

STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING, THEIR WRITING  
STRATEGY USE AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

BY  
HABTAMU MULUGETA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN  
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, AND  
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have supported me during my study. Thus, I would like to thank a few of them most sincerely.

I primarily wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my advisors Dr. Alamirew G/mariam and Dr. Geremew Lemu for their guidance and feedback on my work and for their continuous encouragement throughout the study. I am also indebted to friends and colleagues Ato Bereket Assefa, Ato Tesfaye Haile, Dr. Badima Belay, Dr. Fekadu Mulugeta, Dr. Girma Gezahegn, Ato Alelign Aschale, Ato Berhe Tafere and Ato Abrham Menna who gave me valuable comments on the different parts of my study.

I am grateful to Dr. Melakneh Mengistu, the current Chairperson of DFLL, for his appreciated advises and moral support, and AAU and DBU for their financial supports during the course of my stay in this program. I would also like to thank Ato Gashaw Tesfa and Ato Abera Tibebe, from the Department of Psychology, for their valuable comments and suggestions on the data collection and statistical tools used in this study. I also acknowledge Dr. Seif Getaneh (DBU), Ato Yeshambel Alimaw (DMU) and Ato Bereket Assefa (AAU) for helping me in arranging classes during the data collection process, and English major students in the three sample universities who participated in the study.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their uninterrupted moral support, understanding, patience and love. My Father, Mulugeta Andualem, my mother, Huluye Alemu, my wife, Azeb Birhane, my daughters, Simret and Meron, my brother-in-law Solomon Birhane, my sister Firehiwot Mulugeta, and my best friend Abayneh Kassahun have been my source of courage, vitality and delight during the long and challenging academic engagement I have gone through.

## **Abstract**

*This study aimed at investigating students' beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and their writing performance. To achieve the purpose of this study, a descriptive-correlational design was employed. The design was also used to see the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. Data were collected from 97 respondents in three public universities. Four sampling techniques (convenience sampling, purposive sampling, availability sampling and simple random sampling) were used to select the sample universities, department and batch, and respondents. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings indicated that students have positive beliefs about writing. However, the descriptive data analysis revealed that students have low writing strategy use and poor writing performance. The correlation analysis indicated that there were positive, but non-significant, relationships between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. The degree of influence the independent variables have on writing performance was also found to be non-significant though it was positive. Students mentioned several educational and psychological factors such as their negative attitude towards learning English, their lack of interest to use the different approaches and strategies of writing, the marginalization of the writing strategies from the curriculum, university's system of assigning students to the English department as the main reasons for their low use of writing strategies and poor writing performance. Based on the major findings, it was chiefly recommended that the current curriculum and course materials should be revisited considering the current approaches and methods in writing pedagogy. It was also recommended that students should be assigned to the English department based on their interest. Furthermore, further studies should be conducted to clearly identify the major factors affecting students' writing performance.*

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## **List of Acronyms**

AAU	Addis Ababa University
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BALLI	Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory
DBU	Debre Berhan University
DFLL	Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
DMU	Debre Markos University
EAP	English for Academic Purpose
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GPA	Grade Point Average
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
Ph.D	Doctor of Philosophy
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPA	Subject, Purpose, and Audience
WPT	Writing Performance Test

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The Ethiopian educational system started with the introduction of Christianity. Its main aim was teaching religion with the goal of reading, writing, and reciting some parts of the biblical text in Geez, a liturgical language (Pankrust, 1976). The main strategy adopted in the traditional education at its initial stage where many learners engaged in was memorization, but its advanced stages such as '*Quine*' exhibit high order level thinking and high level and instant creativity. At the time, there was lack of enough writing material. As a result, students were expected to memorize the words of God that were written through the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the development of Islam education in different parts of Ethiopia also made its own contributions to the development of education in Ethiopia (Alamirew, 2005).

The traditional education system was later supported by modern education during the era of Emperor Menilik II. Menilik's adoption of western style education was for the purpose of the prevailing political, modernization and international communication (Marew, 2000). In those days of the introduction of contemporary education into Ethiopia, the media of instruction used to be foreign languages (French, Italian and English). Heugh et al, (2006) prove this saying "this first school (Menelik II) was primarily limited to teaching European languages such as English, French and Italian, ..." with the exception of the Italian occupation period in which attempt was made to make some local languages media of instruction (p. 45). During the imperial and military regimes, too, one foreign language, English, was in use in education, particularly from grade seven upwards. The objectives of introducing modern education during the imperial and military regimes were to educate the young to ensure peace in the country, to reconstruct the country, and to produce diplomats who can communicate in foreign languages (Tekeste, 2006 & Pankhurst, 1976).

The education and training policy of FDRE government envisages bringing up citizens endowed with humane outlook, countrywide responsibility and democratic values having developed the necessary productive, creative and appreciative capacity to take part fruitfully in the development and utilization of resources and the environment at large. Accordingly, the

educational curriculum of the country was prepared based on the goals of the education and training policy (Ministry of Education, 1994).

In relation to the development of modern education in Ethiopia, the English language has played significant roles. Primarily, it is a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels. It is also taught as a subject as it is seen as an international language. In both cases, it has mainly instrumental goals. Students need to attain enough mastery of the language to enable them to achieve general academic success. Besides, they need the language to communicate effectively socially and in the work place where the use of English is necessary (Tekeste, 2006).

In addition to the above major roles, government and private organizations use English to facilitate their important activities that may require the use of the language. International organizations are using English as an official language. The existence of government and non-government media transmissions in English and newspapers published in English can also be good manifestations of how English language is functioning (Alamirew, 2005).

In Ethiopia, there are 41 public universities, including Civil Service and Ethiopian Defense universities since the year 2017. These universities are established starting from the time of Emperor Hailesilase to the current government. They are categorized into three generations based on their period of establishment (first, second and third generation). The universities have been running various undergraduate and post-graduate programs. Some of these universities have also been giving Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English Language and Literature under the College of Social Sciences and Humanities since the beginning of modern education while some more have opened the department recently. The English Language and Literature Department is expected to produce English language experts with virtuous English language knowledge and skills. More specifically, at the end of the program, students are expected to have good skills of speaking, reading, writing, listening. Their vocabulary and grammar knowledge is also expected to be up to the standard. Parallel to this, students are also expected to have a better understanding of literature, linguistics, and media and communication. To meet the above goals, a new Harmonized Curriculum for the Department of English Language and Literature was made effective 2013. It aims to offer students with a deep understanding of the English Language, Literature and Communication from various perspectives, with the aim of preparing them for the

era of globalization and human communication matters. The courses offered are designed primarily for the development of learners' language skills with the general aim of preparing them to be excellent communicators in a range of professional areas.

The curriculum gave due emphasis to writing skill compared to other language elements. Five writing courses (Basic Writing Skills, Intermediate Writing Skills, Advanced Writing Skills, Creative Writing and Research and Report Writing), which range from the basics to advanced levels, are included in the curriculum. This shows that writing skill is given due emphasis in the current English language and literature curriculum.

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) accentuates 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 university students are anticipated to learn to write specific types of technical texts that are related to the fields they are studying (Graefen, 1996). This includes adopting a style of writing proper to the academic field 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, although writing skill is considered tremendously important, a lot of research 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 (Tahaineh, 2010; Rababah, 2003; Bacha, 2002; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1997). According to Tahaineh (2010), writing skill "... is needed for taking notes, describing objects or devices and writing essays, answering written questions,

writing their compositions, writing experimental reports, etc.” (p. 79). Like other EFL contexts, the situation in Ethiopia has also been reported poor, and school and university 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; Haiemichael, 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.

Research studies identified several factors that may affect the writing performance of students in various aspects at the different levels of learning. These factors could be related to students, teachers, methods and materials and other variables that may affect students’ writing performance. When we say students’ related factors, numerous causes can be mentioned. Among the various causes for students’ poor writing performance, the first and perhaps the major one are psychological factors. Some of the psychological variables which influence the performance of writing are attitude, beliefs, self-efficacy and apprehension (Bandura, 1977a).

Most cognitive theorists and researchers have acknowledged that poor academic self-concept, low self-esteem, negative attitudes toward their study or erroneous perceptions of students may be associated with poor academic performance (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). In relation to this, more recent works have extended the social cognitive view to explore the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance. As Graham et al., (1993) wrote, “The knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that students hold about writing play an important part in determining how the composing process is carried out and what the eventual shape of the written product will be” (p. 246).

Language learners hold different beliefs about language learning because of the influence of their previous experience or their cultural background (Horwitz, 1987). Borg (2011) defines belief as ‘propositions individuals think to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, a basis for action, and are resistant to change provide’. In relation to this, many researchers have suggested that learners’ preconceived beliefs about language learning would likely affect the way they use their learning a second language (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Wenden, 1986a, 1986b). Likewise, students’ writing performance can also

be predisposed by the belief they have about writing since what we called above language learning in general can be transferred to learning to write in particular.

On the other hand, writing strategy is also one of the factors that contribute to the writing performance of students. Regarding this, many scholars (Beare, 2000; Victori, 1999; Arndt, 1987; Raimes, 1985 and Zamel, 1982) claim that writing strategy is the variable that separates successful from less successful writers (Mu, 2005). Maarof & Murat (2013) found that secondary school ESL learners were moderate users of writing strategies, and the study indicated that ESL learners need to be encouraged to use a range of strategies to improve their writing. Thus, writing strategy use has a great impact on the quality of one's writing performance since employing various kinds of writing strategies positively influences students' writing performance as it is indicated in many of the studies conducted in the area (Ridhuan et al., 2009; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Sasaki, 2000; Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Philips 1991;). Therefore, writing strategy use is one of the variables studied in this research to describe students' writing strategy use and its effect on their writing performance.

Having this background in mind, it is appropriate to state the overall context of this study. The current study was conducted on English major university students to investigate their beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and their writing performance. It also analyzes the relationship among the different variables in the study, especially the relationship between the two independent variables (beliefs about writing and writing strategy use) and writing performance (the dependent variable). Thus, the study first investigates students' beliefs about writing and their self-reported writing strategy use. Then, it determines their writing performance. It also correlates the relationship between writing performance and other independent variables (writing strategy use and beliefs about writing). The degrees of influence the independent variables have on the dependent variables are also analyzed. Finally, it identifies the factors that affect students' writing strategy use and writing performance.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

It has been a frequent complaint often heard in Ethiopia that university students are unable to express themselves in a plain, correct and comprehensive manner in writing. It is also globally accepted that writing is believed to help students do key assignments, enhance their performance and functioning, and extend their knowledge at the university level, (Graham & Perin, 2007).

The importance of writing skills intensifies as students join higher education since education at universities requires good academic writing skills to effectively carry out their academic tasks. In universities, students are required to learn the core components of academic writing, rhetorical structure, lexicon, and conventions of writing in order to produce formal essays and reports 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).

In addition, at university, especially for English major students, students' educational achievement is assessed mostly based on their writing skill for the assessment system in higher education requires preparing various kinds of reports, assignments, term papers, and other writing tasks. This is seen as an evidence of students' understanding of the materials presented in courses. The nature of tests and final examinations is also highly allied to students' ability to express their ideas through writing. According to Hyland (2004), mastery of writing ability has a key importance for all the students to successfully perform writing tasks, and it is even more essential for L2 students such as English majoring students since they have to write well in English better than other students taking English as a common or a supportive course.

However, in Ethiopia, university students, including English majoring students, have been showing low writing ability. The researcher's own teaching experience, colleagues' informal blames and empirical studies on the area (Tekle et. al, 2012; Temesgen, 2008; Alamirew, 2005; Kefelegn, 2003; Geremew, 1999 and Yonas, 1996) support students' writing skills problem. Primarily, the researcher as an English language instructor in both Debre Berhan and Addis Ababa universities had been able to witness that most university students of his own classes could not write fluently and accurately. Some of these students were not even able to write

paragraphs other than writing some phrases and clauses. In line with this, many students skip the writing part, which mostly covers 10 marks out of 50%, because they are unable to write a paragraph or an essay which is given as part of their final examination. This is also supported by other English language teachers who were teaching basic writing skills in the two universities (AAU and DBU). This was confirmed through the informal discussion teachers made during the teaching-learning period and at the end of the semester during the assessment.

This was the main reason that initiated the researcher to conduct his study on this area. Therefore, if students have to be successful in their academic studies, their English language proficiency, in general, and writing performance, in particular, should be significantly improved. Given the important role writing plays within the academic and educational settings and institutions and its complex nature, it seems essential to identify factors affecting the development of writing. Students' problems in writing may occur because of many factors. One of the causes for the challenge might be the complex nature of the writing skill itself. Byrne (1988) states that certain, psychological, linguistic and cognitive, factors make writing a complex and difficult discourse medium for most people in both native and second language.

Secondly, various local (Tekle et. al, 2012; Temesgen, 2008; Alamirew, 2005; Kefelegn, 2003; Geremew, 1999 and Yonas, 1996) and abroad (Brown, 2007; Pedrosa et.al, 2006; Hinkel, 2004; 2002) studies have indicated the low writing ability of students in schools and universities. According to the local studies mentioned above, students' writing skill is not up to the standard and the writing instruction has also had challenges. Most of these studies focused on studying the implementation and learning preference of students parallel to their writing performance.

In recent decades, however, researchers in the field of second language acquisition have shown great interest in learners' individual characteristics that can affect the learners' success in language learning. Belief about writing has been one of the research focuses. Researchers have found that second language learners come to the language class with some preconceived ideas or beliefs about language and language learning, particularly learning to write and that these beliefs can indicate what expectations the learners have, how they want to learn, and what actions in their language learning they will take (White & Bruning, 2005; Wenden, 2001; Peacock, 2001;

Horwitz, 1987). Therefore, it appears necessary to investigate the beliefs that second language learners possess and their writing strategy use, and relate these to their writing performance.

In Ethiopian milieu, there are some works (Tekle et al. 2012; Animaw 2011; Abiy, 2000; Berhanu, 2011; Habtamu, 2011; Birhanu, 2008 and Alamirew, 2005) on students' and teachers' belief system and classroom practices on English language teaching, in general. More specifically, some other scholars (Tekle et. al., 2012; Habtamu, 2011 and Alamirew, 2005) conducted researches on teachers' and students' beliefs or perceptions and classroom practices about writing skill. All of these studies indicated that there is a mismatch between what students and teachers believe about learning or teaching English language/writing and what they actually practice. These findings can directly or indirectly show that belief is one of the factors which affect English language instruction.

Moreover, there are a few local studies (Zelege, 2013; Dawit, 2008; Anteneh, 2005) and some studies abroad (Pajares et al., 2001; McCarthy et al., 1985) which were conducted on exploring the effect of students' characteristics and strategy use on their writing performance. These studies indicated that studying writing performance in relation to both psychological and pedagogical variables is essential since L2 writing is undeniably a complex process that involves both the cognitive processes of second language acquisition, as well as the genres, purposes, and values of the targeted L2 discourse community (Polio & Williams, 2009). Writing triggers thinking, enables learners to concentrate and organize their ideas, and increases their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize (Rao, 2007; Ur, 1996). Ur (1996), for instance, defines writing as a complex and difficult task. It demands a good planning, content organization, use of proper vocabulary and structure depending on the genre and practice. The above evidence can clearly signify that writing is not something that our students do well without controlling other variables which can directly or indirectly influence it. The general overview of the local works which are related to the effect of psychological factors and writing strategy use on writing performance is summarized as follows.

Alamirew (2005), in his PhD dissertation studied teachers' and students' perception of writing instruction, and the writing performances of grade 12 government school students. This survey based study revealed that the writing lessons through the plasma television are not effective.

Both teachers and students have a positive attitude towards teaching/learning writing, but practically they give less attention to writing lessons. As a result, students have low writing performances (Alamirew, 2005).

Similarly, Anteneh (2005) studied gender differences in writing self-efficacy and performance in writing. This correlational study revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. The study also revealed that boys outsmarted girls in both their writing self-efficacy and writing performance.

Dawit (2008) also conducted a similar study on finding out the correlation among sources of self-efficacy, self-efficacy and performance in reading and writing skills of Bahir Dar University students. He also explored the degree to which the reading and writing efficacy beliefs and performance differ as a function of gender. He used questionnaire and tests to explore the correlation among the variables. In his correlational study, he employed three statistical tools (correlation, t-test and regression). The findings revealed that there is a significantly strong positive relationship between writing efficacy and writing performance. It is also reported that there is a significant difference between male and female students' reading and writing performance.

Most recently, Zeleke (2013) examined the correlation between students' attitude towards leaning to write lessons through receiving training on the learning strategies of writing and their writing performance to discuss relevant contents, organize contents appropriately, and use accurate grammar, appropriate vocabulary and correct mechanics. This correlational study was conducted on first year students of Hawassa University. The findings revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between students' attitude towards learning to write through receiving training on the strategies and their writing performance on the aspects of writing. Correspondingly, the coefficient of determination also revealed that the students' attitude towards receiving training on the strategies predicts their writing performance.

From the above discussion, it can be learnt that although there are various researches which were conducted independently on writing performance, beliefs and strategy use, there are only a few studies which explored writing performance with other variables (self-efficacy, attitude and

training on writing strategy). To the researcher's knowledge, there are no research works to date which explored students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and writing performance in the Ethiopian context.

The researcher was, thus, highly motivated to conduct this study due to the fact that university students have low writing ability as indicated in the literature (Tekle et. al, 2012; Temesgen, 2008; Alamirew, 2005; Kefelegn, 2003; Geremew, 1999 and Yonas, 1996), observed by the researcher and understood from the informal complaints of writing skill instructors. Although students' level of writing performance is exhaustively examined by several studies, scholars are still investigating the reasons behind students' low writing performance.

Therefore, investigating beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and writing performance may provide an alternative view as it intensifies our view of the types of psychological factors that could affect writing performance beyond self-efficacy and apprehension, which have been well researched in the writing and educational psychology literature (Pajares et al., 1999; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Thus, the exploration of beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and writing performance helps to integrate the research in this area, which could be valuable for future writing researchers in both educational psychology and English composition areas. This is one of the rationales why this topic is selected.

Secondly, the researcher is very much interested in the topic as he tried to read related works in the area where there are limited and inconsistent findings about the effects of psychological and educational factors on students' writing performance. Regarding this, some researchers indicated that there are inconsistencies on the relationship between psycho-educational factors and writing performance (Dawit, 2008; Pajares, 2002).

Thirdly, there are a few research works which investigated the use of writing strategies with students' writing performance. These works show that writing strategy is a road which may take us to an effective writing. According to Manchón (2001) successful and unsuccessful writers have been found to differ especially in the quality and appropriateness of the strategies employed. Therefore, this study might show students' tendency of using writing strategy, its

relationship with writing performance and the factors that affect their writing strategy use. This might be an evidence for the experts in the area.

Generally, this study is conducted within the contexts given in the previous sections to add knowledge on the existing ones. Moreover, the previous sections help us understand the seriousness of the problem and thereby the gap to be filled in the area. Thus, it is decided to conduct a study on exploring students' beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and their writing performance. It also examined the degree of influence the independent variables have on the dependent variable.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main aim of this study was to investigate English major students' beliefs about writing, writing strategy use, and their writing performance.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify students' beliefs about writing;
- ii. identify students' writing strategy use;
- iii. examine students' writing performance;
- iv. examine the relationship among students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and their writing performance;
- v. examine the degree of influence of beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and each kind of writing strategy use on students' writing performance; and
- vi. Identify the factors that affected students' writing strategy use and writing performance (if their writing strategy use and writing performance are reported low).

## **1.4 Basic Research Questions**

This research attempts to answer the following basic questions:

1. What are students' beliefs about writing?
2. What writing strategies do students use?
3. How proficient are students in writing?
4. How do students' writing performance level, their beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use correlate?
5. What is the degree of influence of beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and each kind of writing strategy to predict students' writing performance?
6. What are the major factors that affected students' writing strategy use and writing performance (if their writing strategy use and writing performance are reported low)

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The result of this study is significant for several theoretical and practical reasons. Primarily, it adds value to our knowledge on the kind of relationships among beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and writing performance. More specifically, the study would give a clue for methodology specialists of Ethiopian language education about the relationship among students' beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and writing performance. This helps them consider belief, 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' beliefs and strategy use on their overall language performance together with other psycho-educational factors.

Secondly, exploring beliefs about writing, writing strategy use and writing performance in the same study may give additional insights in the area of English language education. This study, thus, may serve as a springboard for future researchers interested to conduct similar studies on the area extending the views about the types of variables into other pedagogical variables that may affect writing performance beyond self-efficacy and apprehension, which have been well-researched in the writing and educational psychology literature (e.g., Pajares et al., 1999; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

This study, thus, may serve as a springboard for future researchers interested to conduct similar studies. This can be applied by revising the approaches and methods used in the materials, and by giving trainings which might advance students' beliefs about writing. Similarly, the use of writing strategies should be explicitly presented in the curriculum, syllabus and course materials to make them more familiar to the students and the teachers.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is delimited to three public universities that have English language and Literature departments. The study targeted third year English major students at Addis Ababa, Debre Berhan and Debre Markos universities. All third year English major students in these three universities were the total population of this study. The study was confined to the following variables: students' beliefs about writing, self-reported writing strategy use and their writing performance. Similarly, the study investigated the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. It also examined the degree of influence the independent variables have on the dependent variable. Thus, the topic is delimited to three public universities and three major variables. The result of this would have been more representative had the number of universities exceeded this. Secondly, only two variables that may affect writing performance were included in this study, but the research would be more comprehensive if other affective variable were added.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Some of the challenges that encountered during the study were shortage of time and financial constraints. Although the researcher is given four years period to complete this study, the difficult nature of the topic and some minor changes after the pilot study made the time tight to complete the study within the given time frame. In the second place, the financial support given by the universities was still not sufficient enough to collect data from universities in remote areas. Despite such challenges he confronted, the researcher has tried his best to manage the above problems and collect the right information that helped to deduce relevant conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

- ***Beliefs about writing*** are students' views about the nature, importance, approach, focus, methods and procedure, and feedback system of writing.
- ***Writing strategy*** is defined as the sequence in which a student engaged in the memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social writing strategies.
- ***Writing strategy use*** refers to the frequency in which students use the six (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social) writing strategies to facilitate their writing.
- ***Writing performance***: the writing achievement scores of students in the essay writing test prepared for the research purpose.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual reviews on writing skill, beliefs about language learning and writing, writing strategies, and the relationships that beliefs about writing and writing strategy use have with writing performance. It also discusses the major factors affecting students' writing performance. Empirical evidences are also reviewed to strengthen the theoretical reviews of this study.

### **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. With regard to 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 audiolingualism 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 enticed 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 reexamine 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 prewriting, 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 prewriting, writing, rewriting, and all their attendant strategies - can be talked about and modeled. In short, writing-as-a-process can be taught.

Now a day, 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) summarises 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

### **2.3.3 The Genre Approach**

Since the mid-1980s, considerable attention has been paid to the genre approach to teaching writing. In terms of writing in a second language, The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as “a framework for language instruction” (Byram, 2004, p. 234) based on examples of a particular genre. The genre framework supports students’ writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages.

Let us first look at its definition. Swales (1990) identified a genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58). His definition suggested the basic idea that there are certain agreements or rules which are generally allied with a writer’s purpose. For example, personal letters tell us about their writers’ private stories, film reviews analyze movies for potential viewers, and police reports describe what happened. Most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes; a personal letter starts with a cordial question in a friendly mood because its purpose is to maintain good relationships with friends, and an argument essay emphasizes its thesis since it aims at making an argument.

On the other hand, Byram (2004) defined a genre as a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers involve as members of their culture. Kay & Dudley-Evans (1998) presented these circumstances of genres such buying fruits, telling a story, writing a diary, applying for a job interview, and writing an invitation letter as examples. Each spoken genre has a specific goal that people should achieve through several steps. Thus, the specific social goals become main

focuses when genre was discussed. It also implies that before writing, the context of a situation should be well-thought-out and analyzed in order to anticipate what linguistic features are required. Kay & Dudley-Evans (1998) also shared an essential viewpoint that all genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes. Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

There are various practical applications of the genre approach to the teaching of writing. Byram (2004) formulated three distinctive adaptations of the genre approach to writing: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Australian genre based educational linguistics, and North American New Rhetoric studies. Most ESP researchers primarily outlined the genre approach with spotlights on the formal distinctiveness of genres in order to help students gain understanding of the communicative purposes and linguistic features of texts that they are required to write in their professional discourses, while these experts paid less attention to the specific roles of content and their social environments (Hyon, 1996).

In general, the followers of the genre approach regard genres as strategies for examining and teaching the written texts that students needed to master in specific settings like English for academic purposes and English for professional communication classrooms. It is still good to mention that this approach ignores the relevance of content and writers' social environments.

#### **2.3.4 The Process Genre Approach**

All the three approaches have received quite a number of criticisms, and so the field is open to many, often contradictory, opinions (Tribble, 1996). As noted by Caudery (1995), teaching English as a Second/foreign Language has a habit of embracing teaching methodologies with fervor, and then, as a few cracks begin to show and it seems that the new teaching approach will not solve every classroom problem, of rejecting them with equal vigor.

As a result, an eclectic approach to the teaching of writing, by synthesizing the strength of the process and genre approaches for implementation in the classroom was emerged. Such an

eclectic approach offers advantages such as a more focused use of texts as models without sacrificing the flexibility to acknowledge elements of other approaches.

The essential idea here is that the writing class recognizes that it involves knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches) writing development happens by drawing out the learners' potential (as in process approaches) and by providing input to which the learners respond (as in product and genre approaches). One of the central insights of genre analysis is that writing is embedded in a social situation, so that a piece of writing is meant to achieve a particular purpose which comes out of a particular situation. An example might be an estate agent writing a description of a house in order to sell it. This purpose has implications for the subject matter, the writer/audience relationship and organization, channel, or mode (Huang, 2014; Hedge, 1988 & Martin, 2002). While genre analysis focuses on the language used in a particular text, processes were included to help writers produce a text reflecting these elements under the term 'process genre'. This would cover the process by which writers decide what aspects of the house should be highlighted, as well as the knowledge of the appropriate language.

In the writing classroom, teachers need to replicate the situation as closely as possible and then provide sufficient support for learners to identify the purpose and other aspects of the social context. So learners who wanted to be estate agents would need to consider that their description is meant to sell the house (purpose), that it must appeal to a certain group of people (tenor), that it must include certain information (field), and that there are ways in which house descriptions are presented (mode). Then, drawing on their knowledge of things such as vocabulary, grammar, and organization, our writers would use the skills appropriate to the genre, such as redrafting and proof-reading, to produce a description of a house which reflects the situation from which it arises (Tribble, 1996).

Different genres require different kinds of knowledge and different sets of skills, and our knowledge of both the knowledge and skill involved in different genres is limited. However,

teachers are expert writers of many genres, and a key feature of this approach is that they should draw on their own knowledge of, and skills in, particular process genres (Hyland, K., 2007).

The development of writing will vary between different groups of learners because they are at different stages of their writing development. Learners who know a lot about the production of a particular genre, and are skilled in it, may need little or no input. Some groups of learners will have a good awareness of how the potential audience may constrain what is written. Other groups may lack knowledge of what language is appropriate to a particular audience. In this case, the learners need some kind of input in terms of, say, the language appropriate to a particular audience, or the skills in deciding whom the potential audience may be. What input is needed will depend on their particular group of learners. In many cases, the teacher is not able to find out what the learners know or can do before the class (Hyland, K., 2007; Swain, 1995).

In general, the process-genre approach in EFL writing classrooms ensures the usefulness and power of process writing pedagogy (prewriting, drafting, feedback, and revising), but it does not replace it by entirely the genre approach. The two approaches can instead be seen as complementing rather than opposing each other.

## **2.4 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.

### **2.4.1 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).

#### **2.4.1.2 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).

#### **2.4.1.3 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.

## **2.4.2 Specific Models to Writing**

### **2.4.2.1 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.

### **2.4.2.2 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).

### **2.4.2.3 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 a 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).

#### **2.4.2.4 The Bereiter and Scardamalias' Model**

The previous models by Hayes & Flower (1980) and Hayes (1996) deliberates the complexity of written language production and the importance of several types of reading in written text production: reading instructions, sources and the text during revision are the most important that need consideration, respectively.

Another model by Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) introduced a two-model approach to writing. They explored the writing process by examining the differences between skilled and unskilled writers. Moreover, they introduce the notions of “knowledge telling” and “knowledge transformation”: the first means just recording speech, whereas the second is related to composing new language. According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), the two terms refer to the differences in text production: knowledge telling is when language is recorded with no or little planning, translation or other text production processes, while knowledge transformation involves all cognitive processes discussed above to come up with a new text. Their model builds on the assumption that while people can learn to speak it is not equally as evident that they can also learn to write. They explored that there is a huge difference between unskilled and skilled writers in the use of strategies. Unskilled writers employ fewer and simpler strategies than expert writers. Unskilled writers spend less time on planning and they revise less than expert writers. Moreover, the strategies skilled and unskilled writers use show different features, as expert writers' strategies do not develop from the simpler strategies used by unskilled writers, but they employ different ones. The Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) two-model approach has educational implications to writing instruction as it makes a distinction between skilled and unskilled writers. This can be categorized under the socio-cognitive model to writing.

