because non-native students need more than just creativity to form ideas in English. L2 learners need teachers' great concerns of grammar and syntax. This means that students have to acquire the basic rules of grammar and know the correct syntactic structures to compose and write their essays proficiently. During writing, students commit some of the linguistics errors mentioned above which causes poor performances in writing.

Brown (2007) classified four categories to describe the errors in second language learner production data. The first overview is to identify errors by addition, omission, substitution and ordering. The second category is to put in the students levels of language (phonology, lexicon, grammar and discourse) that should be considered. Third, errors can be also analyzed by the global errors or local errors as explained. Finally, Brown (2007) suggests identifying errors by considering the two related dimensions of error, such as domain and extent. He explains "domain is the rank of linguistic unit (from phoneme to discourse) that must be taken as context in order for error to become apparent, and extent is the rank of linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered in order to repair the sentence" (p 263). These errors have a negative impact on students' composition.

Language transfer is another important linguistics factor which affects students' writing performance. Transfer is defined as the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired (Odlin, 1989). The study of transfer involves the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms, and their over-use (Ellis, 1994). This is to mean

that “the L1 can have a direct effect on inter-language development by influencing the hypotheses that learners construct” (Ellis, 1994, p. 342). According to McLaughlin (1988), transfer errors can occur as a result of learners’ lack of the necessary information in the second language or the attention to activate the appropriate second-language routine. Likewise, a student’s first language plays a complex and significant role in L2 acquisition. For example, when learners write under pressure, they may call upon systematic resources from their native language for the achievement and synthesis of meaning (Widdowson, 1990). Research has also shown that language learners sometimes use their native language when generating ideas and attending to details (Friedlander, 1990). Thus, language transfer influences students’ writing performance as it is clearly shown above.

Students’ input and interaction has also a great role in the writing process, especially in classroom settings. Some studies (Ellis, 1994; Selinker, 1972) showed that input, L1 transfer and communicative need may work together to shape inter-language. Research has focused on four broad areas: input frequency, the nature of comprehensible input, learner output in interaction, and the processes of collaborative discourse construction. Writers need to receive adequate L2 input in order to form new hypotheses about syntactic and rhetorical forms in the target language. If students are not exposed to native-like models of written texts, their errors in writing are more likely to persist (Pellettieri, 2000).

Generally, we can see that linguistics factors have important roles in determining the status of students’ writing performance. It is also briefly stated that grammatical issues, language transfer and input and interaction are the basic linguistics features that are to be considered in dealing with the linguistics factors affecting students’ writing performance.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Research Design

In order to achieve the objectives which were mentioned earlier, a descriptive study research design was chosen. According to Kumar (1996), a descriptive study research design is used to describe systematically a situation, problem or phenomenon. Therefore, the current researcher used descriptive study research design since it is a suitable way in gathering data of what people think, feel and do. This research design employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer research questions. A Mixed method approach attempts to combine methods from different paradigms and it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data. Thus, it allows the use of both methods so that the overall strength of the study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2003). Hence the current researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade of Teji Senior Secondary School. The researcher used quantitative research method for analyzing data numerically which were collected by using close ended questionnaire and the qualitative method to analyze data which were collected by using observation checklist, open ended questionnaire, document analysis and interview.

3.2. Population

Grade nine students and their English Language teachers who are teaching in Teji Senior Secondary School in 2015 E.C were selected as subjects of the study. The researcher selected grade Nine Teji senior Secondary school which is found in the town he is working. So, this can help the researcher to observe activities closely and can also get relevant and empirical information by giving much time. The reason that the researcher selected the area for the study was due to the fact that he has been teaching in that area, so it allows him to study closely. The researcher's interest to conduct this study in grade nine is he believes that the students in this grade level can provide an empirical and full information which leads the researcher to get enough and reliable data in the issue under assessing. In addition, the researcher believes that grade nine EFL language teachers have experience for long times in teaching English, so that they can provide actual and reliable information based on students' difficulties in writing skills.

These subjects of study were expected to share accurate data about nature and prevalence of writing difficulties, the causes of students' challenges in writing skill and attempted to improve students' writing skill. In addition, using students' informative seems an obvious and imperative choice and the primary, sometimes the only respondents (Long, 2005).

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Conducting the study on the total population is not possible and it is also impracticable because of some practical limitation like time and other factors. Therefore, conducting sampling is needed in order to make the research findings economical, credential and accurate (Kumar, 2006).

Thus the researcher used systematic sampling technique, which is a type of probable sampling to select sample students. In the first place, the whole students' names will be listed according to their alphabetical order in each section, and then by taking every fifth, sample students will be selected from the section ten of grade nine. In order to determine sample size, the researcher will use the formula of finite (known population) (Yemane, 1967)

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N)(e)^2}$$

Where n=sample size

$$n = \frac{623}{(1+623)(0.07)^2}$$

N=Total number of grade nine students = 623

$$n = \frac{623}{(1+623)(0.0049)}$$

e= sample error i.e 0.07

$$n = \frac{623}{1+3.0527}$$

1= the probability of event occurring (given)

$$n = \frac{623}{4.0527}$$

$$n=150$$

Thus, out of ten sections, 15 students were selected systematically from each class. On the other hand, since the number of teachers in Teji Senior Secondary School is not large enough, the

researcher take all EFL teachers (five) as a sample by using availability sampling technique which is non-probable sampling.

3.4. Instrument of Data Collection

Observation, questionnaire, document analysis and interview were the tools used for data collection. These instruments used to gather data from teachers' and students' difficulties in writing practice. Class room observation was particularly used to generate information in support of the interview and document analysis.

3.4.1. Classroom observation

Classroom observation is important because it helps the researcher to get direct information which is helped actually in the class room. It helps the researcher to observe how writing skill teaching learning process is practically being implemented in the class room, how students practice writing skill in the class room and how English language teachers are practically teaching writing skill lesson. Similarly, the researcher observed how English language teachers help students to overcome their problems and how they give them feedback. Supporting this idea; Cohen et.al (2007:396) depicts that the typical features of observation as a research development is that it helps the researcher opportunity to gather live or direct information from naturally occurring social situations. In this method, the researchers could observe directly what was taking place in the situation instead of relying on second hand sources. Thus, so as to gather reliable information in the actual English writing skill lesson in the classroom the researcher observed writing skill lessons.

Therefore, the researcher used observation check list to be the tool is more effective and he gathers data while the English language teacher is teaching writing skill in the classroom. So as to avoid biased the researcher will observe five writing skill teaching lessons, Checklists were prepared by his own and also adapted from (Mohammedamin, 2015) as a reference to strengthen the study.