#### **2.4.2.5 The White and Arndt Model**

White & Arndt (1991, p. 5) stated writing as that “... re-writing that revision seeing with news eyes has a central role to play in act of creating text”.They share the same feature of Krashen's

model which is an interrelated set of recursive stages that includes: drafting, structuring , reviewing , focusing , evaluating and generating ideas.

They pay attention to the topic, the purpose, and audience which are the main effective elements in writing. According to them, the first stage in writing includes brainstorming technique which is similar to Hedge's (2000). In this respect, they claimed "brainstorming should be free-wheeling, unstructured, and nonjudgmental" (White & Arndt, 1991, p.8). This technique can be done by different interaction patterns: pair work, group work or the whole class, but they emphasize that group-work works better when brainstorming is applied, i.e., the more students participate, the more ideas flow. They added other techniques which are note-making and mind-mapping. For them, drafting is the moment when writers move from pre-writing to writing a first draft. They go on to claim that relevant to drafting is the process of revising and writing until a good product is produced.

When writing a paragraph, White & Arndt (1991) claim, writers must think how to appeal to their readers from the beginning and how to continue doing so, as they go through to the text leading them to the conclusion which is usually related to the beginning and give the text a sense of completion. The reason behind doing so is to encourage learners to organize a text the best possible way. And they emphasized on what we call self-correction. This specific model can best fit with the social model to writing.

#### **2.4.2.6 The Hedge Model**

Hedge (2000) also proposed four main stages in using the process approach (Composing, Communicating, Crafting, and Improving). In addition to paying a special attention to purpose and audience, she claimed that the first thing to consider is purpose which is a worthy element to look at for it will have an impact on the organization and language chosen when drafting. Then, audience, as Hedge argued, makes writers choose the most suitable things to say, the styles such as formal/informal, etc. That is to say, having a sense of purpose and audience at the very beginning may give writers a better insight on the content of the texts.

Composing, as the first stage, includes brainstorming which is similar to White & Arndt (1991) and Krashen (1984) models. Also, she added another technique which is mind-mapping or note-

making which is similar to White & Arndt's (1991). Also, she looked at communicating as the audience themselves.

Hedge (2000, p. 333) had less interest in "Focusing and Structuring" than White and Arndt, (1991). Hedge (2000) gave more attention to communicating than composing, i.e., more emphasis to audience. She contended that in everyday life people have different purposes to write social, academic, professional, etc., and obviously, there's a person to whom they address their writing.

Hence, communicating allows students to address their written texts to real audiences, e.g., teacher, classmate, and friends. To this end, teachers must help students to become aware of their audience, i.e., before starting, they must answer these questions:

1. *Who is my reader?*
2. *What do I need to say?*
3. *How can I make it unambiguous and accessible to my reader?* (Hedge, 2000, p.303)

Concerning crafting, she said that "Crafting is the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure" (Hedge, 2000, p.315). Putting ideas together in a text is not an easy task and successful crafting requires analyzing the finished products. Similarly, within the improving stage, she described two activities: redrafting and editing: the former deals with evaluating, rethinking and rewriting parts in the text while the latter involves checking grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

#### **2.4.2.7 The Blanchard and Root Model**

According to Blanchard & Root (2004), the writing process involves three main stages: pre-writing, writing, revising and editing. They also emphasized what they called "SPA" which stands for subject, purpose, and audience. They argued that pre-writing is the hardest part of writing when getting started for many people.

They go on to claim "pre-writing is a way to warm up your brain, just as you warm up your car's engine before you drive" (Blanchard & Root, 2004, p.11). This stage includes generating ideas, brainstorming (which is a quick way to generating a lot of ideas on a subject), clustering (a visual

way to generating ideas), and free-writing which is a helpful technique to writing as much as we can write without worrying about mistakes.

Then, planning, i.e., making a simple outline of the ideas generated from prewriting, this helps us organize our thoughts as we plan our paragraph. The second stage is writing which deals with paragraph writing, i.e., using the ideas generated in the pre-writing stage as a guide, with respect to the main parts of a paragraph (topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences (Blanchard & Root, 2004).

The last step is revising and editing. Revising is a very important part in the writing process. They described the word revision as the combination of the root word vision and the prefix re- which means again, i.e., when we revise, we see again. We look to our writing again to see how we can improve it. Then, editing is the final part of the revision step. These stages can provide us with some kinds of changes that can be done when revising (Blanchard & Root, 2004).

#### **2.4.2.8 The Harmer's Model**

Harmer (2007a, p.4) suggested four main basic operations/stages for the writing stage which are presented in the following way: “planning → drafting → editing → final draft”. According to him, when planning, writers must pay attention to three main issues: the purpose of writing, the audience to whom they write, and the content structure, i.e., how to organize ideas and arguments in a best sequence. By doing so, the writer will be ready to start with the first stage where he must decide about what he is going to say. Harmer (2007b) distinguished three main categories of writers: those who make detailed notes, others see that a few jotted words may be enough, while the second category sees that it is needless to use those notes since their planning is in their heads such as planning a shopping list. By drafting, as a second stage, he suggested that it is the first version of a piece of writing; he stressed also that the writer should write a number of drafts till he reaches the editing stage. At this latter stage, the writer reads and tries to see what works, what is not clear, and what is ambiguous or confusing, then checking spelling and grammar. Once editing and making the necessary changes, the writer produces the final version (draft), and becomes ready to send the written text to its intended audience.

Harmer (2007b) is against the linear process to writing, rather he supports a non-linear or recursive process where the writer can plan, draft, edit, and then often re-plan, re-draft, and re-edit for many times. He claimed that the recursive processes of writing should be represented by the above aspects of writing in a different way. That is why he proposed the “process wheel” which clearly shows the various ways/directions that writers can take either travelling backwards or forwards around the rim or going up, and down the wheels spokes. Only when the final version is really ready then it can be said that the process reached its culmination.

In short, we can say that Harmer (2007b) had his own perspective where he suggests the purpose, the audience, and the content structure as the basic components in writing.

## **2.5 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.

### **2.5.1 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 behavior, 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.

### **2.5.2 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, metacognitive, 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.

### **2.5.2.1 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).

### **2.5.2.2 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” (McCrinkle & 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 (McCordle & Christensen, 1995).

### **2.5.2.3 Compensation Strategies**

Compensation learning strategies are direct strategies used by learners to ‘overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills’ in a new language learning process (Oxford, 1990, p. 90). These strategies help learners keep their language learning without interruption due to knowledge gap about the language element they are working on (Oxford, 1990). Students vary in how they compensate for their missing information during writing. Actually, good writers make wide rereading of their texts and repeat to keep their writing going or for revision purposes; however, less capable writers frequently do very little rereading or reread and repeat large chunks of text, but they do not have good overall results (Wolfersberger, 2003). These results indicate that L2 proficiency affects the use of L2 compensation strategies. A wealth of literature (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Pennington & So, 1993; Cumming, 1989; Cumming et al., 1989; Chamot, 1987; Raimes, 1987) has concentrated on finding out the role of L2 proficiency and the writer’s procedural knowledge in L2 writing expertise. For example, Jones and Tetroe (1987) compared the writing processes of a group of subjects writing in two languages and found that their students used the same planning strategies in both their L1 and L2. The results also indicated that the ESL writers’ language proficiency affected the quantity, not the quality, of planning. Jones & Tetroe further concluded that, if the planning models used while writing in the L2 had been transferred from the L1, lack of abstract planning could not be attributed to lack of L2 expertise. Instead, lack of L2 expertise affected the quality of the texts, but it did not interfere in the planning process. Similarly, for Cumming et al., (1989) the use of problem-solving strategies in the L1 and L2 was not related to second language proficiency, but to the learners’ levels of writing expertise. It was, however, true that the higher the writing expertise and the writers’ L2 proficiency level, the higher the grades in the compositions they obtained. These conclusions suggest that L2 proficiency has an important influence in explaining L2 writing ability as writing strategies are essential in the writing process.

#### **2.5.2.4 Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive 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), metacognition 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.

#### **2.5.2.5 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.

It is worth mentioning that both affective and social strategies are considered as compensation strategies which are used to describe what learners do to overcome the difficulties that they face, such as listening to music, eating, or taking a break. The social strategies are further elaborated in the following section.

### **2.5.2.6 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.

### **2.5.3 The Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and Academic Performance**

The research into general language learning strategies (Khalil, 2005; Riazi, 2008; Yang, 1999; Chamot, 1987) has been showing that there is a strong relationship between language learning strategies and students' academic performance.

Khalil (2005) conducted a research on language learning strategies of 194 high school students and 184 freshman university students. The study revealed that proficiency level and gender were the main factors that had an effect on the participants' strategy use in Palestine. However, in the study, language proficiency level was defined based on the academic levels difference between university and school learners. The results showed that students' language proficiency level had an effect on five language learning strategy categories and the results favored female students over males in 16 individual strategies.

Similarly, Riazi (2008) investigated the patterns of language learning strategy use of 120 female Arabic-speaking students who were majoring in English at a university in Qatar. The participants were of average proficiency level, and were from all educational levels in the university. Using Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire, it was concluded that female Arab students were not different in their use of language learning strategies compared to other cultural groups. According to Riazi (2008), freshman students, in particular, reported more frequent use of

language learning strategies than students of other levels. Interestingly, participants reported more use of metacognitive, cognitive and compensation strategies than affective, social and memory strategies.

Yang (1999) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between EFL college students' beliefs about language learning and their use of learning strategies. The study found that language learners' self-efficacy beliefs about learning English were strongly related to their use of all types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. Also, learners' beliefs about the value and nature of learning spoken English were closely linked to their use of formal oral-practice strategies. The results of this study suggested cyclical relationships between learners' beliefs and strategy use and their final success in learning English.

Consequently, many research attempts have been made to address strategies specific to L2 writing in relation to students' writing performance. Writing strategies are thought to be instrumental in helping L2 learners expand their writing skill. As a result, over the past few decades, research into L2 writing strategies has been extensive (Roca de Larios et al., 2008; Sasaki, 2002, 2004, 2007; Mu, 2005; Wong, 2005; Victori, 1999; Whalen & Menard, 1995; Cumming et al., 1989; Arndt, 1987; Raimes, 1985).

Several studies have been conducted on the role of writing strategies in relation to writing performance (Nguyen & Gu, 2013; Zeleke, 2013). Nguyen and Gu (2013) investigated the effect of writing strategy instruction on writing performance among 54 Vietnamese university students, and they found that writing strategy training significantly improved ESL writing performance. Research has also focused on documenting the link between L2 writing proficiency and writing strategies. Similarly, in Ethiopian Context, Zeleke (2013) conducted a similar research with the aim of examining the effects of training in metacognitive, affective and social learning strategies of writing in improving students' use of each of these learning strategies of writing in the case of Hawassa University. The results showed that the training significantly improved the students' use of the learning strategies of writing. The study also revealed that the training made the students learn the importance of the strategies to improve their writing skills. Hence, they

continued using the strategies appropriately in and outside the class to help them successfully accomplish their writing tasks (Zelege, 2013).

Similarly, certain studies on the relationship between writing proficiency and writing strategy use has revealed that writing proficiency is closely related to writing strategy use (Bai et al., 2013; Chien, 2012; Mu, 2005; Sasaki, 2000, 2002; Victori, 1999 Arndt, 1987; Raimes 1985). For example, in a large scale study of Singaporean ESL students, Bai et al. (2013) found that ESL writing strategies (e.g., planning, revising and evaluating) were significantly correlated with English language proficiency. Likewise, Chien's (2012) study into writing strategies of 40 EFL university students revealed that student who had high writing proficiency used significantly more planning, revising and reviewing strategies than those with low writing proficiency.

Generally, the above evidence can clearly show us the relationship between language learning strategies and academic performance. Particularly, several studies were cited to show the closer relationship between the two variables.

#### **2.5.4 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 leaners 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.

Generally, the above empirical data can help us deduce that there is a certain agreement among the researchers that there is a positive relationship between writing strategy and writing performance. The above data also indicates that though there are inconsistencies among the studies in the area, most of the findings revealed that the social, compensation and affective strategies are the mostly preferred strategies by the writers compared to others.

## **2.6 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).

In cognitive psychology, pupil's beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning, or epistemological beliefs, have been investigated with the idea that they are part of the underlying mechanisms of metacognition (Flavell, 1987), form the basis of epistemology (Goldman, 1986), and are a pouring force in intellectual performance. From this point of view, beliefs about language learning are viewed as a part of metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1987), which include all that individuals know about themselves as learners and thinkers, including their goals and needs. Flavell (1979, 1981) gives emphasis to the study of metacognitive knowledge in second language learning and focuses on the individual. He calls this "person knowledge." Person knowledge is knowledge learners have obtained about how cognitive and affective factors such as learner aptitude, personality, and motivation may influence learning. In addition, it includes specific knowledge about how the above factors are applied in their experience. For example, is it the learners' beliefs that they do, or do not, have an aptitude for learning another language or, that their particular type of personality will inhibit or facilitate language learning? (Wenden, 2001).

Wenden (1999) discusses that metacognitive knowledge makes up "a system of related ideas, some accepted without question and other validated by their experience" (p. 436). Apart from being seen as a component of metacognitive knowledge, other definitions of beliefs--depending on one's theoretical perspective--have identified them as mini-theories (Hosenfeld, 1978), insights (Omaggio, 1978), culture of learning (Contazzi and Jin, 1996), learner assumptions (Riley, 1980), implicit theories (Clark, 1988), self-constructed representational systems (Rust, 1994), conceptions of learning (Benson and Lor, 1999), and "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning, and about the nature of language learning and teaching" (Victori and Lockhart, 1995, p. 224).

Similarly, White & Bruning (2005) investigated two types of implicit beliefs about writing, positing that these beliefs influence a writer's level of engagement with writing tasks. The authors based their study on earlier work by Schraw & Bruning (1999, 1996), which examined implicit beliefs about reading, specifically transmissional and transactional beliefs. Transmissional belief showed that reading is a means by which readers receive information from authoritative sources, while transactional beliefs maintain that reading allows readers to construct

knowledge by reflecting critically on what they read in light of their prior knowledge and experiences, and by integrating what they learn from text into their existing knowledge base. Schraw & Bruning found these transmissional and transactional reading beliefs to be statistically independent of one another. Readers whose beliefs were predominantly transmissional had lower levels of cognitive and affective engagement with the text and did not comprehend what they had read as well as readers whose beliefs were predominantly transactional.

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. 6.1 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.

Starting from long year ago scholars claimed that people hold some predetermined ideas about several issues and that these beliefs can influence their understanding of and reactions towards new information. According to Puchta (1999), beliefs are "guiding principles" of people's behaviors. He elaborated those beliefs "are generalizations about cause and effect, and that they influence our inner representation of the world around us. They help us to make sense of that world, and they determine how we think and how we act" (pp. 68-69). Puchta states that people

interpret new information and react to it on the basis of preexisting ideas about the particular subject.

Stevick (1980) argues that beliefs about language learning, as well as other cognitive and affective variables, have become an interest of researchers in the field of second language acquisition because of the assumptions that “success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom” (Stevick, 1980, p.4). He also explained that what goes on inside learners, which includes learners’ beliefs, seems to have a strong impact on learners’ learning process.

Correspondingly, second and foreign language learners come to class with ideas about the nature and process of the learning. They have some assumptions about what language learning is and how a second language should be learned (Horwitz, 1987). These preexisting beliefs are claimed to have influential impacts on learner’s approaches and behaviors in the learning process (White, 1999; Horwitz, 1987). Some researchers proposed that some beliefs are beneficial to learners while others argue that some beliefs can lead to negative effects on language learning. For instance, Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggested that learners who have positive attitudes and realistic language-related beliefs are more likely to behave in a more productive way in learning than those who have negative attitudes and mistaken beliefs. Similarly, Mori (1999) claimed that positive beliefs can compensate for learners’ limited abilities. In contrast, Horwitz (1987) was concerned that some misconceptions or erroneous beliefs may undermine learners’ success in language learning. She developed an instrument, Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to assess students' beliefs about language learning in major areas: (1) foreign language aptitude, (2) the difficulty of language learning, (3) the nature of language learning, (4) learning and communication strategies, and (5) motivations and expectations (Horwitz, 1987, 1988).

Peacock (2001) also investigated changes in the beliefs about second language learning of 146 trainee ESL students over their 3-year program at the City University of Hong Kong. Although he reports differences in three key areas, disturbingly, no significant changes have been found. These key areas are: learning a second language means learning a lot of vocabulary and grammar rules and the belief that those speaking more than one language well are very

intelligent. Peacock (2001) concludes that these participants when preparing their classroom tasks, materials, etc. might over-emphasize the learning of vocabulary and grammar rules compared to the other classroom tasks necessary for foreign language learning.

Using learners' retrospective reports to, Wenden (1986a, b) investigated and classified learners' metacognitive knowledge about their language learning experiences. She found that, in addition to their own language learning strategies, the interviewees were able to discuss the following aspects of their language learning:

1. the language, including its grammar, phonology, vocabulary, discourse, and function;
2. their proficiency and progress in the language, areas of difficulty, and comparisons with others;
3. the outcome of using a selected strategy;
4. their reactions to the learning process and views on language aptitude, learning style, personality, and age; and
5. explicit and implicit beliefs about how best to learn a second language.

Generally, the above reviewed studies have showed how learners think about language learning (Horwitz, 1988), how their preconceived beliefs relate to their strategy use (Wenden 2001; Yang, 1999; Horwitz, 1988), as well as how students' beliefs conflict and mismatch with those of teachers, or even students of different institutions (Kern, 1995). These results revealed that language learners indeed have their preconceived beliefs about language learning and some of their beliefs are unrealistic and even misleading. In addition, the findings of these studies also suggested that learner beliefs influence not only their approaches to specific tasks but also their reactions to learning activities and their choices of language learning strategies. It is then with these assumptions about how beliefs can affect learners' behaviors and success, researchers in second language acquisition have been investigating learners' beliefs about language learning for more than two decades with the hope that an understanding about the beliefs that second and foreign language learners bring to class may help them design language classes and curricular that accommodate learners' beliefs. In addition, beliefs that can potentially cause negative effects on learners' success in language learning are hoped to be refined (Horwitz, 1987).

### **2.6.2 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.

The recognition of the role of learners' epistemological beliefs across various disciplines has contributed to a growing body of evidence which suggests that they play a central role in learning experience and achievements (Schommer, 1990) and have a profound influence on learning behavior and learning outcomes (Weinert & Kluwe, 1987). Interdisciplinary research shows how one's belief systems, social cognitions and metacognitions are a great force in intellectual performance (Schoenfeld, 1983), and that learners may be directly influenced by their perception of success in learning and levels of expectancy with realistically high expectations helping to build confidence, and low (or unrealistically high) expectations leading to de-motivation and disappointment (Puchta, 1999).

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.

The same result has also been reported in other studies from the same era (Pajares & Valiente, 1999; 1997; Pajares and Johnson, 1996; McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer, 1985). Moreover, Pajares & Valiente (2001) also investigated elementary-school students' writing self-efficacy and found that the students' self-predictions significantly predicted their writing performance; furthermore, they found that their self-efficacy beliefs directly influenced their anxiety about the task of writing, their feelings about its perceived usefulness, and their evaluation of essay writing specifically.

White and Bruning (2005) did a research on the relationship of writing beliefs, including writing self-efficacy, and writing performance of the post-secondary learners. They administered a quantitative study through three tests that indicated the learners' implicit beliefs about the writing hardness, the attitudes toward writing they held, and their writing self-efficacy. The researchers deduced that the learners' beliefs about writing had a great impact on the quality of their writing. As a result, they persuaded writing instructors to pay attention to the self-efficacy perceptions of their learners so that "integrated models of writing" (p.186) can be designed to meet their individual writing demands.

In a more recent study, Jones (2007) investigated the relationship between 118 freshman learners' writing self-efficacy and their internal sense of control over their writing performance. The participants were from many nations including Asians, African-Americans, Latinos, Whites,

and “Other” men and women. The results revealed that there was a significant difference between the learners showing weak writing skills with those having stronger writing skills. “Self-beliefs had a far greater effect on course grade than previous writing achievement for the weaker students than the stronger students” (Jones, 2007, p.18).

Based on what was discussed earlier, although self-efficacy has been known as having a great impact on the performance of the writer, there are some other studies which state that the students’ high self-efficacy in writing may not surely indicate better writing performance (Sawyer, Graham, & Harris, 1992; Alvarez and Adelman, 1986). One of the most recent studies that confirm this point was done by Hashemnejad & Amini (2014) on one hundred and twenty Iranian EFL learners. In another study conducted by Al-Mekhlafi (2011) on forty-four female EFL teacher trainees at Sohar University in Oman, the results revealed that there was no relationship between the participants’ writing self-efficacy and their writing performance. So, as it can be seen here, there is a discrepancy between the results of the above-mentioned studies regarding the relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance.

The study of perception and beliefs in both foreign and second language acquisition is important, as it has been noted that successful learners develop insights into beliefs about language learning processes, their own abilities and the use of effective learning strategies in the classroom and the context beyond that (Oxford, 2003). It has been argued that while some beliefs may have a facilitative effect on learning, others can hinder it. Supportive and positive beliefs help to overcome problems and thus sustain motivation, while negative or unrealistic beliefs can lead to decreased motivation, frustration, and even anxiety (Puchta, 1999).

A second type of belief that seems to affect writing performance is beliefs about writing, such as students’ beliefs about what good writing is and what good writers do, including the effectiveness of various writing strategies and processes. In contrast to writing self-efficacy, writers’ beliefs about themselves with respect to their ability to write, beliefs about writing address writers’ beliefs about writing tasks and skills as well as the procedures involved in performing these tasks and skills well (Puchta, 1999).

The investigation of these beliefs is only in its initial stages. Nevertheless, a few themes are emerging from the initial studies in this area, such as a distinction between a focus on substantive versus mechanical issues (e.g., comprehensive revision as opposed to surface editing) and an emphasis on artistic creation as opposed to strategy-based craftsmanship. Several studies in this area (Graham et al., 1993; Silva & Nicholls, 1993) have indicated that these domain beliefs about writing affect writing performance. Most hypothesize that this effect is cognitive and mediated by the strategies writers select. Others suggest that this link is affective as certain beliefs about writing, such as the belief that writing skills are innate, may foster writing apprehension and the extent to which students like to write (Charney, Newman, and Palmquist, 1995; Palmquist & Young, 1992). Thus, some beliefs may be adaptive, or related to good writing, while others may be maladaptive, or associated with weak writing performance. This classification and terminology is consistent with that used by motivational researchers such as Dweck & Leggett (1988) and writing researchers includes Pajares & Valiante (2006).

Of the few studies of these beliefs, some look at only one or two beliefs about writing, such as the notion that writing skills are an innate gift or a skill that develops with time and practice (Charney et al., 1995; Palmquist & Young, 1992). Although some of these studies are rooted in the theory of rhetoric (Silva & Nicholls, 1993) or in the research on reading and not writing (White & Bruning, 2005), none reflects the beliefs and principles underlying expert writing and editing practice. According to Glaser & Chi (1988), experts differ from novices in a number of ways, including their ability to see and represent problems in their domain at a deeper level than do novices. Investigating the beliefs underlying expert practice may lead to the discovery of adaptive beliefs that could serve as the bases of writing instruction.

Locally, various studies have been conducted in relation to students' English language performance and other pedagogical and psychological factors affecting it. For instance, studies by Haregewein (1993) and Abate (1996) revealed that English performance of Ethiopian EFL students showed repeated failures in English examinations that could potentially imply their incompetence to use the language when demanded. This problem might appear as a result of students' EFL proficiency which might be attributed to factors such as anxiety (Abate, 1996) and efficacy beliefs (Alamirew, 2005; Anteneh, 2004). In the same vein, others (Alamirew, 2005;

Italo, 1999; Yonas, 1996) state that a range of students in different educational levels could not use English to accomplish academic tasks in English and other subjects.

## **2.7 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 hostleries 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.

### **2.7.1 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.

There is also a strong relationship between admissions of normal measures of educational potential and academic performance such as high school GPA (Grade Point Average) according to the study by Oregon State University (2003). They confirmed that the admission scores are related to academic performance at university level but to a very minimal extent. McDonald et.al

(2001) also suggested that the scores of graduate level studies still outperform any other single measure of cognitive aptitude in predicting success at university level.

The fourth 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 scholars (Sentamu, 2003; Kwesiga, 2002) agreed that students' performance can be influenced by the school in which they studied. They also argue that schools influence the educational process in content organization, teacher and teaching learning and in the end evaluation of the all.

Lack 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.

Similarly, if students do not use a variety of writing strategies appropriately, writing performance might also be affected. This happens due to the complex process of writing in a second language which is difficult for learners to develop all aspects of the stages at the same time. As a result,

they selectively use only those aspects that are automatic or have already been systematized (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Learner strategies can be effective, but they need to be internalized so that they can be utilized in adverse learning situations. For example, if an environment is perceived to be stressful like writing as part of a job interview process, or performing under timed test conditions, learners' affective states can influence cognition. Emotional influences along with cognitive factors can account for achievement and performance in L2, to a certain extent. Schumann (1998) argues that writing strategy affects cognition through its role in framing a problem and in adopting processing strategies. He states that we very often use feelings as information: "When faced with a situation about which we have to make a judgment we often ask ourselves how we feel about it . . . we may also employ feelings when time constraints and competing tasks limit our cognitive capacities" (p. 247). This outcome may affect the way second language students perform when they are under stress.

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.

### **2.7.2 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.

### **2.7.3 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.

## **Conclusion**

In this part, various research works in the area of writing, beliefs about writing, writing strategies, and the relationship between these variables have been reviewed. The theoretical framework of this study included reviews of related literature including empirical studies in the area. In the first part of the review, it covered a range of literature on the definition, nature, importance, approaches and models of writing. This part also incorporated reviews on the writing strategies. The six writing strategies were reviewed in detail. The main issues related to beliefs about language learning were also reviewed in this part. Similarly, empirical studies were reviewed on the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance, and writing strategy use and writing performance. It was also tried to review the major factors affecting students' writing performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of methods employed in the current study. It describes the study area, the participants involved, and the instruments and procedures used for data collection, organization, and analysis and interpretation.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study aimed at exploring students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and writing performance. To achieve this objective, a descriptive-correlational design was employed primarily with an intention of describing students' beliefs about writing and their self-reported practices of writing strategy use. A descriptive-correlational design was also used to see the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. In addition to this, it was used to examine the degree of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

A mixed research method (sequential Quan-Qual) was employed in this study. This method was used for two major reasons. Primarily, a mixed method was used since it was difficult to answer all the research questions using only one method. For example, looking at the relationship between the variables needed quantitative data, while identifying the factors for students' poor writing performance required qualitative data. The second reason for using a mixed method was to triangulate the quantitative data with the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interview. According to Morse (1991), the purpose of triangulation as a design is to get varying, but harmonizing information on the same topic.

A quantitative method was principally employed to numerically describe students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and level of writing performance. It was also employed to numerically analyze the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. It is important to be very explicit about the appropriate uses of correlation in non-experimental studies. Correlation is an excellent method for providing information about relationships. It depicts the relationship between two variables (Johnson, 2001). A linear

regression was also employed to see the degree of influence the independent variables have on the dependent variable.

The qualitative data was also used to get additional data beyond the numbers to obtain comprehensive information on students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and writing performance. By employing a mixed-method design, the data from quantitative methods was triangulated with the data from qualitative method (i.e. students' interview) since it helped the researcher generate a more comprehensive picture of the problems in learning writing, in general.

### **3.2 Setting and Sampling**

#### **3.2.1 The Study Area and Population**

This study was conducted in three public universities in Ethiopia on third year English major students. Since the year 2016, there were 33 public universities with a total of 125, 000 intake capacity (Ministry of Education, 2016). Some of these universities had the Department of English Language and Literature under the college of Social Sciences and Humanities. From the total number of universities, three universities (Addis Ababa University, Debre Berhan University and Debre Markos University) were selected because of the reasons mentioned below in the sampling technique part.

In the three sample universities, there were 103 English majoring students. All of the students were asked to participate in the study, and 100 of them gave their consent to be part of the study. Thus, availability sampling was employed to select subjects of the study. However, from the 100 sample participants, three were excluded from the study because of major incomplete cases in the returned questionnaires. Participants who skipped five or more items in the belief inventory and writing strategy questionnaires were left out. As a result, the total population of this study became 97 students from the three universities. The detail description of the respondents is presented and discussed as follows:

**Table 1: Students' Profile**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>University</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>AAU</b>	<b>DBU</b>	<b>DMU</b>	
Male	17	20	31	68
Female	17	12	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>97</b>

After refining the data, as it can be seen from the above table, 97 students (68 male and 29 female students) participated in this study. From the three universities, Addis Ababa University had the largest number of students. A total of 34 students participated in this study from AAU, and surprisingly there were equal proportion of male and female students. Similarly, 32 students from Debre Berhan University were the participants of this study. From these students, 20 were males while the remaining 12 were females. Unlike the cases at AAU and DBU, there were only 31 male participants in Debre Markos University.

### **3.2.2 Sampling Technique and Size**

This study employed four sampling techniques (convenience sampling, purposive sampling, availability sampling and simple random sampling) to specify the study area, the department and batch, the respondents for the questionnaires (belief inventory questionnaire and the inventory of the writing strategy use questionnaire), and the interview.