3.4.2. Questionnaires

For the successful completion of the study, questionnaire was prepared for the students. The researcher prepares closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were distributed for 150 students at the same time. Brown (2001:6) reveals:

“Questionnaires were written instruments that present respondents with series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers.” Using this questionnaire, students are asked about how to they use steps of writing, how did they organize their writing, in what way did they use grammars and mechanics and also students are asked questions which are related to how language teachers helped them to overcome their problems. The questionnaires were in the form of closed-ended and open-ended .The open-ended is handled with closed ended questions. The closed ended questions helped the participant to answer easily by putting right marks. The open-ended questions are important because the participants responded freely what they feel. This instrument helps the researcher to get answer for first, second, and third research questions. Using questionnaires students express their ideas, opinions and thoughts freely, so the researcher uses this data collecting instrument.

3.4.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis was used to gather data in this study. This document was taken from students’ written text/work. This tool is important for making triangulation the data which are collected from observation and questionnaire. Document analysis is a technique which can generate both valid and reliable data from documents. It also helps for understanding and analyzing of documents (Stemler and Bebel, 1998) as cited Tewodros (2014). The students were asked to write a text according to the title from the text book. Then, the written work is evaluated regarding to the rule of writing skill and its development. That means, the researcher assesses the written work in terms of writing organization (topic sentence, details, concluding, unity, coherence, completeness, sentence variety) and grammar and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling appropriate use of subject and verb and pronouns).

3.4.4. Interview

Interview helps to get direct information in face to face interaction with respondents. In line with this, Singh (2007) states that an interview is typically defined as a face to face discussion or communication via some technology like the telephone or computer between an interviewer and a respondent. He also stated that interview contained certain kinds of communications but allows

giving freedom on the discussion of contain topic. In this study, the researcher used interview, so as to gather direct information from five English language teachers who are currently teaching English in grade Nine Teji Senior secondary School. The English language teachers were selected purposefully. The researcher prepared questions and he asked the English Language teachers when they were free from anything (when the time available for the teachers). This helps the researcher that the teacher generated idea freely or interestingly.

The questions were more of related to the whole aspects of research questions. And this helped to triangulate the data which were gathered through observation, questionnaire and document analysis.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

As it is stated above the study uses data collection instruments (observation, questionnaire, document analysis, and interview). So as to collect the necessary information, the following procedures were employed. First, the data from class observation is collected that how students practice writing skill and how teachers teach practically and help students while they are writing skill. Second, the data through questionnaires which are given for students will be collected. Third, document analysis collected from students' written work is hold. Finally, the researcher interviewed five language teachers.

3.6. Data Analysis procedures

After collecting the data through different instruments the researcher used the following procedures to analyze the collected data. The data which was analyzed through observation, open ended questionnaire, document analysis, and interview using thematically tools (qualitative) data analyzing method. This was done by identifying the relevant data using thematically and classify in to different categories to generate to topic. This means the use of thematic code in which the codes (challenges) presented on the base data received. The closed ended questionnaire was analyzed using statistical tools (quantitative) data analyzing method. These were categorized for analysis (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). As Onwuegh buzie (2010) states cross over analyze gave the researcher to go back and forth many times and present analysis of data gathered through different tools thematically and statistically. While analyzing the data, the researcher integrated the point that was generated through the given tools and the data was interpreted to reach on the relevant conclusion such process of organizing and analyzing the data help the researcher to

develop and understand how each point is connected to each other. Besides, interpretation is given each analyzed item. Finally, based on the analyzed data the researcher tried to summarize the research findings, draw conclusions from the findings and suggest recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data gathered through classroom observation, students' questionnaire, analysis of sample students' written paragraphs and interviews were conducted with English teachers. While analyzing the data, the researcher integrated the point that was generated through the given tools and the data were interpreted to reach on the relevant conclusion.

4.2 The nature of writing difficulties among learners

Writing skill is not naturally acquired or developed rather it needs frequent practice. Paragraph writing is one part of writing skill. Therefore, it needs practice. So as to make frequent practice steps of paragraph writing, brain storming, organize ideas, editing and also sufficient time should be taken as a framework. All these things were gathered through observation, questionnaire, and document analyzed and interview. In order to achieve the first objective of this study, the researcher assessed students' nature of writing difficulties in practicing paragraph writing. Thus, the researcher observed five actual writing lessons in the class room so as to check whether students are practically applying steps of paragraph writing in the class room or not. The main theme presents the analysis of students' paragraph writing practices in the class room. The data collected through observation, questionnaires and interviews were discussed. These includes students' use of steps of paragraph writing, the capacity to finish paragraph writing with in a period was analyzed. In general, the main concern of this part is to answer the first question that is what the nature of writing difficulties among learners is.

4.2.1 Stages of Writing Skill

According to MOE (2003 E.C) grade 9 English language syllabus students should be encouraged to check their own and others' writing before they hand in work. This follows the 7 stage model of writing (brain storm, think, plan, draft, and check, re write proof read, write a neat final version) and encourages them to become more independent learners.

The current researcher observed in the classroom that most students did not know steps of writing and their teachers did not encourage them to practice writing paragraphs. Most of the Students did not show any interest to write paragraphs and did not finish their writing task within a period.

Table 1 Students Responses based on Steps of Writing Skill

No	Items		Always	usually	Some times	rarely	Never	Total
	Steps of Writing skill							
1	How often do you use Steps of writing such as brain storming, planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing	Freq.	15	20	30	45	40	150
		%	10	13.33	20	30	26.66	100
2	Do you brainstorm before you begin to write	Freq.	5	15	30	85	15	150
		%	3.33	10	20	56.66	10	100
3	I organize or plan ideas	Freq.	15	25	30	35	45	150
		%	13.33	16.66	20	23.33	30	100
4	I edit, check and revise my writing	Freq.	5	5	20	85	35	150
		%	3.33	3.33	13.33	56.66	23.33	100

The first item was designed to find out how often students employ the steps of writing such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing or not in writing paragraph. As it is seen above in the table 1, in response to item No1, 15 (10%) of the respondents answered that they always use steps of writing before they began to write paragraph. 20 (13.33%) of the students said that usually use steps of paragraph writing before they began to write a paragraph. 30 (20%) of students said that they sometimes use the steps before began to write paragraph. 45 (20%) of students responded that they rarely use steps writing before they began to write paragraph. 40 (26.66%) of students never use steps of writing before they began to write paragraph. Simply they ran to begin to write as the teacher told them to do so. Thus, from this data the researcher can say that more than 56% students had not been experienced to take time to use steps of paragraph writing before they began to write the paragraph. As the researcher observed students' activities about their paragraph writing in the real Paragraph writing lesson, most students began to write as soon as the teacher ordered them to write about the given paragraph lesson. However, the researcher observed a few students made to think and talk with their peers to share and generate ideas.

Similarly, five English teachers who were interviewed responded that students did not apply the procedures or steps of paragraph writing even though teachers theoretically taught the students to use the procedures of paragraph writing. However, two English language teachers T1 and T4 said, some higher achiever students try to brain storm or recall about the titles what they know before and organize and categorize the ideas as soon as they run to make drafting and also they tried to re write by correcting the errors. This seems that except a few students others were not as such experienced to use steps of paragraph writing before they began to organize and write paragraph.

Item 2 of table1 is designed to see whether students are experienced on thinking or brainstorming before they begin to write a paragraph or not. For this reason, item 2 shows that 5 (3.33%) of the respondents answered that they always thought or brainstormed before they began to write paragraph. 15 (10%) of the students said that usually brain storm before they began to write a paragraph. 30 (20%) of students said that they sometimes brain stormed before began to write paragraph. 85 (56.66%) of students responded that they rarely brain stormed before they began to write paragraph. 15 (10%) of students never brain stormed before they began to write paragraph. As the researcher observed students' activities about paragraph writing during their Paragraph writing lesson. Majority of the students began to write as soon as the teacher told them to write about the given topic of a paragraph. However, the researcher observed a few students who brain storming with their partners to share and elicit ideas. Additionally, five English teachers who were interviewed responded that students did not brain storm or even use other steps of paragraph writing even though teachers encourage the students to use brain storming as the procedures of paragraph writing.

In the above table1, item 3 is intended to assess whether students organized their ideas when they were writing paragraph or not. Thus, 15 (13.33%) of students responded that they always organized or planned their ideas when they were writing paragraph. Similarly 25 (16.66%) of students said that they usually organized their ideas as they were writing. 30 (20%) of the students reflected that they sometimes organized their ideas when they wrote the paragraph. On the other hand 35 (23.33%) of the students said that they rarely organized their ideas. 45 (30%) of students answered that they never organized ideas. Thus, it looks like that more than half of the students fail to organize or planned their ideas and they began to write without considering

these steps. In the classroom observation, the researcher observed the practice of students' paragraph writing lesson in the actual classroom when English language teacher were teaching writing skill. However, almost all students did not organize the words or ideas which are related to the title that they are going to write. Simply they ran to write what they felt about. The teacher did not give clues to the students how they organize ideas.

From the teacher's interview, T1 said, "students are not experienced following steps of paragraph writing. They like to write without following steps of writing. They think it is too complex and bulky." He added "I also focus on only the theoretical aspects of procedures which are used to write a paragraph. I never encourage to use those procedures and to practice either in the classroom or outside in the class room. I focus on only the grammar and vocabulary lesson rather than writing as well as listening part as the students are not interested to write paragraph."

On the other hand, T5 reflected that he usually taught the students to use steps of paragraph writing in general and to organize their ideas in particular. He added that most students did not really happy to do so. From this, it is concluded that English language teachers who taught in the intended grade level did not address the practical aspect of writing to the students. In addition, students also were not that much eager to performing these activities.

In response to the forth item of table1, it is designed to answer whether the students edited, checked or revised the written text or not. In the item 4 shows that 5(3.33%) of the students said that they always edited and corrected what they had written. Similarly, 5 (3.33%) of the students pointed out that they usually edited and corrected what they had written. 20 (13.33%) of students reflected that they sometimes edited and corrected what they had written a paragraph in order to make it well organized. 85(56.55%) of the students answered that they rarely edited and corrected what they had written. 35 (23.33%) of the students pointed out that they never edited and corrected what they had written. This could be that students may not have a habit of correcting or editing the written paragraph. Byrne (1991) discussed that stage enables the students to think and improve the language that they used in their compositions. Besides, the students may also expand their compositions with new ideas or remove the parts that they found unnecessary depending on the feedback provided. In addition, T2, T3 and T5 reflected in interview that students have not developed such kind of habit. As they said that once the students wrote any kind of text they never edited it. T1 replied that I think some students write a

paragraph using steps of paragraph writing but I saw the majority of the students never follow steps of writing. This implies that the students are not experienced for editing the text that they had written.

Generally, according to students' response to use of steps of paragraph writing practice, the students did not practice as well. When T1 taught about paragraph writing concerning biography of famous person, he tried to encourage students to write a paragraph about a famous person .He also follows up the students through desk whether they are implementing the steps of writing or not after he clearly states the concept or the use of writing procedures. In this time, students were not seen to perform those steps of writing skill. Furthermore, in classroom observation students were almost not seen when using the steps of writing. Similarly, English language teachers did not encourage them to practice steps of writing. For example, some of the students even confirmed that they did not know steps of paragraph writing totally and they did not use steps of writing. On the other hand, others said that they knew steps of writing in theory because they read them in the text book and the teacher also told them to use those steps but they have never used them practically. In addition, T5 who was interviewed said that no one follows steps of paragraph writing whenever they write paragraph. English language teachers including him they told the students to use steps of paragraph writing which are found clearly in the text book but the students did not use those steps.

To sum up, students seem to have certain difficulties to practice paragraph writing skill. In line with this, Hedge (1998) mentions that “My own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer; a student needs to write a lot.” Hence they have never shown any interest in paragraph writing. They did not know or use steps of paragraph writing whenever they write a Paragraph; in addition teachers did not encourage them to follow steps of paragraph writing practically when they were teaching writing skill.

4.2.2. Paragraph Organization

A good paragraph should be organized in terms of topic sentence with appropriate supportive sentences and with proper transitional words. It should also state one or single idea or it should show flow of idea. These components are observed in the students' questionnaire, document analysis, as well as teachers' interview.

Table 2 Students Responses regarding Paragraph Organization

No	Items		Always	usually	Some times	Rarely	Never	Total
	Paragraph Organization							
1	I know how to write topic sentences and use them in my paragraph.	Freq.	20	15	30	45	40	150
		%	13.33	10	20	30	26.66	100
2	I use supportive details.	Freq.	5	16	45	40	44	150
		%	3.33	10.66	30	26.66	29.33	100
3	I use concluding sentences.	Freq.	7	13	32	47	51	150
		%	4.66	8.66	21.33	31.33	34	100
4	My paragraph is coherent.	Freq.	17	22	29	52	30	150
		%	11.33	14.66	19.33	34.67	20	100
5	My paragraph is unified.	Freq.	9	15	37	39	50	150
		%	6	10	24.67	26	33.33	100

As it is indicated in the table 2, item 1 is proposed to know whether the students know how to write topic sentences and use them in my paragraph or not. It shows that 20 (13.33%) of students responded that they always wrote a topic sentence and use them in their paragraph and 15 (10%) of students reflected that they usually wrote topic sentence when they wrote a paragraph. 30 (20%) of students answered that they sometimes wrote and used topic sentence. 45 (30%) of the respondent said that they rarely wrote topic sentence 40 (26.66%) of the respondents said that they never know how to write and use topic sentence whenever they write a paragraph. As far as possible students should know how to write topic sentence when they write a paragraph otherwise the written work is not considered as a paragraph.

However, as it is clearly seen in the above data, most students fail to write topic sentence or the main idea of the Paragraph when they write a paragraph. Therefore, students seem to have challenges to write topic sentence while they are writing a paragraph. The same thing is observed from students' written work analysis. Most of the students could not use topic sentence when they write a paragraph. Simply, they state what they feel without including the topic sentence. From this the researcher believes that students have a challenge of identifying what topic sentence is and also have a problem of including topic sentence in a paragraph.