The sample universities were selected using convenience sampling technique. This sampling technique was chosen as the researcher of this study argues that students from any university can be representatives as they are randomly assigned from different parts of the country and as they might have different social, educational, economic and other backgrounds.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample department and batch. Third year English majoring university students were thus selected as these students are expected to take more writing courses than other department students. These students are expected to have a better understanding of the principles, strategies, approaches and other aspects of writing. Similarly, they are also expected to better perform in their writing compared to students from other departments who took only one writing skills course (Basic Writing Skills). Therefore, the

researcher selected these students since they are appropriate to conduct a research on specific language elements (belief about writing and writing strategies). Subsequently, third year students were selected since students at this level took all of the writing courses unlike to second year and first year students. Hence, the researcher found it convincing to conduct this research on third year English majoring students as they were found to be appropriate to the context of this study.

An availability sampling technique was employed to select respondents for the data collected through the belief inventory questionnaire, the writing strategy use inventory questionnaire and writing performance test. As a result, all students in the department of English participated in this study. This sampling technique was principally selected to upsurge the reliability of the result of the study by taking the whole population than taking a sample. Involving all of the population in the study area adds on the accuracy of the result. In addition, involving the whole population in the study could also have a positive contribution to the appropriateness of the inferential statistical tools since the efficiency of some tools increases as the number of respondents increase.

Simple random sampling was used to select six students for the interview. The six students were randomly selected using lottery method from the total population. A total of six students, two from each university, were then finally selected to participate in the interview session.

### **3.3 Data Collection Instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaire was one of the main instruments used to gather data from students about their beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use. The data for answering research questions number 1 and 2 were collected through belief and writing strategy use inventory questionnaires. The detail nature and preparation of these questionnaires is discussed in the following sections.

##### **3.3.1.1 Writing Belief Inventory Questionnaire**

The writing beliefs inventory questionnaire was used to probe students' beliefs about writing which was the first main objective of this study. The questionnaire had also its own contribution in answering research questions number 4 and 5 in the process of examining the relationship

between variables and the degree of influence belief about writing has on the dependent variable. The questionnaire was adapted from White & Bruning (2005) Writing Beliefs Inventory with some modifications on most of the items and ideas to make them fit with the objectives and context of the current research.

The questionnaire was prepared in a Likert scale form. The Likert Scale is an ordinal psychometric measurement of attitudes, beliefs and opinions. In each item, a statement is presented in which a respondent must indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement in a multiple choice type format (Maurer & Andrews, 2000). In spite of its easiness to statistical analysis, a 5 point Likert scale was selected believing that it might, in this context, let respondents put their actual feelings in one of the five alternatives given. It also allows them to accommodate neutral or undecided feelings. Thus, since a 5 point Likert Scale is commonly used to investigate beliefs, and since it adds to the precision of answers, the researcher chose the 5 point scale Likert rather than the 3 point scale one.

The Belief Inventory Questionnaire consisted of 35 items which were classified under 5 sub-categories. The items were classified based on their thematic relationship. The first part of the questionnaire was about students' personal background information. In this part, two questions were asked about students' gender and institutional affiliation. The second part of the questionnaire was about students' beliefs about the importance and nature of learning writing. This part had a total of 5 items- 2 of them on the importance of learning writing and the remaining 3 on the nature of writing skill. The third part of the questionnaire included 8 items on students' belief about the approaches to learning writing. Under this part, statements were designed on the approaches of learning writing skills. Probing students' belief about what should be the focus of learning writing was the main theme of the 7 items congregated under part four of the questionnaire. In the fifth part of the questionnaire, 12 items were set to discover students' beliefs about the strategies to be employed while writing. In the last part, there were three items about the feedback provision system to be employed during writing. The response scales of the questionnaire ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree under five response alternatives: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree.

### **3.3.1.2 Writing Strategies Use Inventory Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was used to obtain a self-reported data on students' writing strategy use. It is a Likert-type tool that was used to examine the frequency of students' writing strategies use. The data obtained through this questionnaire was used to primarily answer research question number 2, and it partially contributed to answering research questions number 4 and 5. It was adopted from Cabrejas (2012) with his formal consent letter to use the questionnaire with slight modification. It has 47 items categorized under the six classifications of Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies. The questionnaire was adopted with only slight changes on words and structure of three of the items for the sake of simplification. Items 1, 20 and 36 were paraphrased for the purpose of meaning clarity. Cabrejas (2012) designed this instrument based on Oxford's (1990) L2 strategy questionnaire since he believes that associating models in the area of psychology with the learning strategy in foreign languages helps the two fields learn each other from their distinct features (McDonough, 1995).

In the inventory, respondents were asked to show the frequency of using writing strategies on a 5-point scale. The respondents were then required to choose one of the five options (1. never or almost never true of me, 2. usually not true of me, 3. Somewhat true of me, 4. usually true of me, 5. always or almost always true of me) which show their writing strategy use. It consisted of six writing strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) that are commonly used in various studies including Oxford (1990).

As it was stated earlier, this tool was taken as it is with only slight modifications for two major reasons. Primarily, the researcher came to learn that the literature in the area, in most cases, seems to have a common consensus on the major issues to be raised regarding learning strategies in general, and writing strategies in particular (Hartley & Branthwaite, 1986; Khaldieh, 2000; Petrić & Czár's, 2003; Torrance et al., 2000). Therefore, the researcher found Cabrejas's tool to be a timely best tool accepted by various scholar. Secondly, the researcher also confirmed that the content, organization and language of this tool are suitable to university level students in Ethiopia. This was also confirmed by colleagues during the validation process and the students during the pilot study. The writing strategy use Inventory questionnaire was accompanied by a

background questionnaire designed to elicit information on the students' gender and institutional affiliation.

### **3.3.2 Writing Performance Test**

#### **3.3.3.1 The Test**

The purpose of the writing performance test was to answer the third research question which aimed at determining students' writing performance level. It was also used to answer research questions number 4 and 5. In the test, students were asked to write an expository essay of about 250 words to examine their writing performance level. Two expository kind essay topics (advantages of learning English language and advantages of social Medias for university students) were given to the students to choose one and compose their writing about it. These topics were familiar to these students since knowing the advantages of learning English is a known fact for English students and since the issue of social medias, especially their advantages is a contemporary issue for university students. Such topics may enable the students to write freely and comfortably because they address things which are meaningful to them. Raimes (1983) argues that when a meaningful writing task is assigned to the students, they will put more thought and efforts into a piece of writing that communicate their ideas and opinions to the reader. This was proved during the pilot study in a different university. This is meant to remove any sort of topic related anxiety among the participants. The participants were given an hour to accomplish the task.

A rating rubric tool was prepared to evaluate the quality of student work on a range of performances from high to low. It contains a set of well-established criteria which helped the researcher get approximately an accurate level of students' performance. The best performance was assigned to the highest point and the poorest is assigned as the lowest point on the scale during the rating process. This scoring rubric provided descriptors for the different levels of proficiency on the scale. These descriptors were thorough enough in allowing the raters to provide a suitable judgment, and to keep them rate reliably. It also enabled them to rate the essays impartially. In general, this analytic rubric provided systematic and inclusive feedback to raters and helped them objectively determine the level of students' writing performance.

This rubric was an adapted version of the rubric developed by Weigle (2002). The adapted version had 5 domains like the original one. The only major modification made was on the weighting scheme. The Weigle (2002) used this rubric with a different-weight scheme mentioning that this kind of weighting scheme is under question for a validity related concern. The analytical rubric in the current study was used with an equal-weight scheme since the main aim of this study was to determine the overall writing performance of students' rather than looking at their performance of the specific element in writing. As a result, 5 sub-domains were assigned equal weight of four points. The end product was a five-point scale (from 1 (zero knowledge) to 4 (complete knowledge) with five sub-domains of writing ability-content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

### **3.3.3.2 Rating Procedures**

Two raters were involved in the rating process. Each rater worked independently in two separate sessions. In the first session, one of the raters took 49 essays while the second rater took 48 essays. The raters were instructed to assign score to each essay based on the five sub-domains of writing performance which ranges from 0 to 4. The scores were then calculated out of 20 and the total score was converted into 100. The second session took place a week later to allow a gap long enough to ensure a more independent judgment. In this session, the raters were given the remaining copies of essays which were scored by the other fellow rater. The average score was taken to determine students' writing performance.

After getting the average raw marks from the two raters, students' writing performance was determined based on the Harmonized Grading Scale of the Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions into three writing performance levels: high, average and low. So, the researcher made the following adjustments to convert the extended grading scales into three major levels of performance for the purpose of this study. According to the Harmonized Grading System, students who scored 75-100 get letter grades of B+ and above while those who score 75 -50 get letter grades between B and C. Students in the above categories would pass a given course with differences in achievement levels. However, students who score below 50 get letter grades of C-, D+, Fx and F which are indicators of poor academic achievement in general. Therefore, in this

study, students whose scores were between 75 and 100 were taken as high achievers while those with scores between 50 and 74 were categorized as average achievers. Students whose scores were below 50 were put under the low achievers category.

### **3.3.3.3 Raters**

The raters of the writing task consisted of two experienced academic staffs who were teaching at university level. The two raters were similar in their qualification and years of experience in teaching. The raters had MA Degree in English with more than 10 years of teaching experience in the same department. They also have taught different writing courses in the department of English. The raters had a 30 minutes orientation session with the researcher which eventually aimed at improving rating accuracy and rater agreement. It also involved an explanation of the rating system, a discussion of common rating problems, and conversation on avoiding bias.

### **3.3.3 Interview**

Qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview for two basic purposes. Principally, the data collected through this instrument were used to answer the last research question which was about the factors that contributed to students' weakness to effectively implement the writing strategies and their poor writing performance. Secondly, it was used to complement the data from the quantitative analysis. It was conducted by the researcher, and it was audio recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

The interview guide included 11 questions. Most of them were prepared after analyzing the data obtained through the three tools (the belief inventory questionnaire, the writing strategy use inventory questionnaire, and the writing performance test). So, some of the questions in this part are prepared based on the results of the quantitative data. The content of the interview questions included items related to reasons for why students believe that writing is difficult, the mismatches between students' beliefs about writing and their practices. Their views about setting goals for their writing, feedback receiving trend, and use of the writing strategies were also investigated under this tool. Additionally, questions were raised about the most frequently used writing strategies and the reason behind it, reasons for students' poor awareness and use of the writing strategies, and the reasons behind students' poor writing performance. Finally, the

interview guide included a question which asks for students' suggestions on how to solve the problems they mentioned as reasons for their poor writing performance.

The interview was conducted with six students who were randomly selected from the respondents who participated in the data collection process through other instruments. The interview took 20-25 minutes. During the interview, interviewees were given the chance to speak either in Amharic or in English. As a result, five of the interviewees preferred to give the interview in Amharic while one of them preferred to speak in English. The interview guide was prepared in English Language and translated into Amharic Language prior to the interview schedule expecting that some students may prefer either of the two languages for the interview based on the researcher's experience during the pilot study.

### **3.4 Data Gathering and Analysis Procedures**

The collection of data through the beliefs inventory questionnaire and the writing strategy use inventory questionnaire preceded other methods of data collection (WPT and interview). In this part, the researcher got data which helped him to find students' belief about writing and their self-reported use of writing strategies. The data collection process through the two questionnaires was done on the same day since there was no reason to administer them one after the other as they were used to answer different research questions in the study. During the data collection, students were informed about the purposes of the study and questionnaires followed by a brief orientation on how to fill questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher while students were in their actual classroom. A general direction was given orally to the students in Amharic in addition to the instructions on the questionnaires. This process took only half an hour in each university.

Secondly, an essay writing test was administered to the students so as to determine students' writing performance level. This was done on the same date after they filled the two questionnaires. In this part, students were given an hour to write an expository essay having at least 250 words. They were provided with extra papers, and they were told to do all the activities related to the essay they were writing on the extra papers given. These extra papers were finally collected with the essays. This was done with an intention of analyzing students' practices of

writing from the extra papers. These extra papers were analyzed and they helped the researcher observe students' trend of writing objectives to their writing, their use of approaches to writing. Finally, students' essays and extra papers were collected and their essays were scored out of 20 although it was later converted to 100 for the sake of analysis.

Finally, the interview was conducted to primarily get data about the factors that contributed to the low use of students' writing strategies and their poor writing performance. This was the main concern of the last research question in this study. In addition, this tool was used to get supplementary data on students' belief about writing, and their general understanding of the writing strategies. This was done under 4 major themes and 10 sub-themes.

When we come to the analysis part, as the approach of this study was mixed (qualitative and quantitative), the data obtained through the four instruments (beliefs inventory questionnaire, inventory of the writing strategy use questionnaire, the writing performance test and interview) were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively based on the nature of the data obtained through each instrument. The quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The detail analysis techniques and procedures are presented below.

As it has been described above, the belief inventory questionnaire was one of the major tools used to collect data from students on their belief about writing. It contains 5 agreement rating scales that range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data obtained through this questionnaire were analyzed statistically using SPSS. Thus, descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency counts, percentages) was used to analyze the data obtained from this tool since ordinal data in an agreement Likert scale cannot yield mean and standard deviation values (Blaikie, 2003). A nonparametric test (an independent sample t-test) was also calculated. Here, Levene's test was also computed to control the effect of number variation between male and female students in an attempt to calculate the independent sample t-test which aimed at looking at if there was belief difference between male and female students.

In reporting the results found from the inventory of the writing strategy use questionnaire, Oxford's (1990) key was employed to comprehend mean scores on the writing inventory

questionnaire. Thus, for the sake of the analysis, the following arrangement and cut-off point was adapted from Oxford's key.

- ✓ HIGH USE = 3.5 to 4.4 (usually used) and 4.5 to 5.0 (almost always or always used)
- ✓ MEDIUM USE = 2.5 to 3.4 (sometimes used)
- ✓ LOW USE = 1.0-1.4 (never or almost never used) and 1.5 to 2.4 (usually not used )

Based on the above classification, the aggregate mean score of the overall writing strategies, each category's aggregate mean score and individual item's mean score were calculated. In addition to this, the aggregated Standard Deviation (SD) and individual item's Standard Deviation (SD) were used to indicate the variation of the scores from the mean.

Furthermore, inferential statistics were used to answer research questions 4 and 5. These two research questions ask about the correlation between the two independent variables (Beliefs about writing and Writing Strategy Use) and the dependent variable (writing performance), and the degree of influences of beliefs about writing, the overall writing strategy use and individual writing strategies on writing performance. Thus, to see the association between the variables, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (denoted by  $R^2$ ) was analyzed to interpret the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (Writing Performance) that is predictable from the independent variables (Belief about Writing and Writing Strategy Use). Similarly, a linear regression analysis was used to examine the degree of influence of the two independent variables (Beliefs about writing and writing strategy use) and each kind of writing strategy use on students' writing performance.

The analysis of the data through the writing performance test was analyzed using a descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and mode). The mean and the mode were used to show the overall writing performance level of students. The remaining two descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to analyze the overall distribution of scores against the cut-off point prepared by the researcher based on the grading scale adapted from the harmonized curriculum. Students' essay results were leveled into three levels- high, average and low- based on the adjustment made in the rating procedure section.

The data gathered through interview was analyzed qualitatively after they are transcribed. This was done through the process of qualitative thematic analysis. This process involved reading the data carefully, identifying key issues in them, and then organizing these issues into a set of broader categories. The detail process is described below as follows:

After collecting the qualitative data from the six students, the researcher first transcribed all of the audio recorded interviews, and then translated five of the transcriptions from Amharic Language to an English language. To assure the quality of the translation, the translated data was given to an external evaluator who is experienced in translating Amharic language to English Language. Necessary amendments were made on very few aspects of the data based on the comments given by the external evaluator. The data were finally categorized into 4 major themes and 10 sub-categories based on their thematic relationship.

The data obtained through this tool were analyzed thematically using a thematic analysis model developed by Miles & Huberman (1994). The model consists of three stages. These stages comprise data reduction, data display and data conclusion-drawing/verifying in the process. In the first place, the transcribed data were read three times to clearly understand the pattern of the data collected, and see similarities and differences among the respondents' responses. Then, as part of the reduction process, the researcher, with the help of one external evaluator, went through the data in an attempt to code and categorize the main points under each question. In the process of data reduction, the researcher first identified important phrases and clauses from each section in the first interview transcription. A similar activity was done by an external evaluator to see the reliability of the coding and categorization process, and there was a similar way of coding and categorizing the data. As a result, the researcher continued reducing the data into codes and categories likewise.

After completing the data reduction process, the researcher went back to the research questions to relate the existing data with the research questions. Then, the points indicated on the track changes were organized into a table so as to make it ready to be analyzed by creating significant patterns and themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Halldorson, 2009). This process is known as

data display. It aims to make sense of the data collected, and it helps to arrange concepts and thoughts (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Finally, the process of data drawing and conclusion was done. In this stage, the researcher had tried to make the ideas generated meaningful for the discussion process which brings together findings from different parts of the analysis and links findings of this study with the existing literature. In this stage, an attempt was also made to keep the information from the interview conceptually coherent and consistent as it contributes to the validity of the findings. The stages of data drawing and display must not become separated from data reduction, because they are complementary. In addition, the stages involve drawing data and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on this data, the thematic analysis was done with an attempt to achieve the last research question and provide supplementary data on issues raised on quantitative analysis.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

It is essential to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, and thus its findings, by addressing the issues of validity and reliability. Reliability is the degree of consistency that an instrument or data collection procedure demonstrates, while validity is the quality of data collection procedure that enables it to measure what it is intended to measure (Best & Kahn, 1998).

The reliability and validity of the instruments in this study were assured through different ways. The tools used in this study were prepared based on the existing literature reviewed in chapter two. These tools were checked by different experts in the area, including the two supervisors of the researcher. The pilot study had also its own significant contribution in strengthening the validity of this research. Throughout these steps, the two questionnaires were tested for response validity which was aimed at checking the participants' understanding on the wording and content of the items, validating the general classification of the questionnaires into sub-categories and verifying whether or not the students selected the appropriate response.

To check the internal consistency of the two questionnaires, the Cronbach's alpha was chosen as the most appropriate reliability index since it was considered as an efficient means of testing reliability in other studies based on questionnaires (Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007; Oxford, 1990;

Petrić & Czár1, 2003). Accordingly, the Cronbach's alpha for the beliefs inventory questionnaire was 0.762 which indicated a good reliability. The Cronbach's alpha of the inventory of writing strategy questionnaire obtained by the previous researcher (Cabrejas, 2012) was .881, which suggests high internal consistency. Similarly, the same measurement was used in the current study and a similar high Cronbach's alpha result (.890) was obtained. The above figures can indicate that the two inventory questionnaires are reliable in terms of their internal consistency.

The reliability of the interview questions was assured by following the various steps of the thematic analysis model developed by Miles & Huberman (1994). During the analysis, the researcher passed through various steps in organizing, coding, categorizing and verifying the data. To upsurge the reliability of the analysis, one fourth of the interview transcription was coded and categorized by the researcher and another expert in the language area, and the coding and categorization was found to be similar with only little difference. Then, after having a short discussion with the expert, the researcher coded and categorized the remaining interview data independently. Finally, the codes were reorganized and categorized into a table under 4 major themes and 10 sub-themes. This process was helpful in clearly identifying the important ideas from the transcript and drawing an accurate conclusion based on the interview data.

To check the reliability of the data obtained through the writing performance test, computing an Inter-rater reliability was found essential. The two raters' scores were computed using Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1988). Thus, there was a high level of agreement ( $k = .817$ ) between the two raters. This indicates that there was a very limited scoring difference between the two scorers despite the subjective nature of the essay test. This adds to the reliability of the essay test result.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

Every ethical consideration was made throughout the process of this study. To this effect, the consent of all participants in this study was asked, and they confirmed their willingness before data were collected. The anonymity and confidentiality of the information of the respondents have been secured. A codification was also used to represent respondents as SA (Student A), SB (Student B), SC (Student C), SD (Student D), SE (Student E) and SF (Student F).

### **3.7 Summary of the Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted at Wolkite University on 28 students. The main purpose of the pilot study was to check the validity and reliability of the tools and procedures used in this study. Based on the results of the pilot study, minor changes were made on the tools and procedures of the study.

The results of the pilot study were consistent to the result of the main study. The result of the pilot study indicated that most of the students (98%) had a positive belief towards writing. Similarly, students reported a low use of writing strategies ( $M=2.1$  and  $SD = .831$ ). Students' writing performance was also found to be very low. Most of the students who participated in the pilot study scored below 50 and the mean result was 38. Similarly, positive relationships were indicated between belief about writing and writing performance, and writing strategy use and writing performance. There was a negative relationship between belief about writing and students' writing strategy use. Students mentioned various psychological and educational factors for their low writing strategy use and poor writing performance.

The following lessons were, therefore, learnt from the pilot study:

1. Major modifications were made on some items in the belief inventory questionnaire since they were found to discover self-efficacy belief and writing preference than beliefs about writing.
2. Three items were also disregarded for they were found irrelevant to the specific objectives of this study.
3. Collecting data from the sample respondent was one of the challenges the researcher faced during the pilot study as students were not patient enough to spend their time filling all the questionnaires, taking the test and taking part in the interview. Thus, it was tried to eliminate these problems by approaching them through their instructors during the data collection for the main study.

4. It was found necessary to check the inter-raters reliability of the test results to check the reliability of scores by the two raters. Thus, unlike to the pilot study, an inter-rater reliability was calculated between the scores of the two raters in the main study.
5. It was also learnt that examining the degree of influence of the correlation between variables was essential to get more comprehensive results. Thus, this part was considered in the main study.
6. The pilot study gave the researcher good lessons on the time and financial breakdown to plan for the main study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the data obtained through four data collection instruments namely, *Beliefs Inventory Questionnaire*, *Writing Strategies Use Inventory Questionnaire*, *Writing performance Test and Interview*. The analysis and interpretation are made in five major categories based on the specific objectives.

### **4.1 Students' Beliefs about Writing**

This part of the analysis answers the first research question which reads '*What are students' beliefs about writing?*' It assesses students' beliefs about writing; a descriptive analysis is, therefore, conducted in order to measure if students have a positive or negative outlook towards the 35 five-Likert scale items categorized under five sub-categories. The 5-point scale of responses are ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### **4.1.1 Students' Beliefs about the Importance and Nature of Writing**

In this part of the analysis, five items were forwarded to students about their beliefs about the importance and nature of writing. They showed a strong positive belief on the four items (items 1, 2, 3 and 4), but their belief about viewing writing as a difficult skill remained negative. Detail is discussed below.

**Table 2: Students' Beliefs about the Importance and Nature of Writing**

Items		1. Writing is a very important skill for my academic study at this level.	2. Writing skill (in English) is very important to my future education.	3. Writing in English is a task that requires a lot of time.	4. Writing is important and has to be given an equal weight as other skills in learning English.	5. Writing is more difficult than other language skills.
N	N	97	97	97	97	97
Strongly Disagree	F	1	1	1	4	8
	%	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.1	8.2
Disagree	F	-	-	7	10	10
	%	-	-	7.2	10.3	10.3
Undecided	F	-	2	8	4	3
	%	-	2.0	8.2	4.1	3.1
Agree	F	36	35	52	44	51
	%	37.1	36.1	53.7	45.4	52.6
Strongly Agree	F	60	59	29	35	25
	%	60.9	60.8	29.9	36.1	25.8

As table 2 shows, a large number of participants (98% - 37.1% agree and 60.9% strongly agree) concurred that writing is a very important skill to their academic life at the university level. The majority of them (96.9% - 36.1% agree and 60.8% strongly agree) also believed that writing has a great role in their future education. This can tell us that students see writing skill important to their current and future education. From this, it can be said that students have good knowledge about the importance of writing at the tertiary education level where their strong written argument and expository skills are vital.

In the same table, students have positive beliefs about the nature of writing. Majority of the respondents (83.6% – 53.7% agree and 29.9% strongly agree) granted that writing in English requires a lot of time. From this data, it can be understood that students have knowledge of the difficult and the time taking nature of writing. In other words, it can be said that students know that they should spend a lot of time for writing and rewrite their composition. Similarly, most of the students (81.5% - 45.4 agree and 36.1% strongly agree) showed positive beliefs about the proportional weight to be given to writing like other language skills. This data may help us deduce as students know that writing should get equal coverage and attention in the teaching-

learning process and the curriculum since most of the activities at university need learners' strong written competence.

However, it is only a few students (18.5% - 8.2 strongly disagree and 10.3% disagree) who believed that writing has a similar level of difficulty compared to the rest of language skills. Most of the students (78.4%) believed that writing is more difficult than the other three English language skills. This finding may help us understand how students perceive writing, and this can also be an indication that most students are developing a sense of phobia about writing. This would have an immediate and a long run impact on students' attitude towards writing and their performance in it. Based on this result, it could be said that students' beliefs about the affective writing strategies are poor. They did not seem to have right beliefs about their writing ability as the majority of them perceived writing as a difficult skill.

#### **4.1.2 Students' Beliefs about the Approaches to Writing**

In this part, there are 8 statements (5 positives and 3 negatives) on students' beliefs about the approaches to writing. After inversely calculating the three negative statements, the overall average of the 8 items was found to be 87.89%. This may mean that the majority of the students have positive beliefs about the approaches to writing. This data can allow us to conclude that the students have a very good understanding of the traditional and modern approaches to writing and the prominence of using different approaches to writing. This conclusion is elaborated in the following discussion.

In items 1, 4 and 8, the statements were forwarded against the process approach to writing. Thus, since these items were negatively stated, the two disagreement positions (strongly disagree and disagree) are considered positive while the other two agreement positions (agree and strongly agree) are taken as a negative stand. Accordingly, the majority of the students (82.5%- 42.3% strongly disagree and 40.2% disagree) did not believe that revision is necessary only if the student doesn't plan and draft carefully. In other words, these students believe that revision should be done unconditionally as it is one of the basic elements of the process approach to writing. Similarly, most of the students (73.1%- 28.9% strongly disagree and 44.2% disagree) did not accept the idea of writing a second draft optional based on the writer's feeling about the

quality of his/her composition. In relation to this, many of them (84.6% - 36.1% SDA and 48.5 % DA) agreed that passing through stages is necessary since they believe it helps to generate an error-free composition. This analysis may help us deduce that students have positive beliefs about the necessity of using the process approach to writing.

**Table 3: Students' Beliefs about Approaches to Writing**

No	Items	N	Scale									
			SDA		DA		UD		A		SA	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Revision is necessary only if the student doesn't plan and draft carefully.	97	41	42.3	39	40.2	1	1.0	9	9.3	7	7.2
2.	Someone can be a good writer through regular practices.	97	-	-	-	-	1	1.0	50	51.6	46	47.4
3.	While writing, I should always make a first draft of my writing.	97	2	2.1	2	2.1	2	2.1	62	63.9	29	29.9
4.	Writing a second draft in writing may not be important if I feel that my writing is good.	97	28	28.9	43	44.2	5	5.2	15	15.5	6	6.2
5.	My ideas and thoughts become clearer to me as I write and rewrite.	97	-	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34.0</b>
6.	Making a final draft to my writing helps me get a good writing product.	97	-	-	-	-	1	1.0	46	47.4	49	50.5
7.	Looking at a writing model before starting writing in English helps me write better.	97	-	-	1	1.0	-	-	57	58.8	39	40.2
8.	Writing should be done once without passing through different stages.	97	35	36.1	47	48.5	1	1.0	10	10.4	4	4.1

The remaining 5 statements are positively stated. As it was indicated before, the majority of the students have strong positive beliefs about the use of different approaches to writing. As can be seen in table 3, almost all of the students (99 % - 51.6% agree and 47.4% strongly agree) opined that regular practice can make them good writers. This means that these students have recognized the importance of regular exercise to improve their writing. Similarly, the majority of the students (93.8%-63.9% agree and 29.9% strongly agree) agreed on the importance of writing

a first draft and a large number of them (95.9% - 61.9% agree and 34% strongly agree) granted that their ideas and thoughts become more clear as they make regular practices. Nearly all of the respondents (97.9% 47.4% agree and 50.5% strongly agree) agreed on the significance of making a final draft for the betterment of their writing. Based on these figures, it may be possible to say that these students have good knowledge of the process approach to writing in which students are expected to produce a better writing product by passing through multiple stages (planning-drafting-revising-editing). On the other hand, a large number of students (99%-58.8% agree 40.2% strongly agree) accepted the notion of referring to a model writing before they start writing. This indicates that the students do also accept some principles of the product approach to writing.

The above data show that the students accept the principles of both the product and process approaches to writing. This could be acceptable as an eclectic approach is recommended to overcome the weakness of each approach to writing. Regarding this, Silva (1990) stated that most L2 writing instructional approaches address only some aspects of writing such as language, text, composing skills, and reader expectations. Thus, depending on a single approach can lead to a tilted perspective on the issues encountered by ESL/EFL students (Silva, 1990). Since “*one size does not fit all, ... the use of a variety of approaches that permits teachers to extend their repertoire*” becomes essential (Reid, 2001: 32).

Generally, it can be deduced that most of the students have good knowledge of the cognitive writing strategies. They showed their strong agreement on the importance of planning and revising their writing. Thus, since cognitive writing strategies are more or less concerned with passing through multiple stages of writing and revision, it would be fair to say that most of the respondents are aware of the cognitive writing strategies. It could again be essential to explain the implication of students’ mixed views about the importance of the two approaches to writing. This result may imply that the students were not purely implementing either of the two approaches to writing because of these approaches’ drawback in bringing the social and cognitive activities together. This may call for the necessity of another approach to writing which includes elements of both the social and cognitive models to writing.

### 4.1.3 Students' Beliefs about the Focus of Writing

In this part of the analysis, it was tried to find out the aspects of the language students give more attention during writing. The items were developed based on both the traditional and modern approaches to writing. Therefore, students that support the principles of the modern approach, which focuses on the message/content of the writing, are considered to have a positive belief while those who support the principles of the traditional approach to writing, which focus on the mechanics and grammar aspect of writing, are considered to have a negative belief about writing.

Having the above understanding in mind, the majority of the students (84.6%, 85.6%, 88.7%, 95.9% and 82.5%) have negative beliefs about the aspects of writing to be emphasized while writing. These students generally reported that language form (grammar and mechanics) should be the primary focus of writers than the message it conveys. This negative view is reflected in items number 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of table 4.

**Table 4: Students' Beliefs about the Focus of Writing**

No	Items	N	Scale									
			SDA		DA		UD		A		SA	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	In writing, students shouldn't worry about spelling and grammar until they are sure they have made their main points.	97	38	39.2	44	45.4	-	-	9	9.3	6	6.2
2.	Students should know standard formats of good writing to be a good writer.	97	3	3.1	6	6.2	1	1.0	51	52.6	36	37.1
3.	While drafting, students should focus on getting their ideas on paper and worry about spelling and mechanics later.	97	25	25.8	58	59.8	2	2.1	7	7.2	5	5.2
4.	Grammar is important, but it is not as essential as the point the writer is trying to make.	97	46	47.5	40	41.2	-	-	8	8.2	3	3.1
5.	I feel that the key to good writing is getting the grammar and mechanics (spelling and punctuation) right.	97	1	1.0	3	3.1	-	-	51	52.6	42	43.3
6.	During revision, students should carefully check their writing for both content and mechanics problems.	97	1	1.0	2	2.1	1	1.0	50	51.5	43	44.3
7.	In marking my written work, teachers should pay more attention to the language form than meaning	97	4	4.1	11	11.3	2	2.1	63	65	17	17.5

As it is presented in table 4, most of the students (84.6% - 39.2% SDA and 45.4% DA) disagreed with the idea of focusing on getting the main idea of their writing before they start worrying about the spelling and grammar of their writing. A similar idea was raised during the drafting stage, and nearly the same number of students (85.6% - 25.8% SDA and 59.8% DA) disagreed with the idea of giving more emphasis to the message of their writing than spelling and mechanics while drafting a composition. Similarly, a large number of students (88.7% - 47.5% SDA and 41.2% DA) did not agree with the notion of giving priority to the point the writer is trying to make than the grammatical aspects of the text. From this result, we can deduce that the majority of students believe in the notion of the product (traditional) approach to writing. They wanted to give due emphasis to the grammatical and mechanics aspects of their writing than its message. According to Leki (1992), traditionally, when students write in a second language, the purpose of writing activity is to catch grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. Thus, we can say that most of the students have negative beliefs about what should be the focus of the writer during writing, drafting, and revision.

Nevertheless, most of the students (89.7% - 52.6% agree and 37.1% strongly agree) concord that it is good to know the standard formats of writing to be a good writer. Despite strongly opposing the idea of giving more emphasis to the message of a composition than its form, many of the students (95.4%- 51.1% agree and 44.3% strongly agree) confirmed the importance of valuing both content and form during revision. This view could have a reconciliatory role in filling the gaps in both the process and product approaches to writing.

In short, as can be understood from the above analysis and interpretation, it might be possible to say that most of the students believe in giving much emphasis to the structural and mechanics aspects of writing than the meaning during writing and revision. This is against the notion of the process approach to writing as this approach favors to meaning than structure.

#### **4.1.4 Students' Beliefs about Writing Strategies**

This section of analysis describes students' beliefs about the strategies to be used during writing. All of the items under this part are written in positive statements. According to the data in table 6, an average score of 90.7% agreement level (agree and strongly agree) was calculated. This

indicates that students have a strong positive belief about the writing strategies to be used during writing. This result might be further explained as the majority of the students are aware of the techniques that should be used while writing to facilitate their writing. These students reported that activities such as planning, organizing, working with others and referring to other materials have positive contributions for the betterment of their writing. This general discussion is explicitly analyzed and interpreted as follows.

**Table 5: Students' Beliefs about Writing Strategies**

No	Items	N	Scale									
			SDA		DA		UD		A		SA	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Writing requires information/knowledge about the topic to be written	97	1	1.0	2	2.1	1	1.0	48	49.6	45	46.4
2.	I should relate my background knowledge with the topic I will write on.	97	1	1.0	4	4.1	2	2.1	47	48.5	43	44.3
3.	During writing, I should organize information to my writing.	97	1	1.0	5	5.2	-	-	48	49.5	43	44.3
4.	Making an outline is one of the good skills in writing.	97	-	-	-	-	2	2.1	42	43.3	51	52.6
5.	In writing, I should always select appropriate language to my composition.	97	-	-	4	4.1	2	2.1	45	46.4	46	47.4
6.	Setting goals to my writing helps me write better.	97	1	1.0	7	7.2	3	3.1	45	46.4	41	42.3
7.	It is good if teachers provide me with different strategies for generating ideas, like brainstorming, using questions, visuals, role-plays and simulations.	97	2	2.1	3	3.1	7	7.2	45	46.4	40	41.2
8.	Having discussions on how to improve writing skill is a good strategy to write better.	97	-	-	1	1.0	2	2.1	58	59.8	36	37.1
9.	I should write with other students so that I can write better.	97	2	2.1	6	6.2	9	9.3	55	56.7	25	25.7
10.	I should work with the teacher during writing activities.	97	2	2.1	8	8.2	4	4.1	52	53.6	31	32.0
11.	Reading materials in English help me write better.	97	1	1.0	2	2.1	2	2.1	44	45.3	48	49.5
12.	Listening to English transmissions helps me improve my writing ability.	97	2	2.1	8	8.2	9	9.3	38	39.2	40	41.2

As it is presented in table 5, a large number of students (96% - 49.6% agree and 46.4% strongly agree) agreed that writing requires knowledge/information about the topic to be written. Similarly, the majority of them (92.8% - 48.5 agree and 44.3% strongly agree) agreed that it is good if students relate their background knowledge to the topic they are writing on. This means that the respondents are aware of the fact that their prior knowledge and familiarity to the topic can make the process of their writing successful. Based on these two findings, it could be possible to say that students have a positive outlook towards the importance of memory writing strategy which appreciates the use of prior knowledge to facilitate one's writing.

Correspondingly, most of the students believe that organizing information to their writing (93.8% - 49.5% agree and 44.3% strongly agree), making an outline (95.9% - 43.3% agree and 52.6% strongly agree), selecting an appropriate language (93.8% - 46.4% agree and 47.4% strongly agree), setting goals (88.7% - 46.4% agree and 42.3% strongly agree), and using different strategies for generating ideas (87.6% - 46.4% agree and 41.2% strongly agree) have a positive contribution to their writing. These results can help us understand that students have strong beliefs about some aspects of the process approach to writing. These students seem to be aware of the importance of spending much time to the planning stage of writing where they draw a roadmap to their writing. These findings could also tell us that the students have knowledge of the cognitive and metacognitive writing strategies which appreciate planning, organizing, and referring to different materials to facilitate their writing.

The majority of students also reflected positive beliefs about the importance of working with others during writing. A large number of them (96.9% - 59.8% agree and 37.1% strongly agree) agreed that having discussions on how to improve writing skill is a good strategy to write better. Likewise, most students agreed that writing with other students (82.4% 56.7% agree and 25.7% strongly agree) and working with the teacher (85.6% - 53.6% agree and 32% strongly agree) are important parts of the writing strategies. These findings can be good indicators of students' optimistic view towards collaboration during writing. In other words, it could be said that most of the students are aware of the value of working in a group while they write using the process approach to writing. Therefore, this finding may perhaps lead us towards concluding that students' beliefs about the social writing strategies, which focus on seeking assistance from

others and working with others to develop the assumption of working with and learning from others, is positive.

In the last two items, students were asked if reading materials written in English and listening to English transmissions help them improve their writing. In response to these two items, a range of students (94.8% - 45.3% agree and 49.5% strongly agree) and (80.4 % - 39.2% agree and 41.2% strongly agree) respectively said that reading to different materials in English and listening to English transmissions are helpful to improve their writing. These results might help us understand that students have positive beliefs about the use of sources to compensate their writing. This view of students can be directly related to the notions of the compensation writing strategies. These results seem to show us that most of the students have a good understanding of the compensation writing strategies which encourage them to fill their writing gaps through different techniques. These techniques can provide students with options that can help them keep writing.

Precisely speaking, the above findings may help us know that the majority of the students have optimistic views about the memory, cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies of writing. This could mean that students have virtuous knowledge about the writing strategies which might have significant roles in effectively facilitating their writing.

#### **4.1.5 Students' Beliefs about Feedback Provision System in Writing**

This part of the analysis discusses issues related to feedback provision in writing. An average score of 83.96% confirmed that students have positive beliefs about the feedback provision system in writing. As it can be seen in table 6, the majority of the students have positive beliefs towards getting comments from others and themselves to improve their writing skill. Details are analyzed and interpreted next to the table below.

**Table 6: Students' Beliefs about Feedback Provision System in Writing**

Items		1. Getting comments and corrections from peers helps me write better.	2. Getting comments and corrections from teachers helps me write better.	3. Making self-evaluation helps me improve my writing though I wrote it myself.
N	Valid	97	97	97
Strongly Disagree	F	3	-	1
	%	3.1	-	1.0
Disagree	F	17	6	2
	%	17.5	6.2	2.1
Undecided	F	6	1	1
	%	6.2	1.0	1.0
Agree	F	41	58	50
	%	42.3	59.8	51.6
Strongly Agree	F	30	32	43
	%	30.9	33.0	44.3

The first statement under table 6 was about the helpfulness of getting comments and corrections from peers. Regarding this, most of the students (73.2% - 42.3% agree and 30.9% strongly agree) concurred that peer comments and corrections can help them improve their writing skill. These students seem to understand the positive effect of getting others writing experience in maintaining their writing. Similarly, the majority of them (92.8% - 59.8% agree and 33% strongly agree) reflected that comments and corrections from their teachers can help them write better. Compared to students' beliefs about the importance of peer comments and feedback to their writing, students have shown a high level of agreement on the contribution of teacher feedback to the effectiveness of their writing. This could be taken as an indicator that students want to receive comments from their teachers than peers. Moreover, a number of them (95.9% - 51.6% agree and 44.3% strongly agree) agreed that making self-evaluation has a positive impact on the improvement of their own writing. Still, these students are aware that revision makes their writing better.

Therefore, taking the above facts into consideration, it is possible to conclude that most of the students have an optimistic outlook about the importance of feedback (self, peer, and teacher) on the improvement of their writing. Accordingly, it can also be summarized that most of the

students have positive beliefs about the use of social writing strategies which entirely focused on working with others for the betterment of their writing.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to see if there is a difference between male and female students regarding their beliefs about writing. The following table presents it.

**Table 7: Descriptive Group Statistics of Male and Female Students' Belief about Writing**

Group Statistics					
	Sex of the students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Belief	Male	68	3.8748	.26042	.03158
	Female	29	3.8118	.28103	.05219

The above table presents the descriptive statistics of the mean score of males on their beliefs about writing. Thus, the mean score indicated that males (M=3.87) have better beliefs about writing than females (M=3.81). This could mean that male students do understand the basic principles of writing than female students. To see their significance level, an independent samples t-test was computed between the two variables below.

**Table 8: An Independent Samples t-test for Male and Female students' Beliefs about Writing**

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Belief	Equal variances assumed	.314	.577	1.065	95	.290	.06297	.05914	-.05444	.18038
	Equal variances not assumed			1.032	49.488	.307	.06297	.06100	-.05958	.18552

It is indicated in table 8 above that there was no significant level of difference between male and female students' beliefs about writing. A Levene's test at  $p > 0.05$  was computed to control the statistical gap between the two genders. It helped to reduce the effect of number difference between the two genders on the result of the independent t-test. Hence, the second row is

analyzed. Table 8 above shows that males exceeded females with regard to having better beliefs about writing. Nevertheless, the independent samples t-test in table 8 shows that with 95% confidence interval, the difference in beliefs about writing between male and female students was not statistically significant ( $t= 1.032$ ,  $df=49.488$ ,  $p=.307$ ). Therefore, although there was a difference between the beliefs of male and female students about writing, the difference was not statistically significant.

## **4.2 Students' Writing Strategy Use**

This part was aimed at exploring students' writing strategy use based on their self-reported data obtained via a writing strategy use inventory questionnaire. This part of the analysis answered the second basic research question which meant to explore the writing strategy use of students. Therefore, students' overall writing strategy use and their specific writing strategies use are briefly analyzed and interpreted as follows.

### **4.2.1 Students' Overall Writing Strategy Use**

To analyze students' writing strategy use, Oxford's writing strategy frequency level was used as a cutoff point. According to Oxford (1990), strategies can be divided into three frequency levels based on the mean of items on each strategy: high (mean of 3.5 or higher), medium (mean of 2.5 to 3.5), and low (mean of 2.4 or lower). According to the cutoff point, the higher level of a frequency, the more often the writing strategy is used.

The overall mean score of writing strategies reported by the students was 2.26 ( $M = 2.26$ ) with a standard deviation of .911 ( $SD = .911$ ), and according to the above division (Oxford, 1990), this mean score is at a low level. This showed that students' overall writing strategy use was at a low level. Therefore, though there were some differences among the means of the six categories, most students reported that they did not use writing strategies frequently. The high standard deviation value here can also show us how the data are farther away from the mean.

### **4.2.2 Students' Memory Writing Strategy Use**

As shown in table 9, the overall mean score of students' memory writing strategy use was 2.75 ( $SD=1.154$ ), indicating that the overall medium level in their memory writing strategy use. The

specific memory writing strategies use mean of students was ranked descending in the table, and it is reported that students used three of the memory writing strategies (using background knowledge, using new words in a sentence to remember them, and memorizing new words) moderately. They said they rarely revise old compositions not to forget the mistakes they made before, and work on these mistakes to solve them while they write.

**Table 9: The Memory Writing Strategies Use of Students**

No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use my background knowledge about the topic while I write.	97	3.44	1.09895
2	I use new words in a sentence so that I can remember them.	97	2.91	1.12426
3	I memorize new English words by writing them down several times.	97	2.78	1.25189
4	I revise my old compositions so as not to forget the mistakes I made and how to solve them.	97	1.86	1.14226
	<b>Average</b>		<b>2.75</b>	<b>1.154</b>

From the above data, it can be concluded that students' use of the memory writing strategies which can help them link one L2 item or concept with another is not used to the highest level. They used these writing strategies sometimes when retrieving words or concepts while writing although it is a tactic which should be most frequently used to facilitate writing.

#### 4.2.3 Students' Cognitive Writing Strategy Use

As it is indicated in table 10, the overall average mean score of the thirteen items under the cognitive writing strategy was 2.13 (M = 2.13) with a standard deviation of 0.81 (SD=0.81). This figure designates a low-level writing strategy implementation. The standard deviation could also supplement the fact that the scores of students' cognitive writing strategy use were distant from the mean, indicating that most mean scores were below the average mean score.

The above aggregated result can be explicitly analyzed as follows. As can be seen in table 10, the mean scores for each strategy under the cognitive writing strategies were presented in their descending order, and the results indicated that students' cognitive writing strategies were implemented below the average mean score, except in three of the strategies. They reported a

high writing strategies use ( $M=3.52$  (High),  $SD= 1.10$ ) of using transition words in their composition, and medium strategies use of both putting their meaning on paper as quickly as possible before forgetting it ( $M=3.09$  and  $SD=1.06$ ), and trying out different points either orally or in writing to find out what they wanted to say ( $M=2.79$ ,  $SD= 1.27$ ).

However, in the remaining cases, they reported low cognitive writing strategies use. They said that they relatively better implemented (though it is at a low level) the cognitive writing strategies such as reformulating linguistic expressions ( $M= 2.00$ ,  $SD=.81$ ), choosing formal and informal expressions appropriately ( $M=1.96$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ), reviewing previous sections of writing for checking mismatches ( $M= 1.88$ ,  $SD=.65$ ), reading books or good writer's compositions to improve writing ( $M= 1.86$ ,  $SD=.70$ ), and moving paragraphs around for the sake of organization ( $M=1.85$ ,  $SD=.76$ ). All these figures can show us a low cognitive writing strategy use of students.

Similarly, students reported low cognitive writing strategies use in the rest five specific strategies within a minimal mean score interval. They said that they rarely ( $M= 1.78$ ,  $SD=.68$ ) read their composition to check if it sounds. They also indicated low cognitive writing strategy implementations ( $M=1.77$ ,  $SD=.66$  and  $.56$ , respectively) regarding both writing different drafts and revising their compositions after few days for the betterment of their writing. Similarly, they reported low-level writing strategies use regarding frequently rereading their composition ( $M= 1.75$ ,  $SD= .70$ ) and comparing their writing against their plans ( $M= 1.73$ ,  $SD=.58$ ) to improve their writing.

**Table 10: The Cognitive Writing Strategy Use of Students**

No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use transition words (“thus”, “however”, “nevertheless” and so on) in my composition that would help my reader to understand my point.	97	3.5258	1.10012
2	I try to put my meaning on paper as quickly as possible so as not to forget my ideas even if I experience spelling or grammatical problems.	97	3.0928	1.06147
3	I try out different ideas either orally or in writing to find out what I want to say.	97	2.7938	1.27425
4	I reformulate the linguistic expression when I am not sure it is right.	97	2.0000	.81650
5	I choose words and expressions that are formal when I write formally and informal forms when I write informally.	97	1.9691	1.05528
6	I review previous sections of the text when I find a mismatch between my written text and the ideas I want to express.	97	1.8866	.65949
7	I read books or good writers’ compositions to improve my writing.	97	1.8660	.70162
8	I move paragraphs around in an attempt to organize my writing in a more coherent way.	97	1.8557	.76362
9	I read my composition aloud to “feel” its sound.	97	1.7835	.68048
10	I write different drafts of my composition.	97	1.7732	.66935
11	I put aside my writing for a few days to reconsider my thoughts with a fresh mind	97	1.7732	.56835
12	I frequently reread in an attempt to find out what I want to say.	97	1.7526	.70756
13	I compare my composition with my plan or outline to see how well they match or to consider changes.	97	1.7320	.58658
	<b>Average</b>		<b>2.13879</b>	<b>0.818821</b>

In general, based on the above results, it could be possible to deduce that most of the students were not using the cognitive writing strategies which may allow students to process and transform the information they use in their writing. This could also be further interpreted as there was a low active engagement in knowledge acquisition process, in general (McCrinkle and Christensen, 1995).

#### 4.2.4 Students' Use of the Compensation Writing Strategies

As table 11 indicates, students' compensation writing strategies use was reported as the highest (M=3.21, SD=1.19), but at a middle level, frequently used among the six writing strategies. In relative terms, they showed higher mean scores in almost all of the items listed under the compensation writing strategies compared to the mean scores of other writing strategies categories.

**Table 11: The Compensation Writing Strategy Use of Students**

No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use a dictionary to find out words that I don't know how to express in English.	97	3.4742	1.30777
2	I make guesses when I can't find the exact word that I need.	97	3.3918	1.07584
3	I repeat words in an attempt to keep my writing going.	97	3.2577	1.13906
4	I use sources when I don't have enough ideas to complete my composition.	97	3.1753	1.15479
5	I use synonyms when I can't find the word I mean.	97	3.1546	1.27753
6	I make short pauses while writing my composition to consider what I have written so far.	97	2.8660	1.18699
	<b>Average</b>		<b>3.21993</b>	<b>1.19033</b>

As it is explicitly indicated in table 11, a medium level (M= 3.47, SD=1.30) use of dictionaries was reported as a means of finding out the meaning of new words. This was one of the best strategies reported as the most frequently used one among others in the inventory. The second highest mean score (M=3.39, SD= 1.07) at the medium level was making guesses which is one of the compensation writing strategies used to facilitate writing. Students' compensation writing strategies use regarding repeating words with an attempt on keeping their writing go, using sources to complete their composition, using synonyms, and making a short pause for the sake of considering what has been written fell in an average writing strategy implementation level (M= 3.25, 3.17, 3.15, 2.86, and SD= 1.13, 1.15, 1.27, 1.18, respectively).

The above results can tell us about students' moderate use of the compensation writing strategies to reimburse for limitations of their writing by using several techniques to keep their writing

going. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of these students were trying to progress their writing skill using the strategies that could help them use alternative ways of letting their writing continue.

#### **4.2.5 Students' Use of the Metacognitive Writing Strategies**

According to Oxford's (1990) key to understanding students' mean scores of strategy use, the participants of the current study had an overall low use of metacognitive writing strategies (M 2.03, SD, 0.83). This indicates that most of the students were not using the various metacognitive writing strategies, which include activities such as planning and arranging for writing tasks, set goals and objectives, monitoring the writing process, and evaluating their writing progress (Wu & Ya-Ling, 2008), as a means of facilitating their writing, except in two cases where they showed a medium level writing strategy implementation. The detail is presented in the following paragraphs.

The mean scores of each writing strategy used under the metacognitive strategy were reported at a low implementation level, except in the first two items. As it can be observed from table 12 below, students said that they sometimes (M=2.81, SD=1.02 and M= 2.6) consider the characteristics of a good essay and pay attention to the essential parts of writing (thesis statements, topic and supporting sentences), respectively. This result reveals a medium level use of the two metacognitive writing strategies.

However, students' metacognitive writing strategy uses fell at the lowest level in the rest twelve specific strategies. Relatively speaking, students' attempts to consider their lack of fluency and doing something about it (M=2.18, SD= .90), their practice of writing with a specific purpose in mind (M=2.15, SD=.93), and their attempt on deciding on the content, organization and linguistics expression of their composition (M=2.02, SD=.84) were reported to be better implemented compared to the rest ten metacognitive writing strategies although these results are at low implementation levels. They also reported a low strategy use (M=1.98, SD=.82; M=1.89 SD=.72; M=1.89, SD=.80; M=1.86, SD=.77; M=1.84, SD=.82) in setting priorities over revising their composition, planning the content and organization of their writing, considering their audience, following certain organization in their composition, and planning their composition in

advance or while writing either mentally or in writing, respectively. Similarly, the lowest uses of the metacognitive writing strategies were reported on the remaining three items under this category regarding students' practice of comparing their writing with the plan (M=1.79, SD=.76), setting short-term and long-term plans to improve their writing (M=1.73, SD=.68), and checking whether their ideas are clear as they are on paper (M=1.72, SD=.68).

**Table 12: The Metacognitive Strategies Use of Students**

**Descriptive Statistics**

No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I consider the characteristics of good essays while I write.	97	2.8144	1.02398
2	I pay attention to aspects such as thesis statements, topic and supporting sentences while I am writing.	97	2.6289	.96090
3	I am concerned about my lack of writing fluency and doing something about it.	97	2.1856	.90519
4	I write with a specific purpose in mind (i.e. to convince, inform, narrate an event, and so on).	97	2.1546	.93920
5	Before starting to write or while writing, I make decisions about the content, organization and the linguistic expression of my composition and how I should do them.	97	2.0206	.84137
6	I have a set of priorities when revising my composition: first, ideas and organization and then grammar and spelling concerns.	97	1.9897	.82279
7	I am aware of the effectiveness of the strategies that I employ for my writing.	97	1.9175	.89757
8	I plan the content and organization of my composition.	97	1.8969	.72865
9	I frequently think of my audience so as to adjust my text to their needs.	97	1.8969	.80989
10	I follow a certain organization in my composition that would help my readers understand my point.	97	1.8660	.77229
11	I plan my composition in advance or while writing either mentally or in writing.	97	1.8454	.82083
12	I go back to my plan to consider the ideas I have written down and to reformulate them if I feel they are flawed.	97	1.7938	.76292
13	I set myself long-term and short-term goals for improving my writing.	97	1.7320	.68489
14	I think whether or not my ideas are clear as they are on paper.	97	1.7216	.68833
	<b>Average</b>		<b>2.03313</b>	<b>0.832771</b>

In conclusion, it could be possible to say that students were not 'usually' using the metacognitive writing strategies which may help them plan and arrange their writing tasks, set goals and

objectives for their writing, and evaluate their writing progress in the process of writing. It is then possible here to indicate that most of the students did not effectively use the basic writing strategies which might contribute a lot to the improvement of their writing.

#### 4.2.6 Students' Affective Writing Strategy Use

As indicated in table 13, the overall mean score of students' affective writing strategies use was 1.90 (SD=.87), indicating an overall low level in affective writing strategy use. This means that students were not effectively using the affective writing strategies that are used for anxiety reduction, self-reward, and self-encouragement purpose (Oxford, 1990).

The above aggregated result can be analyzed in detail as follows. As it can be observed from table 13, students reported low implementation level on the affective writing strategies, except in a particular strategy which is about encouraging themselves to find a better solution to a linguistic problem in their composition, where they reported a medium strategy use (M=2.54, SD=1.17). They said that they almost never tried (M=1.85, SD=.81) to overcome feelings of frustration and sadness while they were writing. Similarly, they reported low implementation levels (M=1.78, SD=.83; M=1.76, SD=.88; M=1.75, SD=.80 and M=1.70, SD=.73) regarding motivating themselves to keep writing, rewarding themselves while they are given a good grade in composition, having a confidence in their own writing capacity, and writing a diary to their feeling about their writing, respectively.

**Table 13: The Affective Writing Strategies Use of Student**

Descriptive Statistics				
No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I encourage myself to find a better solution to a linguistic problem in my composition	97	2.5464	1.17279
2	I try to overcome feelings of frustration, sadness, etc. when my writing is not as good as I would like it to be.	97	1.8557	.81637
3	I motivate myself to keep writing by saying "come on", "go on", "you can do it".	97	1.7835	.83200
4	I reward myself when I'm given a good grade in a composition.	97	1.7629	.88710
5	I have confidence in my own capacity for writing.	97	1.7526	.80404
6	I write a diary to know how I feel about my writing.	97	1.7010	.73831
<b>Average Mean Score</b>			<b>1.90035</b>	<b>0.875102</b>

In summary, it would be fair to say that most of the students did not encourage themselves in writing activities, and they did not try to overcome frustrations so as to be free from the affective factors. Students' confidence level, and self-rewarding and diary writing practices were also reported to be at the lower level. These findings revealed students' poor psychological make-up which might directly influence the quality of their writing. The poor psychological preparation of students could also hinder them not to regularly write as it makes them lose their writing interest.

#### 4.2.7 Students' Use of Social Writing Strategies

As the average mean score of the social writing strategies (M=2.07, SD=0.88) in table 14 indicates, students did not frequently use these strategies much while they write. That means the average mean score of students' social writing strategy use indicates low implementation level which might be further explained as students' trend of working with others while writing is in a very low level of implementation.

As can be seen from the table below, students' social writing strategy use fell between a mean score of 2.43 to 1.73 all in the low writing strategy use level. Although it is low (M=2.43, SD=.86), students practice of seeking opportunities to improve their writing is better than the frequency of the other three strategy uses. Low uses of social writing strategies were also reported on students' practice of giving their writing to others to get opinions (M=2.06, SD=.83), seeking assistance when they have got linguistic problems (M=2.06, SD=.94), and comparing their writing with their classmates' (M=1.73, SD=.89).

**Table 14: The Social Writing Strategy Use of Students**

Descriptive Statistics				
No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I seek opportunities to improve my writing, such as writing frequently for other people (emails, chat, letters, and others).	97	2.4330	.86491
2	I give my writing to a friend or someone who is good at writing so that I get an opinion about my writing.	97	2.0619	.83933
3	I seek assistance when I have linguistic problems that I cannot solve or I ask another person to revise my composition	97	2.0619	.94444
4	I compare my composition with my classmates' compositions.	97	1.7320	.89577
<b>Average Mean Score</b>			<b>2.0722</b>	<b>0.886113</b>

Generally, it could be possible to conclude that students were not efficiently using the social writing strategies which can help them improve their writing through actions that involve asking questions, cooperating with others and becoming culturally aware (Oxford, 1990). In other words, it could be understood that these students did not have the trend of working with others for the betterment of their writing.

### **4.3 Most Frequently Used Writing Strategies**

This part of the analysis identified the most frequently used writing strategies among the six categories. Descriptive analyses of mean scores of each writing strategy category indicated that the compensation strategies ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) were the most frequently used writing strategies followed by memory writing strategies ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), cognitive writing strategies ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), social writing strategies ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), metacognitive writing strategies ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), and affective writing strategies ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ).

This finding indicated that students' were using the compensation and memory writing strategies better than they did with the others. However, the frequency level of these writing strategies cannot be interpreted as a high level of writing strategy use, but it can simply tell us that these two writing strategies are better used by the students compared to the other four writing strategies. The mean scores of the rest three writing strategies (social, metacognitive and affective) were found to be rarely used.

In short, from the above data, it can be deduced that the aggregated use of the six writing strategies was low. It is also important to notice that the writing strategies were not used in a high-level use in any of the strategy categories. Thus, it could be possible to say that students' poor implementation of the writing strategies could have its own part for students' poor writing performance level together with other factors which affect their writing performance.