Furthermore, English language teachers who were interviewed reflected their experience about how students wrote topic sentence in the paragraph. They said that except a few students most of the students could use topic sentence. Teachers forward their experiences as follows. There is weak organization of topic sentence which is observed in students' written work. They do not clearly understand what it means and how it is used. Generally, they do not have clear information about how to write a paragraph. (T4) Some students write a paragraph with topic sentence. However, most students are not experienced in writing topic sentence in a given paragraph. They do not consider parts of paragraph while they are writing a paragraph (T2). In addition students were observed in classroom observation whether they use and how they organized parts of paragraph when they wrote a paragraph. Some students observed while they were using topic sentence in classroom practice during writing session.

This indicates that students did not know how to organize a paragraph with proper topic sentence that is why they face a challenge to construct topic sentence or other parts of a paragraph. This seems only a few students know how to write a Paragraph. They know parts of paragraph and how where the parts of the paragraph must be written whereas others do not know the way or use of topic sentence. They ran to write what they feel about without considering topic sentence. Topic sentence should be taken in to consideration as frame work when students write a paragraph.

In the second item of above table students were asked about whether they write supportive sentences which support topic sentence properly or not. Thus, 5 (3.33%) of the students responded that they always write detail sentences appropriately in the written paragraph. 16 (10.66%) of the students said that they usually write supportive details appropriately in the written paragraph. 45 (30%) of the students answered that they sometimes wrote detail sentences appropriately in the written paragraph. 40 (26.66%) of the students replied that they rarely wrote detail sentences in the written paragraph. 44 (29.33%) of the students claimed that they never write sentences that supports the topic sentence. So, it is clear that most students may not write supportive sentences clearly.

During the interview, the respondent (T1) stressed that most students did not use or write appropriate detail sentences. He added that some students' paragraphs did not have relation to the title or topic sentence. In line with this, T5 pointed out "In my experience, only a few

students use or write supportive detail sentences appropriately. However, majority of students do not know in what way sentences can be written.” Therefore, it is concluded that almost all students face a problem writing supportive detail sentences. Similar questions were raised for English teachers. For example T3 replied that most students did not know the items that included in the paragraph to supportive. He added that they did not identify the beginning or the end of paragraph.

In item 3, it is designed that students were asked to express their experiences whether they use concluding sentences when they had written a paragraph or not. The data shows that how the students concluded their paragraph. Therefore, 7 (4.66%) of students answered that they always have an ability to conclude the paragraph. Similarly, 13 (8.66%) of the students reflected that they usually have an ability to conclude the paragraph. 32 (21.33%) of the students said that they sometimes conclude the paragraph. On the other hand, 47 (31.33%) of the students expressed that they rarely write concluding sentence. 51 (34%) of the students replied that they never conclude the paragraph. Generally, as it is observed in the above data, each student has their own experiences for concluding the paragraph that they have already written. Thus, it is possible to say that a majority of students cannot conclude the written paragraph.

In addition, the teacher was interviewed about the ability of students’ paragraph organization. Therefore, T2 told that almost all students could not identify or know the items which are included in the paragraph like topic sentence, detail sentence, and concluding sentence. Instead of they conclude the ideas, simply they finished before they conclude the paragraph. This seems that the paragraphs which are written by almost all students do not contain concluding sentence. In short students are not well experienced to conclude a paragraph. As a result, almost all students finished their ideas without restate what they had written.

Furthermore, in the interview, the teachers were interviewed about the awareness of students how they use concluding sentence while they were writing a paragraph. Hence, T4 explained there is a weak organization of concluding sentence because they have not enough information about writing a paragraph. Students cannot take in to consideration the parts of paragraph including sentence as a frame work when they write a paragraph. This seems that student have not information as well as there are gaps to write a paragraph. Most of students completed their ideas instead of restating what they had written. If the paragraphs were written with appropriate

concluding sentence, it helps the reader to recall what is written. If not, the reverse is true. So according to the data which are analyzed above, seems that most students fail to restate their ideas.

According to item 4, the students were supposed to justify whether they used connectors or transitional words or phrases properly when they wrote a paragraph or not. Thus, 17 (11.33%) of the students reflected that they always used transitional words properly. In addition, 22 (14.66%) of the students described that they usually used words in the correct place. This data is not as such enough in the intended grade level. On the other hand, 29 (19.33%) of students said that they sometimes use transitional words in the correct place. 52 (34.67%) of students answered that they rarely use transitional words in the correct place. This assured that the students do not know those words, and they do not use appropriately. 30 (20%) of the students mentioned that they have never used transitional words.

In addition, the teacher who was interviewed reiterated this idea by saying the students did not practice writing skill using transitional words. Therefore, T5 reflected that some students use common transitional words when they write a paragraph. In contrast most of the time students do not use cohesive device necessarily. They seemed to a problem of linking idea. From the above reflection , it is understood that majority of the students not seemed to know the function of transition words to link words, phrases as well as sentences accordingly.

The last item in the above table, the students were suggested to answer whether the paragraph that they had written was really show flow of idea, and state a single idea or not. In response to item 5, 9 (6%) of the students revealed that they always constructed a paragraph which is being unified and shows chronological order and talks about the main idea. 15(10%) of the students indicated they usually constructed a paragraph which is unified. 37(24.67%) of the students said that they sometimes constructed a paragraph which is unified and the idea of the paragraph shows chronological order. 39(26%) of the students answered that they rarely constructed a paragraph which is unified. 50(33.33%)of the students answered that they did not constructed a paragraph which is unified. This seems that more than half percent of the participant could not write well unified paragraph.

Furthermore, in the interview, T4 reflected that most students did not write unified parts of paragraph and they do not use them appropriately. He added that students face a challenge of using appropriate cohesive devices. If so, students are not expected to write unified paragraph or it does not show flow of idea. He also said that some students write a paragraph carelessly. According to teacher reflection, it is understood that almost all students' paragraph lack flow of ideas.

When students write a paragraph, they are supposed to write sentences which are written in the paragraph should states to the target of topic sentence in the paragraph. If not, readers are unable to understand the paragraph. According to classroom observation grade nine students' paragraph writing, students fail to write well unified paragraph. They sometimes write out of the topic sentence.

Moreover, English language teachers were also asked their experience in what way the students write well unified paragraph. Almost all the intended teachers answered similar ideas. For instance, T1 reflected "I do not expect but some students sometimes make their paragraph uniform that means they use cohesive devices they come up with the point. They use grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling properly. They write also in logical order. However, the reverse is true for majority of them; they could not perform what I mean before some students' experience.