### **4.4 Students' Writing Performance**

The aim of this part was to answer the fourth research question which asks about students' writing performance level. To do so, the following activities were done ahead of the analysis process. Primarily, as it was stated in chapter three, the test was marked out of 20% based on the rubric prepared. Then, the results were converted into 100%, and this analysis was done based on

the converted data. In the methodology chapter, it was also indicated that students' writing performance is classified as high, medium and low based on the official grading system of the Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions which is declared in the New Harmonized Curriculum (2013). Analysis of participants' performance in the WPT indicated that students' overall level in essay writing was poor. A mean of 43.86 and a mode of only 45 strongly confirmed this. The highest writing score was 90 out of 100 and the lowest score was 25 out of 100, with the majority of the students (75.3%) scoring between 25 and 45 as can be seen in table 15.

**Table 15: Score Distribution of Students in the WPT**

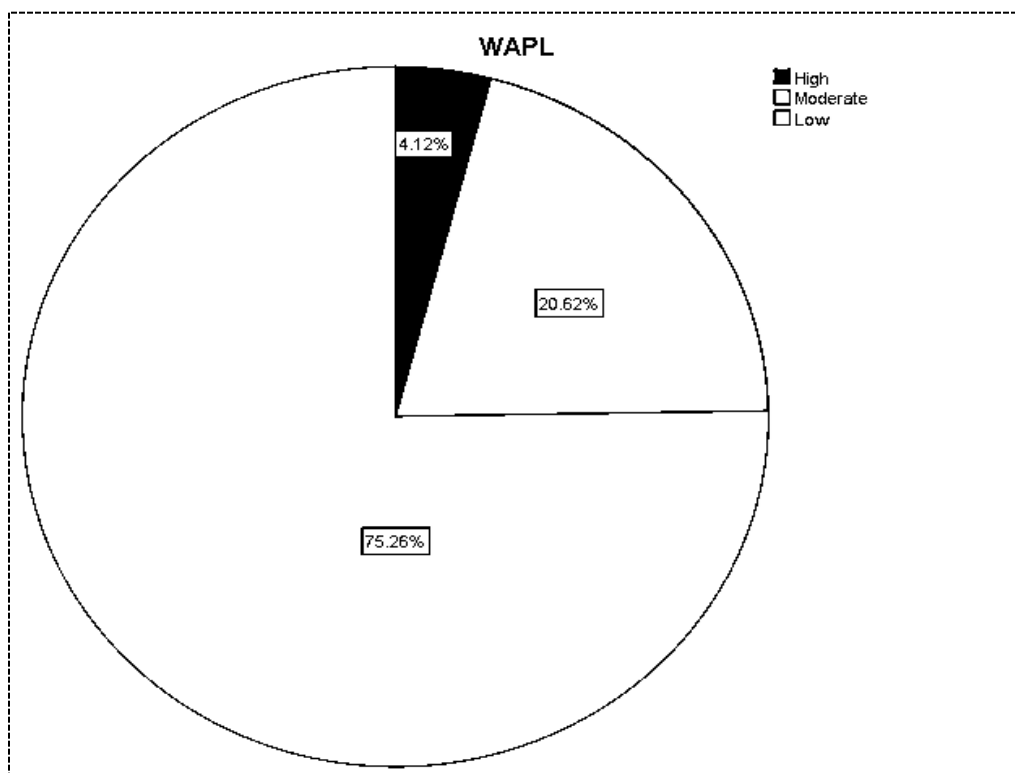
Score out of 100%	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Mode
25.00	10	10.3	<b>43.8660</b>	<b>45.00</b>
30.00	8	8.2		
35.00	12	12.4		
40.00	15	15.5		
45.00	28	28.9		
50.00	8	8.2		
55.00	3	3.1		
60.00	1	1.0		
65.00	3	3.1		
70.00	5	5.2		
75.00	3	3.1		
90.00	1	1.0		
Total	97	100.0		

As table 15 shows, more than a quarter of the students (28.9%) scored 45 out of 100, which was 5 marks behind the expected average score. Similarly, 10.3% of them scored 25 out of 100 while only 1% of them scored 90 and above out of 100. The number of students who scored in between 25 to 45 covers 75.3% of the total population. However, it was only 24.7% of the respondents who scored in between 50 to 90; of which, it was only a few (9.3%) who scored 70 and above.

These figures can show us that most of the students scored far below the expected average score which is 50 out of 100, half of the total. This can be best summarized as follows.

Figure 1 below summarizes the overall writing performance of students based on their writing performance test result. Accordingly, the majority of students (75.3%) scored a low writing performance result. However, only a few numbers of students (4.1%) scored a high writing performance result which ranges in between 75 and 100. There were few students (20.62%) that fell in the average performance level scoring 50 to 74 out of 100.

**Figure 1: Students' Writing Performance Level**



Generally, the above data can help us conclude that most students' writing performance level was very low. Most students were not able to score at least 50 out of 100; they scored below 50. If we convert the above raw marks into grades, most of the students will score letter grades below 'C' which will not allow them to pass any course in the curriculum. If we even look at the remaining students' scores who scored 50 and above, it is not much farther than 50 which is the mid-point of the total score. This could mean that the students were not in a position to produce an essay that can at least meet the minimum requirements of writing such as fluency and basic

structural and mechanical elements in writing. This is a very important finding which could show the actual level of these students' writing performance compared to the national standard assessment system.

Moreover, it was also tried to see if there was a statical difference between male and female students' writing performance, and no significant difference between the results of the two groups was found. Details are presented below.

**Table 16: Descriptive Group Statistics of Male and Female Students' Writing Performance**  
**Group Statistics**

	Sex of the students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WPT	Male	68	43.0147	12.40305	1.50409
	Female	29	45.8621	15.29875	2.84091

The above table presents the descriptive statistics of the mean score of male and female students' writing performance, and the score (M=45.86) showed that female students have performed better in writing than males (M=43.01). This would mean that the quality of female students' writing was better than that of males' although it was not found to be at a significant level of the Levene's test (p=.391).

#### **4.5 A Correlation Analysis between Variables**

In this section, a correlational analysis was made to show the relationship between variables. It aimed at answering the fifth research question. In this research, beliefs about writing and writing strategy use are the two major independent variables that were believed to affect the dependent variable (writing performance). Similarly, the six writing strategy uses (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social) were also considered as independent variables when they were separately correlated with writing performance. On the other hand, writing performance was a dependent variable in this research. Thus, to see the association between the variables, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was computed.

#### 4.5.1 The Relationship between Beliefs about Writing and Writing Performance

Hypothetically, it is assumed that beliefs about writing and writing performance have some positive relationship (Dawit, 2008; Millis, et al., 2007; Anteneh, 2004; Hampton & Mason, 2003; Pajares, 2003 & 1994; Zimmerman and Bandura, 1994). The current study has also shown a positive relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance. The following table shows the statistical value of this relationship.

**Table 17: The correlation between students’ beliefs about writing and their writing performance**

**Correlations**

		Beliefs About Writing	Writing Performance T
Beliefs about Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.763
	N	97	97
Writing Performance	Pearson Correlation	.031	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.763	
	N	97	97

Table 17 above presented the result of the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance using Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient showed a positive relationship ( $r=.031$ ) between beliefs about writing and writing performance. However, the Pearson’s correlation between the two variables was not found significant at  $p<0.05$  as the result exceeds the cut-off.

Therefore, we can say that there was a linear relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance, but this relationship is weak. This may be further interpreted as when students’ beliefs about writing increase, their writing performance level will also increase at a very low level.

In addition to this, the coefficient of determination (denoted by  $R^2$ ) was also analyzed to interpret the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (Writing Performance) that is predictable from the independent variable (Beliefs about writing). Accordingly, the coefficient of determination was found to be .001. This indicates that it was only about 0.1% of the variance in

students' writing performance that can be attributed to the beliefs students hold about writing. The rest (99.9%) might be related to other factors which might affect students' writing performance. Therefore, it could be simple to conclude that beliefs about writing seem to take an insignificant proportion on determining students' writing performance.

#### 4.5.2 The Relationship between Writing Strategy Use and Writing Performance

Again, a similar statistical technique, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, was applied to find out the relationship between students' writing strategy use and their writing performance. Accordingly, the results revealed that students' writing strategy use and writing performance were correlated. Following is a tabular presentation showing the direction and strength of the relationship between the aforementioned variables.

**Table 18: The Correlation between Students' Overall Writing Strategy Use and Writing Performance**

##### Correlations

		Overall Writing Strategy Use	Writing Performance
Overall Writing Strategy Use	Pearson Correlation	1	.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.653
	N	97	97
Writing Performance	Pearson Correlation	.046	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.653	
	N	97	97

Table 18 above portrays the correlation between the students' self-reported writing strategy use and their writing performance. The table shows that the r-value is .046. The p-value is .653, and the correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This indicates that there was a weak linear relationship between students' writing strategy use and their writing performance. That is, as the students' writing strategy use increases, their writing performance increases in a very low level as their relationship was found to be weaker.

The coefficient of determination computed was .002, which indicates that the students' writing strategy use predicts their writing performance at only 0.2 %. This implies that 0.2% of the

variance in students' writing performance can be attributed to the students' ability to use writing strategies while writing. The remaining 99.8% could be associated with other factors. Based on this data, it can be said that writing strategy is one of perhaps the least determinant factors which contribute to students' writing performance though it better determines writing performance compared to beliefs about writing.

#### 4.5.3 The Relationship between Belief about Writing and Writing Strategy Use

In this part, an attempt was made to see if there was a relationship between students' beliefs about writing and their self-reported writing strategy use. This correlation was done between the two independent variables since the Pearson product-moment correlation does not take into consideration whether a variable has been classified as a dependent or independent variable. It treats all variables equally. But, the coefficient of determination was not calculated since it requires the two variables to be dependent and independent.

Thus, the result of the Pearson correlation shows that students' beliefs about writing have a positive linear relationship with their writing strategy use. The data showing direction and strength of the relationship between the aforementioned variables is presented in the following table followed by the analysis and interpretation.

**Table 19: The Correlation between Students' Beliefs about Writing and their Writing Strategy Use**

#### Correlations

		Belief about Writing	Overall Writing Strategy Use
Belief about Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.187
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.067
	N	97	97
Overall Writing Strategy Use	Pearson Correlation	.187	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	
	N	97	97

Table 19 above showed that there exists a positive relationship between students' beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use. This, relationship, however, was weaker than the two relationships found between beliefs about writing and writing performance, and writing strategy

use and writing performance. The Pearson's correlation between students' beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use ( $r=0.187$ ) was not found significant at  $p<0.05$ , which implies the result is acceptable with a very limited probability of error. In short, it might be concluded that there is a linear relationship between students' beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use though it is not a strong relationship.

#### 4.5.4 The Relationship between Writing Performance and the Six Writing Strategy Uses

In addition to correlating the two independent variables (beliefs about writing and students' writing strategy use) with the dependent variable (writing performance), it was tried to independently see the association for the six writing strategy uses with writing performance. The results indicated that there were insignificant negative and positive associations between the six writing strategy uses and writing performance. The following paragraph fleetingly discusses the detail results.

**Table 20: The Correlation between Writing Performance and the Six Writing Strategy Uses**

No	Correlations	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
1	Memory Writing Strategy Use and WP	-.096	.351	97
2	Cognitive Writing Strategy Use and WP	-.021	.838	97
3	Compensation Writing Strategy Use and WP	.015	.884	97
4	Metacognitive Writing Strategy Use and WP	.021	.837	97
5	Affective Writing Strategy Use and WP	.150	.142	97
6	Social Writing Strategy Use and WP	.120	.241	97

As Table 20 summarizes, the relationship between students' writing strategy use under each category and their writing performance was computed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient shows a relatively better positive relationship ( $r=.150$  and  $r=.120$ ) between students' affective and social writing strategy uses and writing performance, respectively. Although these two relationships were better than the rest, the correlation remains insignificant. There was also a weak positive linear relationship ( $r=.021$  and  $.015$ ) between students' metacognitive and compensation writing strategy uses and writing performance, respectively. In other words, it was to mean that when students' use of the above

four writing strategies (affective, social, metacognitive and compensation) increases, students' writing performance will also increase although not significantly.

On the other hand, a negative linear relationship ( $r = -.021$  and  $r = -.096$ ) was shown between students' cognitive and memory writing strategy uses and writing performance. This relationship was not found to be significant. Therefore, we can construe this data as when students' cognitive and memory writing strategy use increases, their writing performance level will decrease although not at a significant level. This is logically not acceptable.

Generally, it could be deduced that students' use of the six writing strategies had no strong relationship with their writing performance. However, a positive linear relationship was found between four of the writing strategy uses (affective, social, metacognitive and compensation) and writing performance, and a negative relationship was also seen between the use of two of the writing strategies (memory and cognitive) and writing performance. This result could be used to strengthen the various findings that appreciate the existence of either positive or negative relationship between writing strategy use and writing performance (Chien, 2012; Harris et al., 2008; Hu and Chen, 2007; Victori, 1999).

#### **4.6 Regression Analyses of the Influence of Independent Variables on Writing Performance**

Examining the degree of influence of the two independent variables (beliefs about writing and writing strategy use) and each kind of writing strategy use on writing performance was one of the basic research questions in this study. Thus, to calculate the effect of these independent variables on students' writing performance, multiple regressions were computed. The analysis and interpretation of the results are presented as follows.

##### **4.6.1 Regression Analyses of the Influence of Belief about Writing and Writing Strategy Use on Students' Writing Performance**

In the previous sections, descriptive and correlational analyses were made to show students' beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use level and the association between these variables. In this section, a regression analysis was made to see the effect size that beliefs about writing and

writing strategy use have on students' writing performance both independently and collectively. The following two tables can show us the output of the regression followed by the interpretation.

**Table 21: Model Summary of Beliefs about Writing and Writing Strategy Use**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.051 <sup>a</sup>	.003	-.019	13.44068

a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall Writing strategy Use, Beliefs about Writing

As it is presented in table 21 above, the correlation between the predictors and writing performance (the predicted) model summary is .051. Its adjusted value (-.019) indicated that the variance in writing performance can be negatively predicted from the two variables: beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. This is an overall measure of the strength of the association though it does not show the magnitude to which the independent variables predict the dependent variable. The predictive value of the two independent variables is briefly presented and interpreted in the following table followed by its descriptions.

**Table 22: Parameter Estimates of two Independent Variables**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	35.443	20.837			
1	Beliefs about Writing	1.089	5.273	.022	.207	.837
	Overall Writing Strategy Use	.040	.102	.041	.391	.697

a. Dependent Variable: Writing Performance Test

Table 22 above presents the regression coefficients of the two independent variables (the predictors) having a non-significant contribution to the dependent variable (writing

performance). A brief discussion about the effect of the two predictors on writing performance is presented below.

As can be seen in table 22, beliefs about writing were found to have an insignificant contribution to students' writing performance. The standardized coefficient shows a beta value ( $\beta$ ) of .022 which indicated that a change of one standard deviation in beliefs about writing will result in a change of .022 standard deviation in the writing performance. Therefore, it can be said that the impact of beliefs about writing on students' writing performance was not significant ( $t = .207$ ,  $p = .837$ ). Nonetheless, based on the sign of the coefficient, it can be said that beliefs about writing have a positive contribution to students' writing performance though too little.

Similarly, as can be observed from the same table (table 22), students' overall writing strategy use had no significant impact on students' writing performance ( $t = .391$ ,  $p = .697$ ). This conclusion is drawn from the statistical evidence in table 22. The standardized coefficient shows a beta value ( $\beta$ ) of .041 which indicates that a change of one standard deviation in writing strategy use will result in a change of .041 standard deviations in the writing performance.

Generally, it could be possible to conclude that the two predictors (beliefs about writing and writing strategy use) had non-significant contributions to students' writing performance. In both cases, it was observed that the predictors had positive contributions to writing performance though not significantly. On the other hand, though not found significantly, writing strategy use was found to better predict writing performance. Therefore, based on these findings, it could be concluded that improving students' writing performance needs a due consideration of the various factors that might contribute to the poor performance of students writing other than beliefs about writing and writing strategy use.

#### **4.6.2 Regression Analysis of the Influence of the Six Writing Strategies Use on Students' Writing Performance**

In this section, a regression was done to see the effect of the six writing strategies use on students' writing performance. Hence, the general model summary description and predictive

size of the six writing strategies is clearly discussed in tables 23 and 24 followed by the interpretation.

**Table 23: Model Summary of the Six Writing Strategies**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.232 <sup>a</sup>	.054	-.009	13.37803

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social strategy, Compensation strategy, Metacognitive strategy, Memory strategy, Cognitive strategy, Affective strategy

Table 23 above demonstrates the correlation between the predictors (the six kinds of writing strategy uses) and writing performance (the predicted). The model summary was .054, and its adjusted value was -.009 which indicates the variance in writing performance can be negatively predicted from the six writing strategies use. The detail discussion on the predictive value of these variables is demonstrated in the following paragraph and then is interpreted in the subsequent paragraphs.

**Table 24: Parameter Estimates of the Six Writing Strategies Use**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	47.005	11.995		3.919	.000
	Memory Strategy Use	-.613	.554	-.122	-1.108	.271
	Cognitive Strategy Use	-.390	.419	-.116	-.930	.355
	Compensation Strategy Use	.147	.395	.040	.371	.711
	Metacognitive Strategy Use	-.046	.293	-.020	-.158	.875
	Affective Strategy Use	.689	.539	.174	1.277	.205
	Social Strategy Use	.613	.675	.113	.908	.366

a. Dependent Variable: Writing Performance

Table 24 above indicates both positive and negative, but insignificant, contributions of the six writing strategies on students' writing performance. The standardized coefficient of the three

writing strategies use (affective, social and compensation) indicated that they have positive ( $\beta = .174, .113$  and  $.040$ , respectively) contributions to the improvement of writing performance. That means, as students frequently use these three writing strategies, their writing performance will also be positively influenced. However, the contribution of the three writing strategies (affective, social and compensation) was not found to be statistically significant ( $t = .908, p = .366; t = 1.277, p = .205; t = .371, p = .711$ , respectively).

On the other hand, the standardized coefficient of the three writing strategies use (memory, cognitive and metacognitive) in table 24 indicated that these writing strategies could negatively ( $\beta = -.122, \text{contr}-.116$  and  $.040$ ) contribute to the enhancement of students' writing performance. This means that, students' writing performance level decreases as their use of these writing strategies increases. The negative contributions of the three writing strategies (memory, cognitive and metacognitive) were, however, not found to be significant ( $t = -1.108, p = .271; t = -.930, p = .355; t = -.158, p = .875$ , respectively).

In conclusion, it could be deduced that affective writing strategies use was found to best predict writing performance compared to the other five writing strategies though its contribution was non-significant. This can be further interpreted as the more students use strategies under the affective writing strategy, such as encouraging and rewarding themselves while writing to overcome some of the writing difficulties, the better their writing performance will be. Therefore, avoiding distractive feelings and building confidence might lead students towards producing a better writing. In addition, social writing strategy use was also found to be the second best predictor of writing performance compared to the rest four writing strategies use. This may precisely mean that the more students assist each other, the better their writing performance will be. In other words, students' writing performance will improve as they get the chance to work with their friends. The rest four writing strategies are either least predictors or are deleterious contributors to writing performance.

#### **4.7 Data from Students' Interview**

The data obtained through interview was analyzed using the Miles & Huberman's (1994) model of qualitative data analysis. After categorizing the codes into major themes and sub-themes, the

analysis was thematically done under four major themes and ten sub-themes. Having done this, the researcher explained the responses given under each theme along with three of the research questions (research question 1, 2 and 6) presented in this study.

As it is presented in the table below, the seven themes under the first major theme provided data which was used to triangulate the data obtained through the belief inventory questionnaire. So, it aimed at answering the first research question. The data under this major theme also aimed at identifying the reasons for students' existing beliefs about writing. The analysis and interpretation sections of each category are independently treated followed by the reasons students stated for their existing beliefs about writing to keep the cohesion of the report.

The themes under the second major category tend to supplement the findings revealed through the inventory of the writing strategies in an attempt to identify the most frequently used writing strategies and the reasons behind using them frequently. The second section also attempted to partially answer the last research question as it tries to identify the reasons for students' poor writing strategy use in general.

The third theme, which is one of the two major issues aimed to be answered under the last research question, is about the major reasons for students' poor writing performance. Finally, supplementary data were organized under the last category on solutions for students' poor writing performance.

**Table 25: Categorizing the Main Themes and Sub-Themes**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Major Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	
1.	Students' beliefs about writing	A	The difficulty nature of writing
		B	Setting goal
		C	Approaches to writing
		D	Students' view about feedback on writing
		E	Level of writing students give for a comment
		F	Aspect of writing students give more emphasis
		G	Reasons for students' existing beliefs about writing
2.	Students' understanding and use of	A	Students' understanding of the writing

	the writing strategies		strategies
		B	The most frequently used writing strategies by students
		C	Factors contributing to students' poor understanding and use of the writing strategies
3.	Major reasons for students' poor writing performance		-
4.	Solutions forwarded on improving students' writing performance		-

#### **4.7.1 Students' Beliefs about Writing and Reasons behind their Beliefs**

##### **4.7.1.1 Why do Students Perceive Writing Skill Difficult?**

Most of the interview questions were prepared based on the results obtained through the questionnaires and the writing performance test. Accordingly, the interview began by asking students why they perceived writing skill as the most difficult skill than the other three language skills, and in their responses, they mentioned several reasons related to its nature and their poor writing skill background. For example, Student A mentioned that writing skill is difficult since there are many rules to be considered while writing and that it requires the use of various writing strategies which he found challenging to implement. Similarly, Student B said that writing has several things to be considered and that it needs much time and effort than the remaining language skills. Similar issues were raised by the rest three students. Student C said that she perceives writing skill difficult because she had not properly learned it in her previous classes as the result of her English teachers' reluctance to teach the skill properly. Furthermore, the remaining two respondents mentioned the demanding nature of writing as a major reason for viewing writing as a difficult skill.

From the above discussion, one can understand that students conceive writing as a painful and challenging language skill. They assume producing a good writing as a challenging process since it demands considering various things: grammar, vocabulary, organization, content, and mechanics aspects of writing. In relation to this, Gilmore (2009) stated that writing in the mother tongue is painful for many students, but when it comes to writing in the second language, the

students' hardship and pain are worsened. However, although writing skill is considered to be challenging by its nature, the researcher argues that students' belief about the difficult nature of writing is exaggerated as he believes that writing skill can be improved through practice despite its complex nature.

#### **4.7.1.2 Students' Tendency of Setting Goals for their Writing**

In the second interview question, students were asked about their tendency of setting goals for their writing, and all of them said that they did not have the trend of setting goals for their writing although they believe it is helpful. In addition to the researcher's observation during the writing performance test and from the rough papers collected during the test, students confirmed that they did not put objectives to their writing. Following their confirmation, they were asked the reasons for not setting goals to their writing, and three of the respondents mentioned their lack of the habit of setting goals to their writing. On the other hand, the remaining three said that they do not set goals for their writing because they do not think that it brings change.

From the above discussion, it could be possible to say that students have little or confusing understanding about setting goals to their writing. They did not seem to know how to set objectives to their writing and its importance to the advancement of their writing although they positively reacted about it on the belief inventory questionnaire. These mismatches could happen as a result of these students' unclear position on the importance of setting goals for their writing as a means of improving their writing skill.

#### **4.7.1.3 Students' Beliefs about and Rationales for their use of the Approach to Writing**

In their response to the questionnaire part, most of the students reported that the process approach to writing is better than the other approaches, especially the product approach to writing. However, after looking at students' writing practice from the rough papers they used during the essay examination and the researcher's observation during the administration of the essay writing test, it was understood that they were not implementing the process approach to writing; rather, most of them were observed writing using the product approach.

Most of the respondents seem to be theoretically familiar with the process approach to learning writing than the remaining approaches. Most of them confirmed that passing through the

different stages of writing is essential to produce an effective writing. Although they perceived writing this way, their actual writing practice was not found consistent with their classroom practices. They forwarded several reasons for the mismatches between their belief and practice.

Almost all of the respondents mentioned their lack of experience as a major reason for not appropriately implementing the process approach to writing. Students A and F additionally stated that their teachers did not motivate them to follow the process approach to writing other than teaching the principles orally. Student F further explains this and the other reasons as follows:

*The process oriented approach that includes brainstorming, planning ideas, drafting, rewriting, and editing is a bit complex. You see, while writing, these actions are time consuming plus they need more effort than what is needed in the product approach. Thus, when I write, for example, I don't give attention to all the processes, except connecting the topic to my prior knowledge and writing the final copy without drafting or editing it.*

As can be understood from the above extract, students consider the process approach to writing more complex. They also consider it as a time-consuming task. Similarly, two of the interviewees stated that their lack of patience to consider all the stages under the process approach to writing is one of the reasons for the mismatches between their belief and practice. Regarding this, Student B further explained that he does not write following the processes of writing though he theoretically believes they are important. He mentioned his lack of patience to pass through the processes as a reason for the mismatch between his belief and practice.

To sum up, students mentioned various reasons for the mismatches between their positive beliefs about the use of the process approach to writing and their poor practice of the approach. They identified their lack of experience, the demanding nature of writing, teachers' limitation to motivate their students to use the approach, and students' lack of patience to follow the processes as the major reasons for the mismatches. The above analysis can help us conclude that there is a mismatch between students' belief about the approaches to learning writing and their actual use. They believe that the process approach to writing is useful, but they do not implement it considering it as a time-consuming task. This may lead one towards concluding that students' belief about the process approach to writing is not in a clear position.

#### **4.7.1.4 Students' Beliefs about the Importance of Feedback to their Writing**

One of the sub-themes under the first major theme was about the belief students have regarding the importance of feedback to their writing and reasons for their belief. Regarding this, most of them indicated that comments from others (teachers and students) are important for the improvement of their writing. However, two of the respondents (Students A and F) said they accept others' comment selectively. For example, student F argues that comments from others are important if they are only positive comments. Thus, he suggested judging others comments before considering them.

As one can realize from the above argument, the respondent wants to get positive or constructive comments about his writing than getting negative ones. This could be seen as a big divergence from the students' side regarding their beliefs about feedback provision in writing. This could also be a good reflection of students' frustration on getting and giving comments on written works. If they hate to receive negative comments from others, the other way round could also be true-they may not be open to provide negative comments on others' written work, too.

Following students' positive, but contradicting outlook towards feedback provision in writing, they were asked about the level of their written work they give to their teacher or classmates for comments. In response to this, five of the respondents reported their limited experiences in giving and getting comments to or from their friends. They stated that they usually give the final version of their written work to their teachers since they believe that the final version of their writing helps them clearly identify their writing gaps. Here, Student A further stated that he gives the final version of his writing to his teacher to get comments which may help him see areas of deficiency in his writing.

The above data strengthens students' views about the level of their writing they give for comments and the reasons behind that. They strongly suggested that the final level of their writing should be given so that gaps can be clearly identified in the final part of their writing. The respondents also said that they give the final version of their written work to their teachers since teachers collect writing activities for evaluation purpose than giving comments that can help students to improve their writing skill.

Unlike others, one of the respondents (Student D) showed his positive position towards receiving comments from both teachers and peers, and he said that he gives the draft part of his writing for students and teachers to get the chance to correct his mistakes. He also mentioned that he gives the final draft for teachers if they need it for evaluation purpose.

From the above responses, it can be understood that students understanding about the importance of feedback to their writing is in a wrong position due to their teachers' trend of assessment. Teachers did not seem to eventually collect written works to provide students with comments which might help them improve their writing. Rather, teachers seem to focus on collecting students' writing as part of the assessment which might ultimately affect the writing instruction tradition.

#### **4.7.1.5 Students' Beliefs about the Aspect of Writing they focus on**

In this part of the interview, students were asked about the area of their writing to which they give more emphasis while they write, and all of them mentioned grammar to be their primary focus when writing. From the six respondents, four of them exclusively mentioned grammar as their only area of focus of writing. However, two of the respondents (Students A and B) indicated mechanics as another area of their emphasis.

In their responses to the reasons why they gave more attention to the grammar and mechanics aspects of writing than other aspects such as message and organization, student F further argues:

*Most of the time, as an English language student, I care for my grammar and the accuracy of my writing. The message or the content is secondary for me as a language student. I am more concerned about the grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization of my writing.*

When we scrutinize the above extract with some details, the respondent had the belief that grammar and mechanics aspects should get more attention while writing than even the content of the writing. He argues that the main focus of an English language student during writing should not be the content of the language; he rather suggested grammar and mechanics get priority. This student showed his due concern about the accuracy of his writing than the message to be transmitted.

Similarly, Student E said that she gives special emphasis to grammar since she believes that grammatical problems can distort the message she intended to convey. This view strengthens the idea of giving primary attention to the structural aspects of writing than the message. In relation to this, Student D stated that a given writing transmits its intended message only if the grammar is correct.

Generally, the above views of the respondents can be summarized as they have the supposition of giving more emphasis to the grammatical aspects of their writing than other aspects. Some of them believe that the mechanics aspects of writing should also be emphasized. They believe that if the grammatical aspect of their writing is poor, the message they wanted to transmit will also be distorted. Thus, they usually worry more about the grammar than the content of their writing. This belief of students about giving more emphasis to grammar stands against the communicative approach to language learning which focuses on the ability to communicate the message, instead of focusing on grammatical correctness. Their belief is consistent with the notion of the product approach to writing which highlights form and syntax and the emphasis was on rhetorical drills than the content of writing (Silva, 1990).