In addition, T3 replied that if the students did not use or know the parts of the paragraph or if they do not use cohesive devices properly, no one expects the paragraph is unified. Rather there are irrelevant points or sentences. There is no flow idea and the paragraphs are written carelessly. As it is understood in the above data, the teachers did not conclude that all students are not able to write a paragraph which is unified. They express their experience that some students could write well unified paragraph. They also confirmed that most of the students never write a paragraph as it is expected therefore, most students seemed to unable to write well organized paragraph. In general, as it is seen in the above data, some students try to write a paragraph with proper organization of paragraph. They really write topic sentences, supportive details, concluding sentences, and with proper cohesive devises. In contrast, majority of the students may not know where and how they write the parts of the paragraph. They have also other language

problems like grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation. Thus, majority of the students may not write well organized paragraph.

4.3. Prevalence of writing difficulties

The prevalence of writing difficulties in this basic writing skill at this grade level is a source of concern, because it showed that, one third of secondary school learners did not meet the readiness benchmarks of proficiency in basic writing skills required at high school level as observed by Action Commission on teaching (2005).

Table 3 Students Responses based on Common Spelling Errors

No	Items		Always	usually	Some times	Rarely	Never	Total
	How often do you face spelling errors such as:							
1	Omission of letters in a word	Freq.	29	37	41	24	19	150
		%	19.33	24.67	27.33	16	12.67	100
2	Substitution of letters in a word	Freq.	33	36	32	28	21	150
		%	22	24	21.33	18.67	14	100
3	Reversing of letters in a word	Freq.	25	34	40	39	12	150
		%	16.67	22.67	26.67	26	8	100
4	Writing completely a different word	Freq.	18	38	31	42	21	150
		%	12	25.33	20.67	28	14	100

In the above Table 3, the first statement was designed to identify whether the students face Omission of letters in a word or not when they wrote a paragraph. It indicated that 29 (19.33%) of the students revealed that they always face Omission of letters in a sentence accordingly. Similarly, 37 (24.67%) of the students said that they usually face Omission of letters in a sentence. 41 (27.33%) of the students reflected that they sometimes face Omission of letters in a sentence. This shows that they face a certain problems when they write a paragraph. 24 (16%) of the students answered that they rarely face Omission of letters in a sentence accordingly. It seemed that two third of the students faced omission of letters in a sentence when they wrote a paragraph.

In addition, in the interview, Teacher (T3) realized in the interview that students faced omission of letters in a sentence. He added that students wrote words or letters out of rules. They wrote carelessly. Similarly, T2 replied that 'students do not write words on their appropriate place. Sometimes they write capital letters instead of small letters or they write small letters instead of capital letters.' Here, students have problems in letters writing. The students assured in open ended questions that they do not use properly.

The second statement was proposed whether the students face substitution of letters or not. In response to item 2, indicates that 33(22%) of the students responded that they always face substitution of letters in a word. 36 (24%) of the students said that they usually face substitution of letters in a word. Whereas 32 (21.33%) of students reflected that they sometimes face substitution of letters in a word. The remaining 28 (18.67%) and 14 (12%) of the students agreed that they rarely and never face substitution of letters in a word respectively. Hence, the above information implies that students face substitution of letters in a word when they write a paragraph.

In addition, in the interview; the researcher interviewed how the students spelt words. Therefore, all five English language teachers replied that substitutions of letters were observed commonly in students' written work. Teachers agreed that students sometimes substitute or add extra letters in the expected word. For example, T1 answered that students missed letters or add other letters which do not have logical relation with the word. T5 added that most students substitute letters in the given word that they are writing too. This shows that students have substituting letters problem.

According to item 3, the students were required to reflect whether they face reversing of letters in a word or not. 25(16.67%) of the students responded that they always used face reversing of letters in a word while they were writing a paragraph. 34 (22.67%) students replied that they usually face reversing of letters in a word. In contrast, 40 (26.67%) of the students replied that they sometimes face reversing of letters in a word. 39 (16%) of the students answered that they almost did not face reversing of letters in a word when they were writing a paragraph. This implies that students face a challenge of reversing of letters in a word when they write a paragraph. In addition T2, T3 reflected that most students faced the problem of reversing of letters in a word.

In terms of item 4 students were suggested that how often they face writing completely a different word. Hence, 18 (12%) of the students replied that they always write completely a different word. 38 (25.33%) of the students described that they usually write completely a different word. In addition 31 (20.67%) of the students mentioned that they sometimes write completely a different word in the sentence. 63 (42%) of the students said that they are incapable of writing completely a different word. In addition, in the interview, T3, T4 replied that the word that they write is completely different. This shows that students construct completely different word when they write a paragraph.

4.4. Mechanics

When we write a paragraph with a well grammatical sentences and with proper mechanics (proper capitalization, spelling, and punctuation), it can be readable or it can be under stood easily.

Table 4 Students' Response on Mechanics Errors

No	Items		Always	usually	Some times	rarely	Never	Total
	Errors made by pupils in writing							
1	Poor Punctuation marks	Freq.	44	30	23	31	22	150
		%	29.33	20	15.33	20.67	14.67	100
2	Difficulties with use of Tenses	Freq.	48	45	33	14	10	150
		%	32	30	22	9.33	6.67	100
3	Poor Capitalization	Freq.	25	36	43	22	24	150
		%	16.67	24	28.67	14.67	16	100
4	Difficulties construction of meaningful sentences	Freq.	38	52	35	20	5	150
		%	25.33	34.67	23.33	13.33	3.33	100
5	Difficulties in Formulation of ideas	Freq.	41	47	23	24	15	150
		%	27.33	31.33	15.33	16	10	100
6	Lack of words to express ideas	Freq.	39	32	40	19	20	150
		%	26	21.33	26.67	12.67	13.33	100

In the above Table 4, the first statement was designed to identify whether the students use proper punctuation marks or not when they wrote a paragraph. It indicated that 44 (29.33%) of the students revealed that they always use poor punctuation mark in a sentence accordingly. Similarly, 30 (20%) of the students said that they usually use poor punctuation marks in a sentence. 23 (15.33%) of the students reflected that they sometimes use poor punctuation marks in a sentence. This shows that they face a certain problems when they write a paragraph. 31 (20.67%) of the students answered that they rarely use poor punctuation marks in a sentence accordingly. It seemed that two third of the students never write punctuation marks properly accordingly.

In addition, in the interview, Teacher (T4) realized in the interview that students use punctuation marks inappropriately. He added that students wrote words or letters out of rules. They wrote carelessly. Similarly, T2 replied that ‘students do not capitalize words on their appropriate place. Sometimes they write capital letters instead of small letters or they write small letters instead of capital letters.’ Here, students have problems in proper use of punctuation marks. The students assured in open ended questions that they do not use properly.

The second statement was proposed whether the students face difficulties with use of tense or not. In response to item 2, indicates that 48 (32%) of the students responded that they always face difficulties with use of tense in a sentence. 45 (30%) of the students said that they usually faced difficulties with the use of tenses when writing paragraph. Whereas 33 (22%) of students reflected that they sometimes faced difficulties with the use of tense in a sentence. The remaining 24 (16%) of the students agreed that they rarely and never faced difficulties with the use of tenses in a sentence. Hence, the above information implies that students have difficulties in the use of tense when they write a paragraph. In addition, in the interview; the researcher interviewed how the students faced difficulties. Therefore, all five English language teachers replied that difficulties in the use of tense were observed commonly in students’ written work.

In the above Table 3, the third statement was designed to identify whether the students use proper capitalization or not when they wrote a paragraph. It indicated that 25 (16.67%) of the students revealed that they always use poor capitalization in a sentence accordingly. Similarly, 36 (24%) of the students said that they usually use poor capitalization in a sentence. 43 (28.67%) of the students reflected that they sometimes capitalized words in a sentence. This shows that

they face a certain problems when they write a paragraph. 22 (14.67%) of the students answered that they rarely capitalized words in a sentence accordingly. It seemed that most of the students never write words properly according to capitalization.

Moreover, in the interview, Teacher (T3) realized in the interview that students use capital letters inappropriately. He added that students wrote words or letters out of rules. Similarly, T5 replied that students do not capitalize words on their appropriate place. Sometimes they write capital letters instead of small letters or they write small letters instead of capital letters.' Here, students have problems in proper use of capitalization.

Interims of item 4 students were suggested that whether they have difficulties in constructing meaningful sentence or not. Hence, 38 (25.33%) of the students replied that they always constructed subject with verbs inappropriately. 52 (34.67%) of the students described that they usually faced difficulties in constructing a subject with a verb. Similarly, 35 (23.33%) of the students mentioned that they sometimes faced difficulties in constructing a meaningful sentence. In contrast, 20 (13.33%) of the students said that they rarely faced difficulties of constructing sentences that are meaningful. Whereas very few students 5(3.33%) of respondents replied that they never faced difficulties in constructing meaningful sentences. In addition, in the interview, T2, T3 replied that subject and verb is mostly mismatched or sentences lack either subject or verb. This shows that students construct fragment sentences.

In response to item 5, 41 (27.33%) of the students mentioned that they always faced difficulties in formulation of ideas. In a similar manner, 47 (31.33%) of the students agreed that they usually in difficulties in formulation ideas. In contrast, 23 (15.33%) of the students replied that they sometimes faced difficulties in formulation ideas when writing paragraph. 24 (16%) of the students said that they rarely faced difficulties in formulation of ideas. Therefore, this shows that almost all students were not sure how they formulate ideas in the sentence. Furthermore, the data gathered through interview shows that the students are incapable of formulating ideas when they were writing a paragraph.

According to item 6, the students were required to reflect whether they lack of words to express ideas or not. 39(26%) of the students responded that they always lack of words to express ideas while they were writing a paragraph. 32 (21.33%) students replied that they usually lack words

to express ideas. In contrast, 40 (26.67%) of the students replied that they sometimes faced lack of words to express ideas when they were writing a paragraph. 19 (12.67%) of the students answered that they almost lack words to express ideas when a text.

4.5. Factors contributing to writing difficulties

Writing is not a natural activity. It is developed through practice. Since writing skill needs day to day practice, teachers are expected to assist students in different aspects in order to improve their writing skill. According to MOE in grade 9 syllabus confirmed that ‘students should be encourage to check their own and others writing’ before they hand in work. The following seven stages of writing (think, brainstorm, plan, draft, check, re write, write final version) and it encourage becoming more independent learners.

4.5.1. Teacher Feedback

In addition, Jarvis (2005) arrives that in order to motivate students in second language writing, teachers should write positive comments on learners’ exercise books and verbally in force good language responses as part of their instructions. Zamel (1985:79) states that teacher’s feedback can be effective if teachers respond to students writing as genuine and interested readers rather than as judges and evaluates .Similarly, Byrne (1988:29) thinks that if we are to be truly readers rather than judges, we should perhaps look not so much at what the learners have failed to achieve but rather at what they actually succeeded in doing.

This might help student’s writer to appreciate receiving comments and use them in their revisions. Many teachers and students acknowledge that corrective feedback improves students writing. Mike (2008) studied the effective of corrective feedback on writing accuracy and improvement. They indicated that corrective feedback had positive effect on writing accuracy.

As it is mentioned in chapter one the third research question what are the factors that contribute to writing difficulties among learners in writing paragraphs. Therefore, observation, questionnaire, document, and interviews were analyzed. The researcher observed teachers’ teaching practice and he also observed whether the English language teachers assist students in order to solve their challenges based on writing paragraphs. The researcher observed in the class room that most of English language teachers did not give feedback to their students which is therefore one the major factors contributing to writing difficulties.

4.5.2. Lack of Student Motivation

According to Zamel (1992) the writing class should take in to account the learners' purposes for writing. Writing tasks can be developed rapidly when students' concerns and interests are acknowledged when they are given numerous opportunities to write and when they are encouraged to become participants. Davies (1998:25) thinks that learners will be encouraged to write if writing tasks motivate them and keep them interested. Byrne (1988) believes that most of writers write less well if they are obliged to write about something based on writing paragraphs. The current researcher as language teacher observed that mostly grade nine English language teachers did not encourage or motivate students to write well developed paragraphs and learners did not participate in writing paragraphs. From the researcher observation, English language teachers tried to focus on grammar parts rather than teaching students writing paragraphs. As it is mentioned in chapter one the third research question is what teachers assist students to solve challenges in writing paragraphs. Therefore, observation, questionnaire, document, and interviews were analyzed. The researcher observed teachers' teaching practice and he also observed whether the English language teachers assist students in order to solve their challenges. At the same time, students were asked whether English language teachers encourage them to practice paragraph writing or not. In the same manner, English language teachers 'were also asked in what way they assist or give feedback for the students during paragraph lesson.

Table 5 Students' Responses on Factors contributing to writing difficulties

No	Items		Always	usually	Some times	rarely	Never	Total
	Factors contributing to writing difficulties							
1	Does your teacher provide to students writing orientation sessions?	Freq.	20	28	33	40	29	150
		%	13.33	18.67	22	26.67	19.33	100
2	Is the teaching of writing skills time tabled in your class?	Freq.	12	25	38	45	30	150
		%	8	16.67	25.33	30	20	100
3	Does your school conduct periodical assessment of learners writing skills?	Freq.	9	14	21	49	57	150
		%	6	9.33	14	32.67	34.67	100

As it is mentioned in Table 5, students were asked whether English language teachers provide to students writing orientation sessions or not when they face problems in time of paragraph writing. In response to item 1, 20 (13.33%) of students reflected that English language teacher always provide them writing orientation sessions when they practice paragraph writing. 28 (18.67%) of students replied that English language teachers usually provide them to practice paragraph writing. 33 (22%) of the students replied English language teacher sometimes gave them orientation to practice paragraph writing. Whereas 40 (26.67%) of the students described that English language teacher rarely provided them orientation to practice paragraph writing. Similarly, 29 (19.33%) of the students reflected that English language never provided them orientation to practice paragraph writing.