#### **4.7.2 Students' Beliefs about and Use of Writing Strategies**

##### **4.7.2.1 Students' Belief about their Awareness of the Writing Strategies**

The respondents were asked to explain about their general understanding of the writing strategies. Three of the respondents (Students A, B and F) reported that they have little understanding of the writing strategies which they informally and indirectly attained from their previous writing experiences and other language learning environments. One of the three respondents (Student A), for example, stated that his understanding of the writing strategies was not that much apparent. He also indicated that he did not even properly learn these strategies in the writing courses he took.

However, two of the respondents (Students E and D) said that they have knowledge of the writing strategies though they question their use of these strategies. For example, Student E stated that he knew about the writing strategies as he had learned them before, but he said that

did not effectively use them. These students did not even indicate that they learned the writing strategies in the writing courses they took at university.

On the other hand, student C said that the writing strategies are useful, but she was not in a position to express her understanding of what these strategies are. This student seemed to be confused about the writing strategies as she was not familiar with them.

Six of the respondents who participated in the interview indicated three different positions on their understanding about writing strategies: three of them said they have a little understanding, two of them said they had a good understanding, and one of them had a neutral position. As a reason for their poor understanding and neutral position about the writing strategies, students indicated the marginalization of the writing strategies from the writing courses. It was also checked whether the writing strategies are included in the Harmonized Curriculum of English Language and Literature, and it was confirmed that the writing strategies are not incorporated in the writing courses. Therefore, it could be possible to conclude that students' awareness of the writing strategies has been affected since they were not formally given the chance to learn them as the strategies were not included in the curriculum.

#### **4.7.2.2 Students' Responses on their Most Frequently Used Writing Strategies**

After dealing with students' understanding of the writing strategies in general, respondents were also asked about the writing strategies they most frequently used. From the responses of the first interviewee, the researcher came to realize that most of the students may have a limited understanding of the writing strategies. Thus, copies of the writing strategy questionnaire were given to the respondents to let them identify the writing strategies they frequently use. In addition to this, the interviewer had also the role of guiding them to correctly categorize the lists under each writing strategy during the interview.

As students had the chance to choose more than one writing strategies they frequently used, each of them listed two writing strategies. Accordingly, they said they frequently used the compensation (4), metacognitive (3), memory (2), cognitive (2) and affective (1) writing strategies in their descending order. They were also asked why they frequently used the said writing strategies, and most of them cited their previous learning experience as a major reason

for their frequent use of these writing strategies. For example, Student A reflected that he frequently uses the metacognitive and compensation writing strategies out of the six writing strategies. He also added that he used these strategies because they involve the use of the process approach to writing and use of dictionaries and synonyms of words when he writes as he was using these strategies in his previous writing experience. He also indicated that his use of these strategies was not comprehensive.

When we look into the above reaction carefully, we notice that the respondent uses the two writing strategies as he has been using these writing strategies in his writing experience and even in his academic writing tasks. This is because of the fact that most of the writing activities in students' previous and current writing lessons encourage them to pass through some of the stages of the process approach to writing, not all the stages. They also mentioned that they used the compensation writing strategies since most of the time they use dictionaries and look for an alternative word so as to resolve their vocabulary deficiency.

Similarly, one of the respondents (Student B) said that he uses the compensation and memory writing strategies because he is familiar with these writing strategies. He also stated that he less frequently used the affective writing strategy as he lacks a self-motivation to write.

Like the previous data, this data also indicates that the frequency of using the writing strategies depends on students' previous writing experience. On the contrary, in her attempt to indicate that the affective writing strategies are her most frequently used writing strategies, Student C said that she is confident about her writing ability. This is one of the strategies of the affective writing strategies. She also indicated that she sometimes plans her writing; this means that she sometimes uses the metacognitive writing strategies though she was not able to name the writing strategies.

Similarly, the respondents mentioned that they use the memory and cognitive writing strategies because these strategies are familiar to them. For example, to justify why she used the compensation and cognitive writing strategies, student E said that she used the compensation writing strategies since she had the habit of using dictionary and synonyms of words while

writing, and the metacognitive writing strategy since she sometimes writes using the stages of writing.

In general, based on the above data, it could be possible to conclude that the compensation and metacognitive writing strategies are the two most frequently used writing strategies by the respondents. The students put their writing experience and familiarity with the strategies as the main reasons for frequently using the said strategies. This result implies that students' use of the writing strategies can be improved as the writing strategies are included in the writing activities they practice at different levels of their educational journey including the tertiary level. This result seems to be consistent with the findings from the inventory of the writing strategy use questionnaire. In both cases, the compensation writing strategy is reported as the most frequently used one. This triangulation would have a great contribution to the reliability of the findings. However, the data showed a disparity regarding the use of the metacognitive writing strategy. It was identified as the second most frequently used writing strategies in the interview data while the data from the questionnaire identified it as the second less frequently used strategy. This disparity might have happened because of students' lack of clear understanding of the writing strategies. Also, there would be a possibility of giving diverging responses for same questions when one's understanding about a certain concept is not clear or at a superficial level.

#### **4.7.2.3 Factors for Students' Poor Writing Strategies Use**

One of the sub-themes under the second major theme in the interview data focuses on factors that affect students' writing strategies use. This part of the analysis partially answers the last research question which emphasized on identifying the major factors that affect students' writing strategy use and writing performance. Thus, this section discusses the factors affecting students' writing strategy use.

The respondents mentioned various factors for their poor implementation of the writing strategies that are related to students, teachers, writing instruction, and curriculum. In relation to this, Student A, for example, stated students' psychological problems and his teachers' lack of awareness about writing strategies as major factors for his limited use of the writing strategies. He explicitly indicated that students' lack of interest towards knowing and using the writing strategies, their negative attitude towards English Language, in general, and writing in particular,

teachers' lack of awareness about the writing strategies, and the writing courses' gap in incorporating writing strategies in their syllabus as the major factors for his poor use of the writing strategies.

Students did not seem to exhaust their efforts in trying to know and use the different kinds of writing strategies which are quite essential in making their writing better. This is actually against the nature of writing which requires using different strategies in the process of producing semantically effective and structurally efficient writing. Similarly, students' negative attitude towards the English language in general and the writing skill, in particular, might gradually cause lack of self-motivation towards involving themselves in writing activities. This is one of the essential findings as it is difficult to talk about using writing strategies in the absence of a positive outlook towards these strategies. Furthermore, Student A stated that teachers' awareness about the writing strategies is poor. He also questioned teachers' capacity to teach writing courses in general. He further criticized the writing courses in the department for not including the writing strategies in their syllabuses. Thus, there are several factors hindering students' use of the writing strategies though they had positive beliefs about the use of these strategies while writing.

Students B and C have also forwarded similar factors for their poor understanding and use of the writing strategies. They mentioned factors such as the exclusion of the writing strategies from the writing courses, teachers' inability of teaching writing and students' motivational problems as the major reasons for their poor understanding and inefficient use of the writing strategies while writing.

Moreover, the remaining 3 respondents (Students D, E, and F) have similar views like the previous respondents, except their inclusion of poor experience in using writing strategy as one of the factors. They blamed their previous education system for not giving them the chance to be familiar with the writing strategies; as a result, they confirmed that their understanding and use of writing strategies became poor.

From the above discussion, it could be possible to conclude that students' understanding and use of the writing strategies is affected by several factors related to students' attitude, motivation and

interest towards using the writing strategies. Students also mentioned the incomprehensive nature of educational materials such as the curriculum and syllabuses, and teachers' lack of competency in teaching writing courses as major factors contributing to their poor writing strategy use. These are actually serious factors which could affect not only the use of their writing strategies but also the overall writing performance of students. Therefore, it is possible to say that students were not using the writing strategies for, basically, they did not have the interest of learning English Language, in general and writing strategies, in particular; for they did not have the right experience which might have led them towards knowing and using the writing strategies, and for the courses syllabuses did not include the writing strategies as part of the writing courses. It could then be sensible to say that students' are not using the writing strategies because of their knowledge gap triggered by psychological and pedagogical factors.

#### **4.7.3 Major Reasons for Students' Poor Writing Performance**

As it was discussed in section 4.4 of the analysis, the majority of the students (75.3%) scored a low writing performance result. Based on this result, students were asked about the reasons for their poor writing performance. Therefore, the key purpose of collecting data through the interview conducted with six students was to get answers to research question number 6 which reads: *'What are the factors that affect students' writing strategy use and writing performance?* As the issue of identifying the major factors for students' poor writing strategy use was discussed above, this part of the analysis focuses on identifying the major factors for students' poor writing performance.

In this part of the analysis, students stated various factors as major reasons for their poor writing performance. One of the major findings in this part is that students are assigned to the English department without their interest when the courses in the department require someone with good English language and interpersonal skills. One of the respondents (Student B) explained that he joined the English Department out of his interest. He also reminded that English was his fifth choice. As a result, he had a negative attitude towards learning English, and he believes that it is difficult to learn English. He further explained that his academic achievement has been affected as a result of joining the English department without his interest. He said that he is not performing well at this level by simply reading materials as learning the English language needs

a good language background. Furthermore, he also criticized the way writing courses are presented in the teaching materials.

As can be understood from the above data, the student is attending his education in this department since he had no option. As a result, it could be difficult to expect this student to have a good English language command, in general, and writing performance, in particular. This is what clearly reflected in the response of this student. He mentioned that his loss of interest and poor academic performance are the results of his arbitrary assignment to the department. He also said that the writing courses are not taught in their modest way. He believes that the approaches through which writing courses are presented should be revised in a way they can be learned by the students with interest.

Similarly, student C listed various factors such as the complex nature of writing, students' poor writing skills background, students' lack of interest, poor writing instruction, and exclusion of the writing strategies from the writing courses as the main causes for students' poor writing performance. She further magnifies the effect of the difficult nature of writing and poor writing skill background on her writing performance. It could be understood from this data that the respondent is frustrated with writing as she is considering it as an unachievable skill overstating the issues to be considered in one's writing. Students' frustration with writing could gradually be one of the major causes of students' negative attitude towards writing. It might also lead students to lose their interest towards learning writing. Factors such as students' poor writing instruction experience and their limited chance of learning the writing strategies in the writing courses are mentioned as the major sources for students' poor writing performance.

A similar view was also forwarded by student A. He stated several factors which can be categorized under the linguistics, social and psychology backgrounds as the major causes for students' poor writing performance. He believes that students are not giving the necessary attention to writing skill although they believe that this skill is essential in the academic environment. The respondent was also different in his view that writing should be taught collaboratively. He believes that students' writing performance is becoming low since teachers do not encourage their students to work in groups during writing lessons. The remaining two respondents forwarded similar factors for their poor writing performance.

In short, students mentioned a number of factors for their poor writing performance. These factors can be put into three major categories: psychological, pedagogical and background related factors. Under the psychological factors, students reported their lack of interest and motivation on writing skill and their negative attitude towards writing as the major factors for their poor writing performance. Under the pedagogical factors, they mentioned the ineffectiveness of the writing instruction, absence of discussions about the writing strategies in the writing courses, inappropriate use of the approaches to writing and students' lack of regular writing practice as the major factors, for their poor writing performance. With regard to the background related factors, they identified their poor writing experience a major factor for their problems in writing.

#### **4.7.4 Solutions Suggested for Students' Poor Writing Performance**

In the last section of the interview, the respondents were asked to recommend solutions for their poor writing performance. Consequently, they forwarded a range of solutions for the problems they listed in the previous sections. The suggestions mainly focused on things to be considered by the teachers, students and curriculum designers as solutions for the problems identified. The suggestions by two of the respondents (Students A and B) stressed on working towards improving students' attitude towards English language, in general, and writing skill, in particular. They also recommended that the way writing skill is taught and the criteria for admitting students to the English Department need to be revised. They also suggested that students should be aware that writing skill can be improved through a regular practice.

The other two respondents suggested several points to be considered from the process of curriculum preparation to the lesson delivery stage. One of the respondents, Student C, suggested that due actions should be taken from the curriculum preparation level to the actual classroom practice. She advised the curricula to be comprehensively designed so as to fill the gaps in it. She further recommended that the abhorrence or fear students have about writing should be solved or abolished through several activities which could improve students' attitude towards writing. She also proposed regular writing practice as part of a solution for students' poor writing performance. Similarly, Student D forwarded similar views on solutions for students' poor

writing performance. Additionally, he believes that a culture of working together on writing activities should be developed as a means of improving students' writing skill.

Furthermore, respondents suggested other solutions which are generally related to the students, teachers, curriculum, and writing pedagogy. Student F, for example, suggests:

*I think it should primarily be worked on the attitude of the students towards English in general, and the writing skill in particular. Secondly, the pedagogical assumptions that exist in the current language education should be modernized. Teachers should also motivate students to know and use alternative approaches to teaching writing and use writing strategies.*

As it is indicated in the above extract, the respondent raised some of the issues to be emphasized in response to students' poor writing performance. He suggested that the issue of students' attitude towards learning English language, in general, and writing, in particular should be worked out as a preliminary activity towards a solution. He also recommended the existing language education system to be revised so that it meets the needs of students. He also recommended teachers to motivate students to use the approaches to language learning and properly use the writing strategies.

Generally, students suggested a range of solutions to improve their poor writing performance. They recommended actions to be taken on students' attitude, teachers' method of teaching writing, institutions' criteria of admitting students to the English Department and their system of designing the curriculum. Therefore, it could be possible to understand that holistic measures should be taken to solve the problems identified by the students as reasons for their poor writing performance.

#### **4.8 Discussion**

This part discusses the data obtained through the different tools which were used in this study for two basic reasons. Primarily, it was needed to bring together the data gained through different tools of the same theme for the sake of triangulation. In relation to this, the data gained through the three tools (Beliefs Inventory Questionnaire, Inventory of the Writing Strategy Use and Writing Performance Test) were consolidated with the data onto the interview to draw meaning

out of it. After triangulating and drawing meaning, an attempt was made to relate the major findings of the study with the literature. This helped to see the convergence or divergence of the findings in this study with the existing literature.

#### **4.8.1 Discussion of Students' Beliefs about Writing**

One of the major findings in this research was that students have positive beliefs about the different aspects of writing which could be taken as indicators of students' overall positive belief about writing. They were optimistic, although not practically supported, about four of the five elements of writing: the importance and nature of writing, the approaches to writing, methods and procedures to be used while writing, and the feedback provision system in writing which were included in the beliefs inventory questionnaire. This part focused on summarizing one of the major findings which aimed at answering the first research question.

Students believed that writing skill is very important to their current and future education, and they were also optimistic about its importance. However, they still think that writing skill is a difficult skill. This means that students were aware of the value of writing in their higher level education which needs their analytical skills that can be communicated to others in writing. Students also believe that writing has to be given an equal weight like other language skills. Similarly, though their belief about the difficult nature of writing could be interpreted as a negative belief, it could be a clue that students know the complex nature of writing. In relation to this, students were asked why they believed that writing skill is more difficult than the other language skills, and they raised several reasons which are related to the complex nature of writing. They argued that producing an accurate and fluent writing requires grave consideration on the semantic and structural aspects of writing. This could mean that students are lacking the perseverance to take time to consider the different elements of writing which might make writing different from the other three language skills. Several studies (Evans & Green, 2007; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Asaoka & Usui, 2003; Krause, 2001) carried out across the globe investigating students' beliefs about writing suggest that students find writing difficult and challenging. Therefore, the researcher of this study argues that the short-cut and easy nature of things following the advancement of technology are perhaps affecting students' attitude towards

writing since it requires following some demanding procedures which cannot be substituted by the applications of technological outputs.

One of the major findings under this part is related to students' beliefs about the approaches to be employed in writing. Most of the students dominantly believe that the process approach to writing helps someone to be a good writer. They showed their strong agreement on the importance of passing through the various stages of writing such as planning, drafting and revision. Statements were also forwarded on some guiding principles of the traditional approaches to writing and students showed a negative stand about these principles. This could again strengthen the finding which revealed students' positive outlook towards implementing the principles of the process approach to writing. During the interview, students also showed their positive views about the importance of using the process approach to writing in improving their writing skill. This would generally mean that students are theoretically familiar with the regulatory ideologies to be implemented in one's writing for the improvement of their writing.

Although the findings from the Beliefs Inventory Questionnaire revealed that students have a positive belief about the process approach to writing than the product one, they were not practically observed implementing it. It could be reasonable to report that there is a huge mismatch between students' belief about the writing approach they believe to be used while writing and the approach they practically employ. They claimed that the process approach to writing should be used during writing to improve their writing. This result is in line with the results of some previous studies (Alodwan & Ibnian, 2014; Ibnian, 2011; El Said, 2004; Darayseh, 2003; Alsouqi, 2001) that showed subjects' views on the importance of using the process approach to writing for the development of students' writing ability. However, they were not seen implementing the principles of the process approach to writing in their actual writing practice; they were, however, observed writing using the product approach to writing in contrast to their beliefs. Thus, students were asked why their beliefs about the approach to writing mismatched with their actual practices, and they identified lack of experience, the demanding nature of writing, teachers' limitation to motivate their students to use the process approach, and students' lack of patience to follow the processes in the process approach to writing as the major reasons for the mismatches. This finding might further be explained as students' cognition about

the process approach to writing was not meticulously internalized. They superficially express their beliefs which they cannot put them into practice.

As part of discovering students' beliefs about writing, students were asked to specify the aspect of the language they believe to be given more emphasis, and most of them reported that language forms (grammar and mechanics) should be the primary focus of writers than the message it gives. In other words, the majority of the students worry about spelling, capitalization, punctuation, tense, subject-verb agreement and other aspects of grammar than the content or the meaning to be transmitted. A similar belief was also reported by the students during the interview. This could mean that students have a negative outlook towards what should be the focus of writers while writing when it is judged against the principles of the modern language learning approaches such as the communicative language learning approach and the process approach to learning to write. This finding does not support a research finding by Semke (1984) which indicated that the focus on writing should be first on the content so that the final written work will be better both in content and form. It is one of the basic notions of the traditional-oriented approach to writing which focuses on grammar, spelling and punctuation than the message. This finding is supported by the findings of other researchers (Jordan, 1997; Yonas, 1997; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Hedge, 1988; Raimes, 1983) which indicated that most of the time students give much emphasis to the structural aspects of their writing than the content.

Students' belief about writing strategies was found to be strongly positive. They indicated that they have knowledge of the role of the writing strategies in shaping the quality of their writing. Students believe that activities such as planning, organizing, working with others and referring to other materials are essential in facilitating their writing. This can be further explained as students seem to know the different writing strategies and their effect on the quality of their writing. However, this positive view of students was reversed in the interview data where most of the students said they have little understanding of the writing strategies. During the interview, they said that they have little knowledge about writing strategies especially when they were asked about the technical names of the strategies. It seems that students' little understanding of the writing strategies was acquired through several informal and formal language learning situations where the writing strategies were not explicitly taught. This fact was confirmed by the

students when they were asked why they did not have a good understanding of the writing strategies. It was also confirmed by the researcher that the writing strategies are not included in any of the writing courses included in the current English Language and Literature Curriculum of the country. This finding is consistent with the result of the study conducted by Riazi (2008) which focused on identifying the perceptions of students on using the writing strategies during writing. It revealed that writing strategies have a positive role in the process of learning to write.

Similarly, students' belief about written feedback provision was found to be positive. They believe that comments from others and oneself contributes to the quality of their writing. In the interview part, they recounted that their experience of commenting on each other's writing was poor though they agreed on the importance of feedback provision for the quality of their writing. This implies that students have a good awareness of the social writing strategies which appreciates self-correction and collaboration during writing. This finding is consistent with studies carried out in the area of students' perceptions and preferences of the kinds of feedback which demonstrated students' positive outlooks about the feedback and comments they were offered from others (Montgomery and Baker, 2007; Ferris, 1995).

Generally, it could be said that students' beliefs about writing are positive though there are contradictions in some areas of their beliefs about writing. They believe that writing is an important skill at tertiary level. They also believe that process approach to writing, the writing strategies, and feedback provision are helpful to improve their writing skill. On the other hand, their belief about the aspect of writing to be given more emphasis was found to be negative. Regardless of the above case, it can be said that students' beliefs about writing are positive though it was not practically implemented due to several reasons. That means mismatches were observed between students' beliefs about writing and their actual practices. A growing body of studies (Melketo, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009) has found that beliefs and practices might not match since practicing the way one believes needs the consideration of several contexts in language learning.

The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference between female and male students regarding their beliefs about writing though males' beliefs about writing were found to be better than females'. This could mean that male students understand the basic principles of

writing than female students, but their level of understanding was not at the significant level of difference. This finding is consistent with a local study (Dawit, 2008) which indicated that females have weaker writing belief efficacy than males. However, several studies from abroad (Schunk, 2003; Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999; Pajares & Valiante, 1999) revealed that females have better knowledge of writing compared to that of males. The reasons behind the diverging results revealed by different researchers might be associated with the various social and environmental factors females face in the family and the society (Dawit, 2008). In Ethiopia, females shoulder various social responsibilities, and they are also challenged by several environmental factors which might finally affect their understanding in various areas. As a result, they might have lack of time to read and communicate on various issues which could contribute to their better understanding.

#### **4.8.2 Discussion of Students' Writing Strategies Use**

This part of the discussion mainly aimed at answering the second research question which deals with the level of students' writing strategies use. It also partially answers the last research question as it discusses the reasons for students' low writing strategy use. Students' belief about writing strategies, which was explored through the data obtained from the beliefs inventory questionnaire, and their awareness/knowledge about the writing strategies, which was described in the interview part, was found to be contradicting. Students believe that writing strategies help to improve one's writing skill, but they again reported that their understanding of the writing strategies was poor as they did not take the writing strategies in any of the courses in the curriculum. This might lead to question students' knowledge about the writing strategies in general.

One of the most important findings in this study was related to students' low writing strategy use which could be seen as one of the reasons for students' indistinct position on their knowledge of the writing strategies. The findings revealed that students' level of using the writing strategies was low. This means that students were not using the various writing strategies, which are believed to contribute to the fluency and accuracy of their writing performance, at a satisfactory level. They reported that they used the writing strategies quiet below average. This could mean that students were using the writing strategies occasionally than using them regularly to facilitate

their writing. It could partly be because of students' low writing strategy use that their writing performance laid at an alarmingly low level. This result is further explained in the next section of the discussion.

In the interview session, students were asked to forward the likely reasons they have for their low writing strategy use, and they itemized factors such as their motivation, attitude and interest of using the writing strategies as the major ones. They also seriously indicated that the marginalization of the writing strategies from the curriculum is a root cause for their poor writing strategy use. This might be further interpreted as students were not motivated to use the writing strategies. In conclusion, it can be said that students were not using the writing strategies because of their knowledge gap caused due to their psychological and educational backgrounds. Similarly, Park (2010) and Ellis (2008) stated that there are many variables besides using writing strategies. They also mentioned linguistic and background knowledge as factors that might affect students' writing strategy use. This makes it consistent with the finding of the current study.

The findings of the descriptive analyses on the Writing Strategy Use Inventory Questionnaire revealed that the compensation and memory writing strategies were the two most frequently used writing strategies, though at an average level, compared to the remaining four writing strategies. Likewise, during the interview, students mentioned the compensation, metacognitive and memory writing strategies as their frequently used writing strategies. This convergence between the results gained through the two tools could give us a reliable picture of students' regular use of the two writing strategies. In other words, it would be said that students' skills of connecting a given L2 item or concept with another and using supplementary techniques to complement their writing skill are better than their skills in the remaining strategies (Oxford, 1990). These findings partly agree with findings from previous studies (Cabrejas, 2012; Torrance et al., 2000) which identified cognitive and metacognitive strategies as the most frequently used writing strategies for successful writing. The studies did not overlook the compensation and affective writing strategies.

### **4.8.3 Discussion of Students' Writing Performance**

In this part of the discussion, an attempt was made to give meaning to the findings related to students' writing performance level and the major reasons for their poor writing performance. So, it answers the third and partially the last research questions. As it was indicated in the analysis part, students' writing performance was found to be very low. A majority of the respondents scored below and far below average in the writing performance test. This could mean that most of the students were not able to produce even a fairly fluent and accurate writing. This could be further explained as students were not able to produce sentences which are free of grammatical and mechanical errors. These students were also not capable of producing meaningful essays which can transmit the expected content. Furthermore, the above result can also be a good indicator that students' capacity of organizing the ideas and using appropriate words in their writing was below the expectation. In general, students' essays were not found qualified when they were evaluated against the five criteria (mechanics, content, organization, vocabulary and grammar) which were used to evaluate their writing performance level. The above discussion might help to conclude that students' level of writing performance was at the elementary level while they were expected to be at the highest level as English majoring university students. This is one of the basic findings in this research.

Unlike to students' beliefs about writing, the results from this section revealed that female students have a better capacity of performing writing tasks than that of males'. This result is consistent with various findings (Pajares, et al., 2007; Schunk, 2003; Pajares & Valiante, 1999; Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999) in the area which indicated female students' better performance in writing than that of males'. This result is different from a finding by Dawit (2008) which revealed that male students have better writing performance than that of females.

After identifying that students' writing performance was at a shocking level, students were asked reasons for their poor writing performance. They stated various reasons that are mainly related to their educational and psychological backgrounds. Students chiefly blamed the university's system of assigning students to the English Department without their interest which might gradually contribute to their negative attitude to the department and to writing. The students said that had they joined the department they chose, they would have better performed academically.

Here, the students were raising the issue of joining the English Department without their interest and this being the major reason for their poor writing performance. They believe that their interest and motivation towards learning writing has been affected since they joined the department without their interest. Thus, they mentioned their lack of motivation, interest and positive attitude towards writing as some of the major factors for their poor writing performance. They also mentioned the poor delivery of writing instruction, marginalization of the writing strategies from the curriculum, inappropriate use of the approaches to writing, and lack of regular practice as major factors for their poor writing performance. These factors can be categorized under the pedagogical factors that could affect students' writing performance. This can be a good implication that the way the writing courses were designed and the means through which the writing lessons are delivered are contributing to students' poor writing performance. They also specified their poor writing skill background as one of the reasons for their poor writing performance.

Therefore, it could be said that various factors which can be summarized into two major categories, educational and psychological backgrounds, are contributing to the poor writing performance of students. In the literature, there are several studies (Millis, et al., 2007; Pedrosa et.al, 2006; Hinkel, 2004; 2002; Hampton & Mason, 2003; Pajares, 2003) which support the findings of the current study. There are also some researchers that disagreed with this viewpoint. For instance, Reddy and Talcott (2006) argue that students' educational background has little to do with their future academic performance.

#### **4.8.4 Discussion of the Correlation Analysis between Variables**

One of the research questions in this study was about examining the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Accordingly, the correlations between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use were examined to see the direction and strength of the relationship between variables. Positive relationships were found in three of the correlations made. This can be further discussed in the following paragraphs.

The current study revealed that there is a positive relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance though it was not significant. This indicates that students' beliefs about writing have their own little effect on the improvement in their writing performance. This may mean that students' writing performance can be improved on a certain level as students' beliefs about writing turn out to be positive. That is, the more students' beliefs about writing get positive, the better the writing performance of the students would be. This result is broadly consistent with other studies (Pajares and Valiante, 2006; White and Bruning, 2005; Anteneh, 2004; Graham et al., 1993; Silva and Nicholls, 1993). These studies specifically or generally indicated that domain beliefs about writing affect writing performance. Similarly, other findings (Millis, et al., 2007; Hampton & Mason, 2003; Pajares, 2003; Pajares, 1994; Zimmerman and Bandura, 1994) and the present study unanimously indicate that there is a linear correlation between beliefs about writing and writing performance. In the contrary, there are also some studies (Hashemnejad & Amini, 2014; Al-Mekhlafi, 2011; Sawyer, Graham, & Harris, 1992; Alvarez & Adelman, 1986) that argue against the positive effect of beliefs about writing on writing performance. These findings revealed that beliefs about writing and writing self-efficacy have not or might not surely have a positive contribution to the quality of students' writing. These contradictory findings could happen due to certain factors related to setting and methodological differences or other related factors.

Likewise, the relationship between writing strategy use and writing performance was found to be positive although it was weaker. This might be further explained as the use of writing strategies has its own impact on the quality of students' writing. That is, as the frequency of students' writing strategy use increases, the quality of their writing will also be built up. However, since the relationship between the two variables was found to be weaker, writing strategy use will have a little contribution to writing performance. This might be alternatively discussed as writing strategy use is one of perhaps the least determinant factor among other factors which contributes to students' writing performance though it better determines writing performance compared to beliefs about writing. This finding is consistent with the various hypotheses that argue the existence of relationship between writing strategy use and writing performance (Chien, 2012; Harris et al., 2008; Hu and Chen, 2007; Victori, 1999).

The findings also revealed a weak positive relationship between students' beliefs about writing and their writing strategy use. It was also found that the relationship between these two variables is the weakest compared to the relationship between beliefs about writing and writing performance, and writing strategy use and writing performance. In other words, it could be said that the change in one's beliefs about writing has an impact, but insignificant, on the use of writing strategies or the other way round. Thus, this could be summarized that beliefs about writing and writing strategy use can be affected each other though their level of contribution is inconsequential. Sundry studies support this finding as they found positive relationships between beliefs about writing and writing self-efficacy belief about writing, and writing performance in an academic setting (Garcia & de Caso, 2006; Pajares, 2003; Bruning & Horn, 2000; Pajares & Valiente, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1996).

#### **4.8.5 Discussion of the Influence of Independent Variables on Writing Performance**

Examining the degree of influence of the independent variables on writing performance was one of the basic research questions in this study. The results from linear regressions revealed that the predictors (beliefs about writing, students' writing strategy use, and each writing strategy use) have a positive, but non-significant contribution to the dependent variable.

The findings from the linear regression indicated that both beliefs about writing and writing strategy use were found to weakly predict writing performance. This could mean that these predictors can have a little positive impact on writing performance. In other words, the writing performance of students' can be slightly changed as their beliefs about writing and writing strategy use gets better. When we compare the results of the two predictors, writing strategy use was found to better predict writing performance though the difference was non-significant. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Abraham & Vann, 1987; Wenden, 1986a, 1986ab) who suggested connections between learners' beliefs about language learning and their use of language learning strategies and their writing performance.

On the other hand, the effect of each of the six writing strategies use on writing performance was examined, and the affective writing strategy uses best predicted writing performance though the

prediction level was non-significant. This means that the more students use the affective writing strategies such as encouraging and rewarding themselves while writing to challenge their writing difficulties, the better their writing performance will be. In addition, social writing strategy use was also found to be the second best predictor of writing performance compared to the rest four writing strategies. This may precisely mean that the more students assist each other, the better their writing performance will be. In other words, students' writing performance will be improved as they get the chance to work with their friends. The rest four writing strategies are either least predictors or had a deleterious contribution to writing performance.

In general, it could be said that the aggregated effect of writing strategy and the individual influence of the six writing strategies use on writing performance were almost found to be consistent as there exists a positive, but insignificant level of influence in both cases. Few of the studies (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Wharton, 2000 and Yang, 1999) in the area found that the social and affective strategies are among the most frequently used writing strategies. These findings agree with the results of the current study.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary

Based on the above discussion, the following summaries have been drawn:

- This study revealed that students have positive beliefs about the different principles of writing, except their negative views about what should be the focus of writing. They showed their positive beliefs about the nature and importance of writing, approaches to writing, writing strategy use and written feedback provision system. This was confirmed through students' strong agreements on the specific writing principles raised under each category. However, students failed to show positive beliefs about the aspects of the language to be given more emphasis while writing. They believe that the grammar and mechanics aspects of writing and not meaning should be emphasized. This view of the students is taken as a negative belief since it supports the principles of the traditional approach to writing.
- The study indicated that there were mismatches between students' beliefs about writing and their real writing practices. In most cases, students did not implement what they believed in. This could be because of their superficial understanding of the principles of writing.
- Students reported a low writing strategy use level which implies their less frequent use of writing strategies. This shows that students were not able to effectively use the writing strategies that contribute to the fluency and accuracy of their writing. Their writing strategy use level was found to be even far below average; this may mean that students are less frequently using the writing strategies than using them regularly to ease their writing. This could have its own impact on students' low writing performance. They primarily mentioned the marginalization of the writing strategies from the writing courses as the major reason for their less frequent use of writing strategies. It was also confirmed that the writing strategies are not included in the current English Language and Literature Curriculum. This could have its own great impact on the overall writing pedagogy and

students writing performance as it could be difficult to talk about effective writing without writing strategies that are seen as a roadmap for an effective writing.

- The findings also indicated that students most often used the compensation and memory writing strategies than the remaining four writing strategies, with only medium level of strategy use. It could be because these writing strategies are direct and common that students used them better than the other writing strategies which demands writing activities that could go beyond superficial understanding and compensatory actions.
- The results of the writing test revealed that students have low writing performance level alike to many of the studies reviewed in this study. The students were not able to produce an essay which could meet the basics of writing. In most cases, it was found difficult to get meaning out of the essays the students wrote. The study also showed that female students' writing performance was better than that of the males'.
- Positive relationships were found between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. These relationships were, however, not found to be statistically significant. Here, we can draw two conclusions which can agree and disagree with a body of literature in the area. The findings of this study do not considerably support the assumption that the belief that learners have about writing may help them do well in their writing performance. The findings of the current study revealed that students' writing performance was low though their beliefs about writing were found to be strongly positive in most cases. On the other hand, the findings of this study were found to be consistent with the findings of other studies about the non-significant relationship between writing strategy use and writing performance. Hence, it could be hypothetically right to expect students' writing performance to be poor as their writing strategy use was reported low.
- The findings from the linear regression revealed that the two independent variables, beliefs about writing and writing strategy use, have little effect on writing performance.

This finding is one of the few findings that pitted against the significant effect of beliefs about writing and writing strategies on writing performance. Similarly, the degree of influence each of the six writing strategies use has on writing performance was not found to be significant. This could be a good sign that there might be other major factors that are contributing to students' poor writing performance than beliefs about writing and writing strategy use.

- Students mentioned several reasons for their low writing strategy use and poor writing performance. They criticized university's system of assigning students to the English Department without their interest. They believe that their writing performance was poor since they joined the department without their interest. Additionally, they raised the ineffectiveness of the writing pedagogy in their earlier writing courses, the inappropriate use of the approaches to writing, their teachers' failures to teach writing, and their lack of regular writing practices as major reasons for their poor writing performance. They also mentioned the marginalization of the writing strategies from the curriculum and their reduced psychological readiness to use the writing strategies as the major factors for their low writing strategy use.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Based on the above summaries, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- This study indicated that students have positive beliefs about writing. They seem to have knowledge of the writing principles which are seen as key indicators of a good writing.
- It was also revealed that there was a big mismatch between students' beliefs about writing and their actual writing practice. They were not seen effectively implementing the principles they believe are important for an effective writing.
- Students' use of the writing strategies was reported to be at a very low level of frequency. This could mean that students were not effectively using the writing strategies although they believe that they are essential.
- The compensation and memory writing strategies were also reported as the most frequently used writing strategies among the six writing strategy categories. Students could better employ these writing strategies because they are familiar to them.
- This study revealed that students' writing performance is very low. In most cases, students were not in a position to produce an essay which could meet the basics of writing and convey complete meaning.
- It is also found out that there were positive relationships between beliefs about writing and writing performance, writing strategy use and writing performance, and beliefs about writing and writing strategy use. These relationships were, however, not found to be statistically significant.
- The findings from the linear regression revealed that beliefs about writing and writing strategy use have little effect on writing performance. The degree of influence each of the six writing strategies use has on writing performance was also not-significant. This result could also imply that the five writing courses in the English Language and Literature

Curriculum have little role in improving students' writing performance. It may again put the effectiveness of the curriculum and the writing pedagogy under a big question mark.

- Several reasons were mentioned for students' low writing strategy use and poor writing performance. Students pointed out university's random assignment of students to the English Department without their interest, the ineffectiveness of the writing pedagogy in their earlier writing courses, the inappropriate use of the approaches to learning writing, their teachers' failures to teach writing, and their lack of regular writing practices as major reasons for their poor writing performance. They also mentioned the marginalization of the writing strategies from the curriculum and their reduced psychological readiness to use the writing strategies as the major factors for their low writing strategy use.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions made, therefore, the following recommendations were forwarded:

- Students did not seem to put their positive beliefs about writing in to practice, and these beliefs did not seem to involve profound understanding. In reality, English majoring students are expected to be well aware of the issues and concepts in writing pedagogy with profound understanding about them. Hence, the method writing is taught and the way writing activities are presented in the course materials should be revised in a way students can effectively internalize the issues and concepts in writing so that they can use them in their writing.
- A comprehensive nation-wide project that would work on developing students' writing performance should be designed by the ministry of education and other stakeholders. The project can be implemented from lower to tertiary levels of education to cultivate students' writing skill from the very ground. Specifically, efforts should be exerted to look up the writing skills of English major students who are expected to overtake the professional responsibilities in the area.
- Universities should give continuous trainings to English language teachers on emerging methods, approaches, techniques and strategies of teaching writing. It would also be better to train some English language teachers to specialize in teaching writing skill. These teachers should also have the chance to take more writing courses other than the courses in the current curriculum.
- Universities should assign students to the English Department based on their interest since learning English language needs learner's interest and his/her language competence. This is because it is difficult to change the language competence of a student unless he/she has good background knowledge and skill of the language, and interest to make regular language practices.

- The ministry of education should encourage universities to redesign writing courses and materials incorporating writing strategies that can help students tackle their writing related problems. Hence, curriculum designers should revise the curriculum to include writing strategies in the course syllabus of the writing courses in the curriculum.
- I also recommend the study be replicated among other department students at tertiary, primary and secondary level students for reliability. A replica could be essential since this study was limited to few variables and settings.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: WRITING BELIEFS INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Student,**

This questionnaire is prepared to collect data for a study that is being conducted on ‘English major students’ beliefs about writing, their writing strategy use and writing performance’. Your responses will be used only for the purpose of the study and they remain confidential. Your identity will also be kept anonymous. Please read each item and give your true responses. For each of the statements below, please show the extent of your agreement or disagreement by putting a tick mark (✓) in the appropriate box. The response scale is as follows:

1. **Strongly disagree**
2. **Disagree**
3. **Undecided**
4. **Agree**
5. **Strongly agree**

**Thank You Very Much in Advance!**

#### **Part One: Background Information**

1. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. University: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part Two: Students’ Beliefs about importance and Nature of writing.**

*1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Learning to write in English is a very important skill for my academic study at this level.					
2.	Writing skill (in English) is very important to my future education.					
3.	Writing in English is a task that requires a lot of time.					
4.	Writing is important and has to be given an equal weight as other skills in learning English.					
5.	Writing is more difficult than other language skills.					

#### **Part Three: Students’ Beliefs about the Approaches to Writing**

*1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Revision is necessary only if the student doesn’t plan and draft carefully.					
7.	Someone can be a good writer through regular practices.					
8.	While writing, I should always make a first draft of my writing.					
9.	Writing a second draft in writing may not be important if I feel that my writing is good.					

10.	My ideas and thoughts become clearer to me as I write and rewrite.					
11.	Making a final draft to my writing helps me get a good writing product.					
12.	Looking at a writing model before starting writing in English helps me write better.					
13.	Writing should be done once without passing through different stages.					

**Part Four: Students' Beliefs about the focus of Writing**

*1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
14.	In writing, students shouldn't worry about spelling and grammar until they are sure they have made their main points.					
15.	Students should know standard formats of good writing to be a good writer.					
16.	While drafting, students should focus on getting their ideas on paper and worry about spelling and mechanics later.					
17.	Grammar is important, but it is not as essential as the point the writer is trying to make.					
18.	I feel that the key to good writing is getting the grammar and mechanics (spelling and punctuation) right.					
19.	During revision, students should carefully check their writing for both content and mechanics problems.					
20.	In marking my written work, teachers should pay more attention to the language form than meaning.					

**Part Five: Students' Beliefs about Writing Strategies**

*1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Writing requires information/knowledge about the topic to be written					
22.	I should relate my background knowledge with the topic I will write on.					
23.	During writing, I should organize information to my writing.					
24.	Making an outline is one of the good skills in writing.					
25.	In writing, I should always select appropriate language to my composition.					
26.	Setting goals to my writing helps me write better.					
27.	It is good if teachers provide me with different strategies for generating ideas, like brainstorming, using questions, visuals, role-plays and simulations.					
28.	Having discussions on how to improve writing skill is a good strategy to write better.					
29.	I should write with other students so that I can write better.					
30.	I should work with the teacher during writing activities.					
31.	Reading materials in English help me write better.					
32.	Listening to English transmissions helps me improve my writing ability.					

**Part Six: Students' Beliefs about Feedback Provision System in Writing**

*1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree*

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Getting comments and corrections from peers helps me write better.					
34.	Getting comments and corrections from teachers helps me write better.					
35.	Making self-evaluation helps me improve my writing though I wrote it myself.					

## PPENDIX B: WRITING STRATEGIES USE INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

In this strategy inventory you will find statements about writing in English. Please, read the statements, and put a tick (✓) on the appropriate number 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 which tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS. In other words, these ranges show your writing strategy use in your actual writing practice.

1. Never or almost never true of me.
2. Usually not true of me.
3. Somewhat true of me.
4. Usually true of me.
5. Always or almost always true of me.

NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE OF ME means that the statement is *very rarely* true of you.

USUALLY NOT TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you *less than half of the time*.

SOMEWHAT TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you *about half of the time*.

USUALLY TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you *more than half the time*.

ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you *almost always*.

Answer in terms of *how well the statement describes you*. Do Not answer in terms of what you would like to do or what other people think you should do. Remember that *there are no right or wrong answers*, since each writer writes differently. Write the answer (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) on the separate answer sheet. If you have any questions, ask the researcher.

### Background Information

1. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. University: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART A: Memory strategies

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I use my background knowledge about the topic while I write.					
2.	I use new words in a sentence so that I can remember them.					
3.	I memorize new English words by writing them down several times.					
4.	I revise my old compositions so as not to forget the mistakes I made and how to solve them.					

### Part B: Cognitive Strategies

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
5.	I try out different ideas either orally or in writing to find out what I want to say.					
6.	I frequently reread in an attempt to find out what I want to say.					
7.	I review previous sections of the text when I find a mismatch between my written text and the ideas I want to express.					

8.	I reformulate the linguistic expression when I am not sure it is right.					
9.	I try to put my meaning on paper as quickly as possible so as not to forget my ideas even if I experience spelling or grammatical problems.					
10.	I write different drafts of my composition.					
11.	I read books or good writers' compositions to improve my writing.					
12.	I move paragraphs around in an attempt to organize my writing in a more coherent way.					
13.	I compare my composition with my plan or outline to see how well they match or to consider changes.					
14.	I put aside my writing for a few days to reconsider my thoughts with a fresh mind					
15.	I read my composition aloud to "feel" its sound.					
16.	I use transition words ("thus", "however", "nevertheless" and so on) in my composition that would help my reader to understand my point.					
17.	I choose words and expressions that are formal when I write formally and informal forms when I write informally.					

### **PART C: Compensation Strategies**

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
18.	I use synonyms when I can't find the word I mean.					
19.	I use a dictionary to find out words that I don't know how to express in English.					
20.	I repeat words in an attempt to keep my writing going.					
21.	I make guesses when I can't find the exact word that I need.					
22.	I use sources when I don't have enough ideas to complete my composition.					
23.	I make short pauses while writing my composition to consider what I have written so far.					

### **PART D: Metacognitive Strategies**

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
24.	Before starting to write or while writing, I make decisions about the content, organization and the linguistic expression of my composition and how I should do them.					
25.	I plan my composition in advance or while writing either mentally or in writing.					
26.	I plan the content and organization of my composition.					
27.	I go back to my plan to consider the ideas I have written down and to reformulate them if I feel they are flawed.					
28.	I set myself long-term and short-term goals for improving my writing.					

29.	I think whether or not my ideas are clear as they are on paper.					
30.	I frequently think of my audience so as to adjust my text to their needs.					
31.	I pay attention to aspects such as thesis statements, topic and supporting sentences while I am writing.					
32.	I write with a specific purpose in mind (i.e. to convince, inform, narrate an event and so on).					
33.	I am concerned about my lack of writing fluency and doing something about it.					
34.	I follow a certain organization in my composition that would help my readers understand my point.					
35.	I have a set of priorities when revising my composition: first, ideas and organization and then grammar and spelling concerns.					
36.	I consider the characteristics of good essays while I write.					
37.	I am aware of the effectiveness of the strategies that I employ for my writing.					

**PART E: Affective Strategies**

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
38.	I encourage myself to find a better solution to a linguistic problem in my composition					
39.	I reward myself when I'm given a good grade in a composition.					
40.	I motivate myself to keep writing by saying "come on", "go on", "you can do it".					
41.	I write a diary to know how I feel about my writing.					
42.	I try to overcome feelings of frustration, sadness, etc. when my writing is not as good as I would like it to be.					
43.	I have confidence in my own capacity for writing.					

**PART F: Social Strategies**

1: Never true, 2: Usually not true, 3: Somewhat true, 4: Usually true, 5: Always true

No.	Strategy	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
44.	I seek assistance when I have linguistic problems that I cannot solve or I ask another person to revise my composition					
45.	I seek opportunities to improve my writing, such as writing frequently for other people (emails, chat, letters, and others).					
46.	I give my writing to a friend or someone who is good at writing so that I get an opinion about my writing.					
47.	I compare my composition with my classmates' compositions.					



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## APPENDIX C-1: WRITING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RURICS

### *The Rating Scale and the Writing Assessment Criteria used to Assess Students' Writing*

**Raters:** Two writing skills instructors having more than eight years of experience

**Items:** There are *five* evaluation categories:

**Rating scale:** A four-point scale (**1, 2, 3 & 4**) is used for each of the five categories. *Criteria for four categories will be as follows:*

- (1) **Mechanics**.....4 points
- (2) **Content**..... 4 points
- (3) **Organization** .....4 points
- (4) **Vocabulary** ..... 4 points
- (5) **Grammar** ..... 4 points
- Totals**.....**20**

#### **I- Mechanics**

4 points: very good mechanical ability *Maximum 5 errors*

3 points: few minor mechanical errors *6 to 10 errors*

2 points: some mechanical errors *11 to 15 errors*

1 point: Many mechanical errors *More than 15 errors*

#### **II- Content**

4 points: very good range of ideas and enough evidence and reasoning

3 points: good range of ideas and good level of evidence and reasoning

2 points: limited range of ideas and evidence and reasoning is limited

1 point: no range of ideas and poor level of evidence and reasoning

#### **III- Organization**

4 points: well organized

3 points: fairly well organized

2 points: loosely organized

1 point: ideas disconnected

#### **IV- Vocabulary**

4 points: very effective choice of words

3 points: effective choice of words

2 points: fairly good vocabulary

1 point: limited range of vocabulary

#### **V- Grammar**

4 points: almost no errors *Maximum 3 errors*

3 points: Few minor errors *4 to 6 errors*

2 points: some errors *7 to 9 errors*

1 point: many errors *More than 9 errors*

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDELINE**

1. Most of you believe that writing is difficult than other skills. Why is it so?
2. During writing, most of you did not put objectives to your writing though you believe that it is important?
3. In general, there are several approaches to learning writing. Of which, in the questionnaire, you reflected that the process approach to learning writing is better than the other approaches to learning writing. However, in practice, during the essay writing test, you were not seen implementing the process approach to writing. Why was it so?
4. Which level of your writing do you give to your teacher or peer for comment? Draft or final? Why?
5. Do you consider comments from others?
6. While you write, to which aspect of writing do you give more emphasis? Message? Grammar? or Mechanics?
7. How do you evaluate your general understanding of the writing strategies?
8. Which of the six writing strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies) do you frequently use in your writing?
9. What do you think are the major reasons that have affected your understanding/awareness about the writing strategies and your writing strategy use?
10. What do think are the major reasons for students' low writing performance level?
11. What solutions do you suggest to solve these problems?



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**SA:** most of the time punctuation grammar

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**SA:** writing strategy

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**APPENDIX E-3: AMHARIC INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION STUDENT – C**

**Date: October 25, 2016**



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#### **APPENDIX E-4: AMHARIC INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION: STUDENT-D**

**Date:** October 25, 2016

**Place:** DBU, English Students Classroom

**Time:** 11□50-12□07 Morning

**R:** □□□□ □□-□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□□□

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**SD:** writing □□□ □□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□ generate □□□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□□□  
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**R:** □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□?

**SD:** □□□□ language skills □□□ (writing and speaking) productive □□□ □□□ □□□  
(listening and reading) receptive skills □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ productive skill □□

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በስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና  
በስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና

**R:** ስለ ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና

**SD:** ስለ ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና

**APPENDIX E-5: AMHARIC INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION: STUDENT-E**

**Date:** Jan 20, 2017

**Place:** AAU, NCR, G10

**Time:** 9፻30-9፻52 Afternoon

**R:** ስለ ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና ስለተገኘው ስራ ስልጠና

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strategy use □□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□  
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**grammar** □□ □□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□  
□□□□ □□□ **word** □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□

**R:** □□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□ □□?

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**SE:** elementary activity strategy

**R:** writing (positive) (writing performance)

**SE:** Ok... practice

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**SE:** writing writing lesson

**R:**

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**APPENDIX F-1: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT –A**

**Date: October 13, 2016**

**Place: DMU, Classroom**

**Time: 3:00-3:25 Morning**

**Researcher:** Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this interview. I will have a short stay with you. We can make our interview either in Amharic or in English. Which one do you prefer?

**SA:** I prefer it to be in Amharic.

**R:** Ok, if we decide to make the interview in Amharic, the first question will be raised in relation to the beliefs inventory questionnaire that you filled last time. In the questionnaire, most of you reported that writing skill is difficult than other language skills. Why?

**SA:** Yes, it (writing skill) is different from others since it has its own rules. A writer is expected to use various strategies while writing. He/she cannot write without these strategies. In addition, it includes other issues such as mechanics, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Thus, if we cannot consider these issues, our writing cannot convey the right message we as a writer wanted to say. The writing will not also be accepted. It is therefore based on these points that a writer should write.

**R:** Very good! Most of you believe that setting a goal to writing is important, but you were not observed doing so during the actual writing. Why not?

**SA:** Yes, I myself did not think about putting a goal to my writing because I did not have a writing lesson which would help me develop the habit of setting goals for my writing. As a

result, though I believe that it is important, it is not easy for me to know or set a goal to my writing since I do not have the experience.

**R:** In general, there are several approaches to learning writing. Of which, in the questionnaire, you reflected that the process approach to learning writing is better than the other approaches to learning writing. However, in practice, during the essay writing test, you were not seen implementing the process approach to writing. Why was it so?

**SA:** Well. Though most of us believe that we should write following the process approach to writing, we face difficulties to change our belief into practice. I can mention different reasons for this. The first and main reason is related to our writing habit. Most of the times, we write for exam and assignment purposes. At this time, passing through the multiple stages becomes boring for us, so we exclude the stages though we know that they are helpful. The other one is that our teachers do not consider the process of writing as part of the assessment; they simply expect us to write fast and submit it to them.

**R:** Do you mean that they do not motivate you to write using the process approach?

**SA:** Eum...Eum...Eum... though they theoretically tell us the principles and importance of the process approach to writing, they do not make a continuous follow-up to let us use them practically.

**R:** Very Good! Let me now ask you a question in relation to this (Approaches to writing). Which level of your writing do you give to your teacher or classmates? The draft? Or The final?

**SA:** I give the final product. Primarily, I draft and try to correct my mistakes. Then, I give it to my teacher or friends after I correct it.

**R:** Why?

**SA:** Because I believe that letting others comment on my final written work will let me see my real writing deficiency which is beyond my capacity, so I give the final one.

**R:** Do you incorporate the comments given by others?

**SA:** Yes. I incorporate the points that I believe in and I learn from them for the future.

**R:** While you write, to which aspect of writing do you give more emphasis? Message? Grammar? or Mechanics?

**SA:** Yes. Regarding what you said before, I give emphasis to capitalization, spelling and grammar.

**R:** So, you are saying that you give more emphasis to grammar and mechanics?

**SA**  Yes.

**R:** Why?

**SA:** Because most of the time I believe that if there are punctuation and grammar errors, my writing will not transmit the right message I wanted to say, so I give more emphasis to punctuation and grammar.

**R:** Don't you worry about the content of your writing?

**SA:** No. I believe that the content of my writing can be maintained if the grammar and mechanics aspects of my writing are correct.

**R:** How do you evaluate your general understanding about the writing strategies?

**SA:** Well. My understanding about the writing strategies is not that much. We did not even properly learn these strategies in the writing courses we took.

**R:** Which of the six writing strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies) do you frequently use in your writing?

**SA:** From the six strategies, I mostly use the metacognitive and compensation strategies. Though I don't use all of the strategies under the metacognitive strategy, I use it since it has many things to do with the process approach to writing. In addition, I use the compensation strategies as I mostly try to use dictionary and the synonyms of words I can't remember while writing.

**R:** So, what do you think are the major reasons that have affected your understanding/awareness about the writing strategies?

**SA:** The first reason is related to students' lack of interest towards knowing and using the writing strategies. Most of us have a negative attitude towards English Language, in general, and writing in particular. So we have poor self-motivation and interest towards writing. We consider writing as a difficult skill. As a result, our awareness about the writing strategies is also poor. Then, teachers' lack of awareness on the writing strategies has also contributed to the poor delivery of the writing courses. Thus, these two interconnected factors have contributed to our poor understanding about the writing strategies. In addition to this, I believe some teachers have no capacity of teaching writing courses. Lastly, I would like to mention writing courses' gap in incorporating writing strategies in their syllabus.

**R:** Finally, let us talk about students' writing performance level. You remember that you had been given an essay writing test before. According to the result, it was known that most of you have a low writing performance level. What do think are the major reasons for students' low writing performance level?

**SA:** Primarily, students' lack of interest should be solved. Then, I believe that teachers' writing instruction and assessment approaches should be improved. Finally, I think writing strategies should be included in the English language curriculum.

**R:** So, what solutions do you suggest to solve these problems?

**SA:** In the first place, our negative attitude towards writing skill and English language in general has its own negative impact on our writing performance. In addition, our lack of experience of working with teachers and students while writing is another major factor. Teachers do not thoroughly go through our writing tasks in class and home works and provide us with appropriate comments which may show our gaps. To your surprise, when we are told to write a paragraph or an essay, some of the studnets copy it from internet and submit it to teachers, and these students get better marks since teachers do not crosscheck it. This might have its own impact on our writing performance improvment.

**SA:** You are welcome!

**R:** Thank you very much!

**APPENDIX F-2: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT-B**

**Date:** October 13, 2016

**Place:** DMU, Classroom

**Time:** 9□30-9□52 Morning

**Researcher:** First of all I would like to appreciate you for your cooperation. We can make this interview either in English or in Amharic. Which one do you prefer?

**Student B:** I thank you, too. Amharic is better

**R□** Let me start with some general issues. As it is learned from the questionnaire, most of you believe that writing skill is difficult than the other English Language skills. Why is it so?

**SB:** Yes. I also believe that it is different. It is difficult to organize and write compared to the other skills.

**R□** Could you elaborate why it is difficult?

**SB:** Primarily, writing is formal and it requires considering the grammar and other things while writing. Secondly, since it is difficult to produce an effective writing with in a shoot, it needs repetition. Thus, writing skill is difficult.

**R□** Do you set an objective to your writing while you write?

**SB:** No. I don't put.

**R□** Why?

**SB:** I don't believe that writing an objective will bring a difference in my writing. Actually, I don't even have the habit.

**R:** Which kind of approaches to writing do use while you write?

**SB:** I am not sure, but I use all kinds.

**R□** As it was observed from your essay writing process, most of you gave more attention to the end product of your essay. However, in the belief inventory questionnaire, you reflected that writing through process is better. Why do you think is the reason for the mismatch between your belief and practice?

**SB:** Yes. Though I believe that I should write following the process of writing, when I come to practice I focus on writing about the topic and finishing writing as fast as I can. The main reason for this is my lack of patience to pass through those processes.

**R□** Which level of your writing do give to you teacher or friends for a comment?

**SB:** The final level.

**R□** Why?

**SB:** We do not have the habit of giving our written work to our friends. But, we give the final version of our writing to our teachers because most of the time teachers collect the last version of the paper to grade it and they do not give it back to us for correction.

**R□** Good. To which aspect of your writing do you give more attention? Is it for the grammatical aspect? Is it for the mechanics aspect? Or is it for the message/meaning?

**SB:** As much as possible, I try to balance all of them. But, I give more attention to making my writing free from grammatical errors because I believe that if we manage to write grammatically correct papers, others will also be achieved at the same time.

**R□** Don't you worry about the message?

**SB:** I believe that other things will be maintained if I can write a grammatically correct writing item. While marking our writing, teachers deduct marks if they get grammatical errors.

**R**□ In general, do you believe that comments or feedbacks from others could help you improve your writing?

**SB:** It has a minimal importance, but we do not have the habit of peer correction.

**R**□ Well. Let us now talk about writing strategies. How do you evaluate your overall awareness about writing strategies?

**SB:** I have little understanding about these strategies; we were not taught them adequately.

**R**□ Though you did not theoretically learn these strategies properly, which of the six writing strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies) do you most frequently use?

**SB:** I sometimes use the compensation and memory strategies because I used to use these two strategies in my previous writing lessons. On the contrary, I less frequently use affective writing strategies since I have a problem of motivating myself that I can write better.

**R**□ Do you generally believe that these strategies (writing strategies) are useful?

**SB:** First of all, I believe that writing strategies are the specific ways of learning writing. Thus, to understand these writing strategies means to write better. Therefore, knowing these strategies helps me very well.

**R**□ In general, what do you think are the major reasons for your poor understanding and use of the writing strategies?

**SB:** I think the major reason for my lack of awareness and low use of the writing strategies is the problem of not including the writing strategies in the curriculum because if the writing strategies had been included in the courses we took, we would have known and used them properly. The second reason is related to teachers' competency. Some teachers have lack of experience and competency to teach writing courses. In the third place, we students have lack of motivation and interest towards learning writing.

**R** □ Very good! It was known that most of you have a low writing performance level according to result of the essay test you took some weeks ago. Can you mention the major reasons for students' low writing performance level?