This indicated that students were not provided orientation by their English language teachers to practice paragraph writing. As the researcher observed in the actual class room, except T5, other English language teachers did not encourage or assist the students to improve paragraph writing skills. Commonly, English language teachers were not committed to encourage the student s practice paragraph writing. The teachers more of focused on teaching the theoretical aspect of writing in general and other language areas like the grammar part rather than teaching paragraph writing skill. In addition, in open ended questions almost all students replied that with in that particular time, meaning with in short period of time their English language teachers told them to do so orally. They also informed them the components of the paragraph and they told them other things that could be taken in to consideration like grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization. However, they did not encourage them to do practically in class rather than they rush in to other language area. Furthermore, English language teachers were asked in what way they assist students to improve paragraph writing. Therefore, said as follow: T1 reflected I think that I could not provide them orientation to improve paragraph writing, but I focus on other language areas like grammar .In addition T3 said: Due to large volume of the text book and short period of time I cannot say I help students to improve paragraph writing skill. Simply I tell them the theoretical rather than the practical aspect of paragraph writing. In some extent I see only a few students who finished early and I show some point how they should write. I believe I must take to home and check the other students 'task but I did not it. To strengthen this idea, Silva et al. (1994) states the structure of a paragraph will be evaluated using preferably systematic evaluation method. This method address the area of content organization, vocabulary and

grammar, mechanical conventions (punctuation, spelling, hand writing) and, etc. This shows that English language teachers were not taking responsible either to encourage students to practice paragraph writing or to solve problems when they have faced. They focus on other language areas i.e. the rule of the language rather than the paragraph writing skill.

In response to table5 in item 2, it is proposed that the students were asked whether teaching of writing skill is time tabled in their class or not. Thus, 12 (8%) of the students answered that it is always time tabled in order to overcome the challenges. 25 (16.67%) of the students reflected that teaching writing skill is usually time tabled in the class in order to overcome the challenges. 38 (25.33%) of the students replied that teaching writing skill is sometimes time tabled in their class. In contrast, large number of the students, 45 (30%) and 30 (20) of the students said that teaching of writing skill is rarely and never time tabled in the class to improve students' writing skill. This implies that students did not improve the paragraph writing because there no time table or common schedule for the students to practice writing skill in the classroom. Similarly, the researcher observed how the students practice written work in the actual class room. For example T3 introduce the lesson and he informed the students to write a short paragraph about biography of famous people. When the researcher interviewed, he said that he gave some times class work as well as home take assignment. However, he said that he did not check the written work line by line. His idea was really seen while the researcher was observing the actual class room. After saying something, he ordered them to write a paragraph about their autobiographies as class work. However, most of the students did not begin to write as soon as the lesson was given. They did not finish on time. As the teacher required them to show the written work, still no one was voluntary to show what they had written to him. After a few minutes, five students show the text for their teacher. The teacher commented the text accordingly. The teacher gave commented as a whole how the students should write a paragraph. Some of his sayings were the students should include the parts of paragraph i.e. topic sentence, supportive details concluding sentence, and proper grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling.

In addition, T4 said, 'I only saw a few students' texts which were written earlier than others or the students who finished first. I told them and write some comments about the organization of paragraph at the same time I commented on grammars and punctuation. However, I did not

comment for each student's written work. Thus, implies there is no time table as well as sufficient time to practice writing skill.

In response to table 5 to item 3 the students were asked whether the school conduct periodical assessment of learners' writing skill or not. 9 (6%) of the students reflected that the school always conduct periodical assessment of learners on writing skill. 14 (9.33%) of the students reflected that the school usually conduct periodical assessment of learners on writing skill. Similarly, 21 (14%) of the students reflected that the school sometimes conduct periodical assessment of learners' writing skill. In contrast, large number of the students 49 (32.67%) reflected that the school rarely conduct periodical assessment of learners' writing skill. 57 (34.67%) of the students reflected that the school never conduct any periodical assessment of learners' writing skill. This implies the school never gave information to conduct periodical assessment of learners on writing skill.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes the study, draws conclusions and offers recommendations based on the overall findings of the study.

5.1. Summary

The general objective of the study was to investigate the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade of Teji Senior Secondary School. More specifically this study attempted to identify the nature of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade, describe the prevalence of writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade and analyze factors that contributes to writing difficulties among learners at ninth grade. For this study, descriptive research design was employed. In order to address these subjects, qualitative and quantitative research method was used. To this end, data was collected using observation, questionnaires, document analysis, and interviews. The researcher observed five writing skill teaching lessons, in the classroom. Questionnaires were distributed to 150 grade 9 students who were attending in Teji Senior Secondary school. The participants of the students were selected through systematic sampling technique. Document analysis was used for assessing students' challenges in practice writing paragraphs which were written by students. Furthermore, interview was conducted with five English language teachers who were currently teaching English in grade Nine Teji Senior secondary School. In this study, the researcher tried to integrate and discussed all the data jointly so as to answer successively the research questions of the study. As a result, after examining the information obtained from the intended instruments the following leading points were established. Students did not have any interest in writing paragraphs. They did not know or use steps of paragraph writing whenever they write a paragraph. Time is insufficient to practice paragraph writing. Students were unable to use topic sentences, supportive sentences, concluding sentences, connectors, grammars and mechanics. Students were not supported by English language teachers to solve their challenges. Teachers did not give feedback for the students' written tasks.

5.2 Conclusions

According to the finding of these studies, the researcher has reached the following conclusions.

- Students are unable to practice paragraph writing in the class room when they are ordered to do so by their English teacher. Students' interest in paragraph writing seems low as they have made to paragraph writing in the class room because they believe that paragraph writing lessons may not have value for their academic as well as future carrier. When they are ordered to write a paragraph they do not give attention. They are not motivated to write. At the same time, they are not volunteers to deliver the paragraph that they have written. They do not complete the task either in time or on time.
- As it was observed in the class room, most students fail to use steps of paragraph writing whenever they write a paragraph because most students seemed not use practically these steps of paragraph writing. It also suggested that they had no idea how to organize ideas, edit their own work, and revise the written paragraphs. They are unable to be critical of their writing process.
- Students are unable to place components of paragraph properly i.e. topic sentence, supportive details, concluding sentences, and with proper cohesive devices. They also faced a problem of writing meaningful paragraph with proper grammar and mechanics. Few students try to write paragraph with proper organization of paragraph. They try to write topic sentence, supportive details, concluding sentences, and with proper cohesive devices. In contrast, majority of the students do not know where and how they write the parts of the paragraph.
- There is a gap to use transitional words in order to connect words, phrases or sentences in the paragraph. Similarly, students could not construct meaningful sentences. For example, disagreement of subject and verb, omission of verbs or subjects tense problems are seen.
- The study indicated that students are unable to use capitalization, spelling, pronouns, and punctuation appropriately. For example, they capitalize letters as well as they make it small improperly and also they omit or miss punctuation marks particularly full stop and comma.