**SB:** Firstly, in general, I would like to mention that I joined this department [English Department] out of my interest. It was my fifth choice. As a result, I don't have a positive attitude towards learning English because I believe that it is difficult. In fact, I was a good student when I was in a high school. Now, I am an average student since I cannot score high by simply reading materials. It is a skill which needs a good language background. In addition, as I stated earlier, the way writing courses are presented is (the approach) one of the major problems. They are not presented in a simple and attractive manner.

**R** □ What do you recommend to solve the above problems?

**SB:** You are welcome

**R** □ Thank you!

**SB:** Lots of things should be done. The first and the major one is that students should join the English department based on their interest. Secondly, students should be aware that they can improve their writing skill through practice. Lastly, I believe that the way writing is taught should be revised.

**APPENDIX F-3: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT – C**

**Date: October 25, 2016**

**Place: DBU, English Students Classroom**

**Time: 11□20-11□43 Morning**

**R:** First of all I would like to thank you for taking part in this data collection process.

**SC:** You are welcome.

**R:** Shall you conduct our interview in English or in Amharic?

**SC:** I can clearly explain my points of view if we make it in Amharic.

**R:** Good! My first question is related to the reasons why most of you believe that writing skill is more difficult than other language skills.

**SC:** Yes. It is actually different from other skills, but is essential for us who major English language and literature and come from remote areas since we lack experience.

**R:** Ok, What makes it difficult then?

**SC:** Basically, because some of us had poor writing skill background and since our school teachers did not give much focus to writing, I now came to understand the difficulty of the writing skill.

**R:** Do you set an objective to your writing?

**SC:** No. I don't.

**R:** Why not?

**SC:** Because I don't have the habit

**R:** Which kind of writing approach do you use while you write? Process? Product? Genre? Process-produce? Free? Guided? Controlled?

**SC:** I first try to understand the topic and then I keep writing.

**R:** Do you mean the product approach?

**SC:** Yes.

**R:** In the questionnaire, most of you claimed that using the process approach to writing is useful. That means you believe that planning, drafting, revision and others are useful. However, practically, you followed the product approach to writing. Why was it so?

**SC**  Yes...We don't usually do this.

**R:** Why?

**SC**  Though we believe that it is important, we don't practically write following the process approach since we do not have the experience. It is also boring.

**R:** Ok, Which level of your writing do you give to your teachers or friends for comment? Draft? Or the final product?

**SC**  First I write on a different paper then arrange and soon and submit it to my teachers. I don't have the habit of giving my written work to friends.

**R:** So, are you saying the final draft?

**SC**  Yes.

**R:** So, you are more concerned about the final product?

**SC**  It is also one thing, and our teachers do also collect our written works for assessment purpose but not to comment on them and let us learn from the comments.

**R:** While you write, to which aspect of your writing do you give more emphasis? Message? Grammar? Or mechanics (punctuation and capitalization)?

**SC** □ I focus on grammar.

**R:** Why?

**SC** □ Because if my writing has not a good grammatical pattern, I think my writing in general will be poor.

**R:** Ok. Do you think that your writing will be improved if your teachers or friends comment on your writing?

**SC** □ Sure. For example, when I sometimes give my draft to my friends before I give it to the teacher, I feel happy of the comments, but we don't have that habit.

**R:** The other point is about your writing strategy use which is related to the idea in the writing strategy use questionnaire. In relation to this, how do you generally express your knowledge or awareness about writing strategies?

**SC** □ Though it is difficult to me to clearly express it, I have little understanding about it.

**R:** You have taken more than three writing courses so far. Didn't you learn about writing strategies in these courses?

**SC** □ Yes, we didn't learn them, but I know some of the strategies by simply reading from the questionnaire we filled last time.

**R:** Which one of the six writing strategies (i.e. memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies) do you frequently use?

**SC** □ Though I cannot namely identify them, I try to feel confident about my writing while I am writing.

**R:** ok. So, do you use the affective writing strategies?

**SC** □ Yes. In addition, I also sometimes use things like planning while I am writing.

**R:** Ok. You are referring to the metacognitive writing strategies.

**SC** □ Yes.

**R:** Good. In general, do you think that these writing strategies are important?

**SC** □ They are very important, especially to English majoring students.

**R:** If you believe that these strategies are important, why haven't you used them so far?

**SC** □ Primarily, as I told you earlier, not including the writing strategies in the courses we took is one of the main problems. Secondly, we students do not give much attention to writing strategies while we write. In the third place, except few of them, teachers do not let us use these strategies.

**R:** Ok. The other point is that from the belief inventory questionnaire I came to understand that most of you have a positive belief about writing. However, you were not practically observed writing in consistent to your beliefs. So, what do you think are the reasons for the mismatches between your beliefs and actual writing practices?

**SC** □ There is a gap regarding connecting what we theoretically know with our practice. It is mostly because of our lack of patience.

**R:** Very good. Let us now talk about your writing performance. When the essay you wrote last time is evaluated, most of you got a low result. Can you tell me the main reasons for the low performance of your writing?

**SC** □ Writing is different from other courses. For example, we may write something and assume it to be best, but in the eyes of our teachers our essay might have many errors. In addition, writing contains many things in it such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and the message. Thus, producing good writing needs considering various things. This is, therefore, very difficult. In addition, our poor writing background can also be taken as one of the reasons for our poor writing skill.

**R** □ Can you tell me the reasons for your poor writing performance?

**SC** □ As I have tried to explain above, the complex nature of writing, students' lack of interest towards writing and teachers' poor writing instruction are the major reasons. Similarly, the missing of some essential components of writing such as writing strategies in the curriculum is one of the problems.

**R** □ What do you think should be done to solve the aforementioned problems?

**SC:** Due actions should be taken from the curriculum preparation level, in general to students' attitude towards writing and their writing practice in particular.

**R:** Thank you very much!

**SC** □ Thank you, too.

**APPENDIX F-4: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT-D**

**Date: October 25, 2016**

**Place: DBU, English Students Classroom**

**Time: 11□50-12□07 Morning**

**R:** Thank you for your being willing to take part in this interview.

**SD:** You are welcome!

**R:** Shall we make this interview in Amharic or in English?

**SD:** Let us make in Amharic.

**R:** Good. Can you first tell me why most of you believe writing is a difficult skill?

**SD:** Writing is all about generating ideas from our mind and putting it into a written form.

**R:** Sure. Can you tell me the reasons?

**SD:** From the four language skills, the two (writing and speaking) are productive while the remaining two (listening and reading) are receptive skills. Thus, these two productive skills require lots of things from students, especially because writing is more formal, and to write better one should worry about the content, organization and grammar. So it is difficult.

**R:** Good. What do you think is the purpose of writing?

**SD:** It has four purposes. One of them is giving information. The second is the one which we use for evidence purpose. Entertainment and creativity are also the third and the fourth purposes of writing.

**R:** Do you set an objective to your writing?

**SD:** I don't mostly set.

**R:** Why

**SD:** I don't think it is that important.

**R:** Which kind of the writing approaches do you employ while you write?

**SD:** Emu... before I start writing, I first list out several ideas about the topic I am writing on. Then I sort out the most important ones and cluster them. Then I start writing.

**R:** So, are you saying that you use the process approach to writing?

**SD:** Yes.

**R:** Very good. With regard to this, most of the students believe that writing following process approach is helpful. However, most of you were not observed writing following the process approach to writing. What do you think are the reasons for this mismatch?

**SD:** Since we have lack of writing experience, we do not practice what we believe in though we know that the process approach to writing is important. This is then typically related to our background.

**R:** Which level of your writing do you give to your teacher or friends for correction? The draft part or the final?

**SD:** I give them the draft because I believe that if others give me comments before the final product, I can have the chance to correct my errors. Therefore, I give the draft version for comment. But, sometimes, if teachers need it for evaluation purpose, I give them the final version.

**R:** Do you think that a comment from other is helpful, in general?

**SD:** Yes. Because I think that I can learn my gaps from others.

**R:** To which level of your writing do you give much emphasis? Is it to the mechanics (i.e. capitalization and punctuation)? Grammar? Or the message/content?

**SD:** If a given writing has to transmit message, its grammar should also be good because if ones writing has a grammatical problem, its meaning might also be distorted. Thus, we should carefully consider all the aspects of writing.

**R:** To which aspect do you thus give more emphasis?

**SD** □ It is for grammar.

**R:** Why?

**SD:** It is because I believe that grammar is very important. For example, if I use the present tense while I am writing about past, the meaning will be totally changed. Thus, I believe that grammar should be given more emphasis since it has a great impact on the quality of my writing.

**R:** Good. You filled a questionnaire on writing strategies last time. In relation to this, how do you evaluate your awareness or knowledge about these strategies?

**SD:** Yes I know them.

**SD:** So, do you think that your use of writing strategy is effective?

**SD:** I think so.

**R:** How?

**SD:** I don't mean that I am fully using these strategies, but I sometimes use them.

**R:** Which of the six writing strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies) do you frequently use in your writing?

**SD:** I frequently use the memory and metacognitive strategies because these strategies are familiar to me.

**R:** Why don't you use them effectively?

**SD:** Because I don't have the efficiency and patience of using all of the strategies while I write, I try to use few of the strategies and try to produce a better writing. Therefore, the reasons for not using these strategies are related to students' lack of interest and teachers' lack of interest and experience to motivate us employ these strategies.

**R:** Very good. Let us now talk about your writing performance. After evaluating your essay exams, I came to know that most of you have a poor writing performance. So, what do you think are the main reasons for your low writing performance?

**SD:** Actually, we got frustrated while we write. This might have its own impact on the writing process. Similarly, as I stated earlier, the problem of not appropriately using the writing strategies and approaches has its own great impact on our writing performance. In addition to this, we did not take the writing strategies both at school and university. We had even the trend of jumping writing lessons when we were at school. Therefore, our writing performance is not improved because of various reasons.

**R:** What do you recommend then to overcome these problems?

**SD:** To solve the problems related to writing performance, I believe that I should make a regular practice. In addition, I believe that we should develop our culture of working with others so as to identify our writing gaps and work towards improving our writing.

**R:** ok. Thank you very much for the time we had.

**SD:** I thank you, too.

**APPENDIX F-5: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT-E**

**Date: Jan 20, 2017**

**Place: AAU, NCR, G10**

**Time: 9□30-9□52 Afternoon**

**R:** Thank you for your being willing for this interview.

**SE:** I thank you, too.

**R:** Shall we make the interview in Amharic or in English?

**SE:** Let it be in Amharic.

**R:** Ok. So far, you have filled two questionnaires about beliefs and writing strategy use. You also took a writing exam. Now, we will discuss most of the points based on these issues. Would you first tell me why most of you believe that writing skill is more difficult than the other three language skills

**SE:** As to my understanding, we believe that writing is a difficult skill since it requires a proper use of grammar. This is quite challenging. It also requires our power of diction.

**R:** So, are you saying that writing is difficult since it contains lots of things?

**SE:** Sure.

**R:** Ok. What do you think is the main purpose of writing?

**SE:** Writing is the process of giving information by converting ideas into writing. Therefore, the purpose of writing is mainly to give information.

**R:** Do you set an objective to your writing?

**SE:** No, I don't set.

**R:** Why not?

**SE:** Because I don't believe it brings difference in my writing

**R:** Good. Eum... Writing has various approaches such as product, process, free, controlled and the like. As it was seen from the essay test, most of you used the product approach to writing. However, in the questionnaire you reflected that the process approach to writing is useful. Why didn't you write based on what you believe in?

**SE:** You know it is because we want to immediately put our ideas into paper before we forget them.

**R:** Why don't you then plan your writing so as not to forget your ideas?

**SE:** I personally do not have this habit. This means that I have the habit of directly writing rather than planning my writing. I also think that writing through process is wastage of time waste.

**R:** Ok. Don't you think that not writing following the process approach will affect the quality of your writing?

**SE:** Sure. Process writing improves the effectiveness of my writing because when I write through process, I think the message and structure of my writing will be improved.

**R:** Good. Which level of your writing do you give to your teacher or friends for comment? Is it the final product or the draft?

**SE:** I give my writing to my teacher when I feel that I have correctly done it, and when I feel that it can transmit the message I wanted to convey. But, we don't have the habit of commenting on each others work.

**R:** To which level of writing do you give more emphasis when you write? Is it for Grammar? Mechanics? Or Content?

**SE:** Eum... I try to consider all.

**R:** To which aspect do you give special emphasis?

**SE:** I give special emphasis to grammar since it has various rules to be considered. If grammar is used incorrectly, the message I intended to convey will be altogether. So I give attention to grammar.

**R:** Good. Do you think others comment will improve your writing, in general?

**SE:** Yes. I believe so, because getting comments from others on my written work will give me the chance to learn from my errors in the process of correcting my writing based on others comment.

**R:** The other thing that we saw in the questionnaire was about writing strategies. How do you then evaluate your overall understanding about writing strategies?

**SE:** Excuse me. Would you say it again?

**R:** I am asking you about your awareness or knowledge of the six writing strategies (i.e memory writing strategies, cognitive writing strategies, compensation writing strategies, metacognitive writing strategies, affective writing strategies and social writing strategies)

**SE:** Ok I have knowledge of these writing strategies as we, more or less, learned about them before. However, I don't effectively employ these writing strategies while I write.

**R:** Which of the strategies do you frequently use while you write?

**SE:** Eum... I frequently use the compensation writing strategy. I also sometimes use the cognitive writing strategy.

**R:** Why do you use these writing strategies?

**SE:** I said the compensation strategy since I have the habit of using dictionary and the synonyms of words while I write. I said metacognitive since I sometimes write through process.

**R:** Do you in general believe that writing strategies are useful?

**SE:** I think these strategies are very important because strategies are basic for one's writing. If we don't know them, it is like saying we don't know how to write.

**R:** Very Good. Eum... So, you already said that you don't use the writing strategies though you theoretically know them. Would you then tell me the reasons for not practically using these strategies?

**SE:** Because most of us had not much been working on writing activities since elementary school, I believe that lack of interest towards writing using these writing strategies is the main problem.

**R:** The other point is related to your writing performance. Most of you reflected that you have a positive belief about writing, but your writing performance is below expected; it is low. What do you think are the reasons behind your low writing performance?

**SE:** Ok...Eum... The following are the main reasons. Primarily, writing needs regular practice by its nature, so I think the first reason is our lack of practice. The other one is related to students' lack of motivation to work against their writing gaps.

**R:** So, what do you recommend to be done to solve these problems?

**SE:** From the students' side we should understand the importance of writing skill in general, and work towards improving our interest related problems. In the second place, teachers should also revise their instructional approach to writing. Lastly, the writing courses and lessons should be properly designed so that they can attract students' attention.

**R:** Thank you very much!

**SE** □ I thank you, too.

**APPENDIX F-6: THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION:  
STUDENT F**

**Date:** Jan 20, 2017

**Place:** AAU, NCR, G10

**Time:** 9:00-9:18 Afternoon

**R:** [redacted]

**SF:** It's ok.

**R:** [redacted]?

**SF:** [redacted]

**R:** Ok... Then, there are some semi-structured questions; try to answer them precisely.

**SF:** Ok

**R:** Last time you filled two questionnaires (the beliefs inventory questionnaire and the writing strategy use questionnaire) and a writing test. In the beliefs inventory questionnaire, most of you reported that writing skill is more difficult than other English language skills. Why is it so?

**SF:** Ya... Unlike to other English language skills, writing are difficult since it has a complex process. It is not an immediate action that you do it at once; it needs to be done consciously; the writer needs to develop his/her idea consciously. So it is a bit hard.

**R:** Ok. Again most of you believe that it is better to put an objective to your writing, but I didn't observe you putting an objective to your writing while you were writing. Why?

**SF:** Most of the students, including myself, do not write objectives to our writing because we don't have that experience [putting objectives to our writing].

**R:** Very good. There are different kinds of approaches to learning writing (process, product, genre, process-product, free, guided, and controlled). Regarding this, most of you believe that most of the approaches to writing, especially the process approach to teaching writing, is better than the product approach to learning writing, but practically you were observed using the product approach to writing. Why is it so?

**SF:** The process oriented approach that includes brainstorming, planning ideas, drafting, rewriting, and editing is a bit complex. You see, while writing, these actions are time consuming plus they need more effort than what is needed in the product approach. Thus, when I write, for example, I don't give attention to all the processes, except connecting the topic to my prior knowledge and writing the final copy without drafting or editing it.

**R:** Don't you think that [not following the process approach to writing] would affect your writing?

**SF:** Of course, yes [it affects], but it depends on the kind of your writing activities. For example, if I am writing a research, it may need more of structural writing, so it may demand me following the process. However, sitting for an exam or writing for a classroom purpose, it is hard to follow the stages in the process approach since it is going to be boring.

**R:** Good, which level of your writing do you give to your classmates or instructor?

**SF:** If you ask me my personal experience, I don't have that trend [the trend of letting other comment on his work].

**R:** Why not?

**SF:** Because the writing activities in the writing or other courses donot encourage me to work with others. In my institute, the collabuarative approach is not much attributed.

**R:** So, in general, do you think that others comment will improve your writing?

**SF:** Of course, yes. But the comments or the ideas that others give you might be effective or affective. So, we should judge the importance of the comments before we consider them, even sometimes people's comment may discourage you.

**R:** So you don't want to give your work for a comment?

**SF:** I want to give, but I give to those who are optimistic.

**R:** Ok which aspects of your writing do you give more emphasis? Content? Grammar? Or mechanics?

**SF:** Most of the time, as an English language student, I care for my grammar and the accuracy of *my* writing. The message or the content is secondary for me as a language student. I am more concerned about the grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization of my writing.

**R:** How do you evaluate your overall knowledge about writing strategies?

**SF:** Ya, last time, while I was filling the questionnaire, I came to know that there are five kinds of writing strategies.

**R:** Yes, six.

**SF:** Thank you! Six kinds of writing strategies, but I didn't theoretically know these things before though I use some of the strategies practically without knowing their names.

**R:** Didn't you learn them in the writing courses you took before?

**SF:** Yes, we didn't take them.

**R:** Good, then. According to your understanding from the strategy use questionnaire, which kind of the writing strategies do you frequently use?

**SF:** Some of the cognitive and most of the compensation strategies

**R:** Do you think writing strategies are useful, in general?

**SF:** Of course, without them [writing strategies] I can say that we can write nothing. So, they are very useful.

**R:** You told me that you are not using these writing strategies intentionally. So, what do you think are the major factors affecting your writing strategy use?

**SF:** Generally speaking, these things [writing strategies] are not familiar to us. The curriculum or the overall educational system focuses on the structural elements of writing. In addition, it gives more emphasis to telling us about the theoretical aspects of writing than letting us practically learn it. These important writing strategies were not taught to us, and our background itself was not that strong regarding writing strategies.

**R:** In general, most of you have a positive belief about writing, but during the actual writing practice, you were not observed implementing what you believe in. What do you think are the reasons for the mismatches between your beliefs and your writing practices?

**SF:** Yes, believing and practicing what you believe in is not an easy task. You need to have a strong commitment and background to implement what you believe in. The other reason for the mismatch between our beliefs and practice is that teachers do not encourage us to write using the writing principles.

**R:** Very good. The other point I want to ask you is related to your writing performance. After marking your essay test, I came to know that most of you have poor writing performance. What do you think are the major factors for students' poor writing performance?

**SF:** Yes...eee... English is a second or third language for most of us. It becomes then hard to produce a good writing item since writing is concerned with factors related to linguistics, social background, and our general attitude towards writing. These factors may directly or indirectly affect our writing performance. Similarly, as to my informal observation, most of us give more attention to speaking in English than writing, but in the actual academic situation, scholars value writing more than speaking. Most of us do not know this fact (the fact that writing is very important). I believe that the way we learn writing (the approach) both at lower grades and here at university is not effective enough in motivating and engaging students in the actual writing

work. I also believe that writing should be collaborative like speaking skill. But, teachers do not encourage us to write in group.

**R:** What possible solutions do you suggest to solve the above problems?

**SF:** I think it should primarily be worked on the attitude of the students towards English in general, and the writing skill in particular. Secondly, the pedagogical assumptions that exist in the current language education should be modernized. Teachers should also motivate students to know and use alternative approaches to teaching writing and seuwriting strategies.

**R:** Thank you very much, indeed.

**SF:** You are welcome.

## APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW DATA

No	Questions	SA	SB	SC	SD	SE	SF
1	In the questionnaire, most of you reported that writing skill is difficult than other language skills. Why?	-Believes Writing skill is difficult than other language skills <b>Reasons</b> -Writing has many rules -It requires the use of writing strategies which is difficult to implement	-Writing skill is difficult <b>Reasons</b> -It has many things to be considered -It needs time and effort	-Writing Skills is difficult <b>Reasons</b> -Poor writing skill background -Its nature is also complex	-He believes writing is a difficult skill <b>Reasons</b> -Writing as a productive skill needs a lot of things to be considered -Writing is formal	-He believes Writing skill is a difficult skill <b>Reasons</b> -It requires proper use of grammar -It requires good power of words	-He believes that writing is difficult <b>Reasons</b> -It has a complex nature -It needs careful planning
2	Most of you believe that setting a goal to writing is important, but you were not observed doing so during the actual	-Does not put an objective <b>Reason</b> -has no the habit/experience	-Doesn't put objectives <b>Reasons</b> Believes It is not useful -Lack of habit/experience	-She doesn't set objective to her writing <b>Reason:</b> -She has no habit of setting objectives to her writing	-Doesn't mostly set objective <b>Reason</b> -He doesn't think it is important	-He doesn't set objectives to his writing <b>Reasons</b> -He does not believe that setting goal bring a difference	-Does not put objectives <b>Reason</b> -Has no the experience

	writing. Why not?					on his writing	
3	In general, there are several approaches to learning writing. Of which, in the questionnaire, you reflected that the process approach to learning writing is better than the other approaches to learning writing. However, in practice, during the essay writing test, you were not seen implementing the process approach to writing. Why was it so?	Does not implement process approach writing <b>Reason:</b> - has no the habit of writing through process -Teachers do not motivate students to write through process- they encourage the process approach to writing	-Not sure about which approach is using, but the researcher came to understand from the explanation that he is using the product approach -There is a mismatch between her belief and practice <b>Reason</b> -Lack of patience to pass through the stages of writing	-Uses the product approach to writing <b>Reasons for not using the process approach</b> -She has no experience -Writing through process is boring <b>Reason for the mismatches</b> -Lack of patience to implement the process approach to writing	-He tries to implement the process approach to writing, not properly implemented <b>Reason for the mismatch</b> -Lack of writing experience due to his poor writing background	-Believes writing through process improves his writing, but he does not use the process approach to writing (There is a mismatch between his beliefs and practice) <b>Reasons</b> •Lack of experience in writing following the process approach to writing •Has the habit of directly putting ideas on a paper not to forget the ideas he has in mind •Thinks that writing following all the stages in the process approach to writing is time wastage.	-He mostly uses the product approach to writing <b>Reasons</b> -Writing through process is tiresome -Writing is time consuming. -Teachers do not encourage us to writing following the process approach to writing

4	<p>-Which level of your writing do you give to your teacher or classmates for comment? The draft? Or The final?</p>	<p>-Gives the final draft to others <b>Reason</b> -Believes if others comment on the final product, it becomes easily to identify his deficiency.</p>	<p>-She gives the final version <b>Reason</b> -She has no the habit of commenting each other with her friends  Teachers do not give papers back, they rather take the final work for assessment purpose</p>	<p>-She gives the final draft of her writing to her teacher <b>Reason</b> -Teachers collect our writing for assessment purpose not for letting us identify our gaps and improve our skill.</p>	<p>-He gives the draft <b>Reason</b> -He believes that it gives him the chance to correct from his errors -He gives the final version for teachers for evaluation purpose</p>	<p>He gives the final draft to the teacher <b>Reason</b> -Has no the habit of getting comments from others</p>	
5	<p>Do you comments given by others</p>	<p>He incorporates others comments selectively.</p>	<p>Believes that comments or feedback from others have minimal importance -But she has no the habit of peer correction</p>	<p>She believes feedback from both teachers and students is useful -She has no habit</p>	<p>Generally believes comment from others is helpful <b>Reason:</b> -Thinks that he learns from others</p>	<p>-He believes that other comments improve his writing because it gives him the chance to learn from others</p>	<p>Believes comments from others are useful in general -But he has no the trend of receiving comments from others on my writing <b>Reasons:</b> -The writing activities do not encourage him to work with others -Collaborative approach is not much emphasized in</p>

							his institution
6	While you write, to which aspect of writing do you give more emphasis? Message? Grammar? or Mechanics?	Mechanics and grammar are given emphasis <b>Reason:</b> -Believes that message should come next to grammar and mechanics -Content is secondary	She gives more attention to Grammar <b>Reasons</b> Believes other aspects of writing can be achieved if the grammar is correct  Teachers give more attention to it while scoring	-Gives focus to Grammar <b>Reason:</b> -Because I believe that grammar is basic and it determines the quality of other aspects	-He gives more emphasis to grammar <b>Reason:</b> -Believes that it should be given more emphasis since it has a great impact on the quality of one's writing	-Tries to consider all, but special emphasis is given to grammar <b>Reason:</b> -He believes that If the grammar is incorrect, the remaining aspects will also be inaccurate	He gives more emphasis to grammar and mechanics -Content is secondary to him
7	How do you evaluate your general understanding about the writing strategies?	Has little understanding of the writing strategies	-She has little understanding about the writing strategies <b>Reasons</b> Because she didn't learn about them adequately	-She believes that writing strategies are useful -She is not sure about her understanding of the writing strategies	-He knows the writing strategies, and uses them sometimes	-He believes that he has knowledge of writing strategies •But he doesn't employ them frequently though he believes they are important	-He believes writing strategies are useful in general -He has little understanding about writing strategies <b>Reason</b> -Did not learn them in the courses
8	Which of the six writing strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation)	Uses the metacognitive and compensation strategies <b>Reason</b>	- Generally believes the writing strategies	-She frequently uses the affective and metacognitive writing	Uses the memory and metacognitive writing strategies <b>Reason</b> -Because	-Generally believes writing strategies are useful -He frequently	-He frequently uses the cognitive and compensation writing strategies <b>Reason</b>

	n, metacognitive, affective and social strategies) do you frequently use in your writing?	-Because these strategies are familiar to students writing experience-	are useful -She uses compensation and memory strategies <b>Reasons:</b> -Used to use these two writing strategies - She uses the affective writing strategies	strategies	these strategies are familiar to him	uses the compensation and cognitive writing strategies <b>Reason for frequently using the two strategies</b> -He has been using these strategies beginning high school (a Background of using dictionaries and writing through process)	-These strategies are familiar to him
9	What do you think are the major reasons that have affected your understanding/awareness about the writing strategies and your writing strategy use?	<b>Reasons :</b> -Poor self-motivation and interest towards writing strategies -Negative attitude towards English -Teachers lack of awareness about writing and their limited capacity	<b>Reasons</b> -The writing strategies are not included in the curriculum - Teachers' poor competency to teach writing -Students lack of motivation and interest about writing strategies	<b>Reasons</b> -Writing strategies are not included in the writing courses or curriculum -We students and the teachers give less attention to writing strategies	<b>Reasons</b> -Students' lack of efficiency and patience -Teachers' lack of initiation and experience to let students use the writing strategies	<b>Reasons</b> Background-poor writing practice -Students' lack of interest	<b>Reasons</b> -Did not learn them before since they are not included in the curriculum -Poor writing strategy use background
1	What do	<b>Reasons:</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Reasons</b>

0	think are the major reasons for students' low writing performance level?	-Students' interest towards English in general and writing in particular -Teachers' method of teaching and assessment -Exclusion of writing strategies from the curriculum	Assigning students to the English department without their interest - Students' negative attitude towards writing - Teachers' way of teaching writing	-The complex nature of writing (has various rules) -Our poor writing background -Students' lack of interest -Poor writing instruction -Exclusion of writing strategies from the curriculum	He gets frustrated while writing -Deficiency of using the writing strategies - Inappropriate use of the approaches to writing Poor writing instruction background	-Lack of regular practice -Students' lack of interest and motivation to fill their writing gaps	-Writing skill is a difficult skill since it is concerned with various factors such as linguistics, social and psychological -It is not given the necessary attention by the students -The method writing is taught should be revised -It should also be taught collaboratively
11	What solutions do you suggest to solve these problems?	<b>Solutions</b> -Should be worked towards students' attitude towards English in general and Writing in particular -Teachers should improve their method of teaching and assessing writing -Teachers focus of area while marking writing should be improved	<b>Solutions</b> - Assigning students to the English department based on their interest -Should be worked towards improving students' attitude towards English language in general and writing in	<b>Solutions</b> -The curriculum should be reconsidered -Should be worked towards students' attitude	<b>Solutions</b> -Believes regular practice helps to improve his writing performance -Group writing should be appreciated to fill writing gaps by the help of others	<b>Solutions</b> -Students awareness towards writing should be improved -Teachers should be careful about their choice of the approaches to teaching writing - The writing course or lessons should be designed in an attractive way	<b>Solutions</b> -Should be primarily worked on students attitude towards English in general, and writing skill in particular -The writing pedagogical assumptions in the current curriculum should be revised -Teachers should work towards modernizing their writing instruction

			particular -The writing instructio n should be designed in a simple and attractive manner				
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