- There is also omission or adding extra letters instead of writing proper words in the paragraph. Unable to identify and use proper pronouns, also other problems which are observed in students' paragraph analysis.
- It was clear that English language teachers not seemed to have any interest to help the students in order practice and to improve their paragraph writing. They could not know whether the students write a text correctly or not. They assist only a few students. They did not help consistently the whole Students according to their errors. They consider giving comments for three or five students as giving feedback for all students.
- All most all English language teachers would not like to assist or give constructive feedback for the students to practice paragraph writing.

5.3 Recommendations

In the lights of findings, the following recommendations can be made to improve the nature and prevalence of writing difficulties among learners.

- It is recommended for English language teachers to motivate students by giving writing tasks to do in the class room in order to increase their interest towards the practice of paragraph writing. Students need to know paragraph writing is important for communication purpose or academic purpose as well as future carrier.
- It is clear that since paragraph writing is a skill that can be improved by making frequent practice through different methods, students should be given chance of learning organization of paragraph and linguistic feature of written English to effectively use them.
- It is advisable for the students to identify steps of paragraph writing and use them practically either in the class room or outside the class room. If so, they minimize errors and improve paragraph writing skills. Since steps of paragraph writing are the focus of English for grade twelve syllabus, English language teachers should take responsibility to inform and encourage students to use steps of paragraph writing practically in the class room and outside the class room.
- It is advisable for students to give priority for components of the paragraph before they write a paragraph, they should first design well developed topic sentence, supportive details from the topic sentence, at the same time they should join sentences in the paragraph with appropriate connectors.
- It is advisable for English language teachers to make encouraging paragraph learning lesson to initiate their students to enable them to produce effective paragraph. They should also give constructive feedback for the students' written work. In addition, teachers should use active teaching and learning method to improve students' paragraph writing skill.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-A

Class Room Observation Checklist

No	Items	Responses
1	How students practice writing when tasks are given in the class room?	
2	Are students encouraged to practice writing in the class room?	
3	Are students interested to practice writing in the class room?	
4	Do students follow steps of writing when they are practicing writing?	
5	Do students have access to practice writing skill?	
6	Do students face challenges in practicing writing in the class?	
7	Do students play their role during practicing writing in the classroom?	
8	Do teachers play their role during teaching writing in the class room?	
9	Are students motivated very well in writing lesson?	
10	How does teacher give feedback for students in the class room?	

Appendix –B

Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is meant to find out information on nature and prevalence writing skill difficulties in English language in grade Nine Teji Senior secondary school. The responses obtained from this study will be useful in improving and enhancing the teaching and learning of writing skills in secondary schools. Please answer the following questions as best as you can, by placing a tick on the statement that is applicable to you or filling in the spaces provided. The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used only for the purpose of this study.

Part I: Closed- Ended Questionnaire for Students

Direction: Each of the students has five alternative scales which how often you employ writing practice section. Now read and react each of the following statements by putting tick mark in the given column.

Keys: 5= Always 4= Usually 3= some times 2= Rarely 1= Never

No	Items	How often (To what extent) do you use:				
		5	4	3	2	1
I	Writing Skill					
1	How often do you use Steps of writing such as brain storming, planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing					
2	Do you brainstorm before you begin to write					
3	I organize or plan ideas					
4	I edit, check and revise my writing					
II	Paragraph organization					
5	I know how to write topic sentences and use them in my paragraphs					

6	I use supportive details					
7	I use concluding sentences					
8	My paragraph is coherent					
9	My paragraph is unified					
Nature of Writing Difficulties						
	Type of handwriting difficulty	5	4	3	2	
1	Poor letter formation					
2	Poor letter identification					
3	Poor letter combination of lower and upper cases in words					
No	Items	How often (To what extent) do you use:				
		5	4	3	2	1
	Common spelling errors					
1	Omission of letters in a word					
2	Substitution of letters in a word					
3	Reversing of letters in a word					
4	Writing completely a different word					
	Errors made by pupils in writing					
1	Poor Punctuation marks					
2	Difficulties with use of Tenses					
3	Poor Capitalization					
4	Difficulties construction of meaningful sentences					
5	Difficulties in Formulation of ideas					
6	Lack of words to express ideas					
Prevalence of writing difficulties						
	How would you rate the following items?	High	Ave.	Low		
1	Your Handwriting					
2	Your Writing speed					
3	Spelling					

	Factors contributing to writing difficulties	5	4	3	2	1
1	Does your teacher provide to students writing orientation sessions?					
2	Is the teaching of writing skills time tabled in your class?					
3	Does your school conduct periodical assessment of learners writing skills?					

Part II: Open -Ended questions

Direction: Read each of the following statements and write your answer in the space provided.

1. Do you use steps of writing when you write a text such as brain storming, planning, drafting, revising, editing? -----

2. In what way does your English language teacher motivate you to practice steps of writing when you are writing? -----

3. Do you face challenges in your writing in English? If you say yes, what are the main challenges when you write a paragraph? -----

4. How about your organization ability in writing activities using appropriate cohesive device at their appropriate place? -----

5. How about using grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, in your paragraph writing? List down how do you use? -----

6. How does your English teacher encourage you to write well organized paragraph? -----

7. How does English language teacher assist you to overcome your writing challenges? -----

Appendix-C

Document Analysis Check List

In this instrument the students' written work will be assessed using the following frame work.

No.	Writing Assessment Check List	Remarks	
		Yes	No
1	Is a text written with appropriate use of topic sentence?		
2	Are supporting details used widely in the text?		
3	Is suitable concluding sentence written in the text?		
4	Is a text meaningfully unified?		
5	Does a text progress in an organized or logical way?		
6	Are cohesive device used properly in the text?		
7	Are the existing words well capitalized?		
8	Are words spelt correctly?		
9	Are sentences punctuated properly?		
10	Is every sentence actually a sentence?		
11	Are pronouns used properly?		
12	Are subject and a verb are used in a given sentence appropriately?		

Appendix-D

Interview for English language teachers

Dear Teacher,

The purpose of this study is to assess nature and prevalence of writing difficulties. Your responses are very useful. Therefore, your co-operation in providing genuine information is highly valuable for successful completion of the study .I kindly request your response for the following questions.

Part I. General information

Name of the School _____

Teacher's code _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Teacher's qualification: _____

Teaching experience: _____

Date of interview: _____

Part two. Interview for teachers

1. How about your student's interest in learning writing skill?
2. Do students have access to practice writing skill?
3. Do you think that students follow steps of writing when they are practicing writing skill?
4. In what way do you motivate students to practice steps of writing when they are writing a text?
5. Do you think that your students face challenges in writing skill? Yes or No,
If you say yes, what are the major challenges of students in practicing writing activities?
6. Do you think that students know what items to be included in writing skill if they know would you elaborate them?
7. How do your students use grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, subject and verb in a sentence, pronoun in their writing appropriately? Would you discuss please?