

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

PROBLEMS STUDENTS FACE IN WRITING: GRADE TEN
STUDENTS OF HIGHER 12 SECONDARY SCHOOL IN FOCUS.

By

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Addis Ababa

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IN FOCUS AT HIGHER 12 SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

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Abstract

The study attempted to investigate the problems in writing in one governmental school found in Addis Ababa. The study has also identified the difficulty level of writing and the causes of writing problems. Data ^{were} were collected from one high school using questionnaire, interview and tests. The participants of the study were grade ten students and English teachers. The sampled students, to fill questionnaire and to participate in the test, were selected randomly. Moreover, the sampled teachers were selected using available sampling to fill the questionnaire and using purposive sampling to participate in the interview. Accordingly, 187 students and 10 teachers were involved in the study. Out of the 187 students 164 have returned the questionnaire. In line with this, the tests were rated by two independent raters. The analysis was carried out using percentage and descriptive statements. Besides, the questionnaire and tests analysis results are fleshed by qualitative discussions of the data obtained through the interview responses. The results of the study indicated that eight glaring writing problems, namely: punctuation and capitalization problems, unclear writing, weak organization, auxiliary and prepositions errors, spelling and vocabulary problems. Further, the study revealed that writing is the difficult and serious for the students understudy. Additionally, it was pointed out that target language factors, students, teachers, parents related factors and environmental reasons were often causes of writing problems. It was therefore, recommended that concerned teachers, curriculum designers, parents and students need to give attention to empower the writing ability. They should value the benefit of teaching and learning of writing skill by contributing their own part in creating conducive learning environment to students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this first part, those basic aspects that could give essential information on the general nature of the study are presented. To this end, background of the Study, some highlights pertaining to what the problem is about, its' objectives, importance, scope and limitations are covered.

1.1. Background of the Study

At the secondary education level, students are taught a variety of subjects that are supposed to help guide them in their future career in personal choices. In line with this, Donayre, (2001:1) stated, "It is during these teenage years of moving in to adulthood that young people often take on their most formidable views and perspectives about the world in which we live in". Because of this awesome transformation, the teaching of English as part of the high school Curriculum is of overwhelming importance. Therefore, interest in teaching and learning of English as a global language has been growing through out the world, and most counties in the world began to introduce the teaching of English as a compulsory subject in to school curriculum. In relation to this, in Ethiopia, English has been taught to enhance the country's development efforts, especially in education sector (H/Michael, 1993: 1) as cited in (Italo, 2004: 10). Supporting this idea, Awol (1999:8); Alemu (2004: 27); and Italo (2004) state that English is serving as a medium of instruction at secondary schools, and it is commonly used for giving notes and setting exams. In addition to this Seime, (1995: 15) confirms that English is also used in legislations, broadcasting, and some cases, in official correspondences.

From the above discussions, one can understand how English will play an important role in achieving the various educational objectives for the

development of society and how much attention should be given for its implementation. On the basis of these illustrations, English language has gained a great importance in the country.

However, elementary school leaves, according to some educators are very poor and it is extremely difficult for them to follow secondary school instructions. For example, Awol (1999:8) points out that the teaching process of English language is geared towards enabling students to pass examination, rather than to use it in learning school subjects. Additionally, the same author explains there is very little help provided to students in writing, speaking, note taking, library work, etc.

Moreover, Zerihun (2002) cited in Alemu (2004:27) states that teachers of other subjects and English are tending to instruct their students by using a language half-way between English and mother tongue, which is attributed not only to the students low comprehension ability but also to the teachers' lack of adequate command of English. Besides, in Ethiopia there are no situations in which students use English outside the class rooms. Therefore, there are no opportunities for students to practice and develop English. Because of this very weak students come to the high schools, with most of them are not any where near to do any thing with English at all level (Alemu, 2004 and Awol 1999). According to Rodger, in Rossinor and Bolitho (1990:12) cited in Alemu (2004) also notes that even the top students who are admitted to Universities are poor in using English. Supporting this, Seime (1999:15) forwards that students are too low to pursue their tertiary education where English is the medium of instruction.

As a result, it is common phenomenon that the level of Ethiopian students language skills in general is very low after they have been learning the language from grade one (1) to University level. Particularly

their writing skill is often found to be below the expectations. This entails that writing skill, which is the base for success in all academic aspects, calls for utmost emphasis by writing teachers at all to improve the learners learning ability in general and to enhance their writing skill in particular. As Italo (1999:208) notes it is imperative that language teachers in general and writing teachers in particular believe that writing skill is a worth learning and practicing in our everyday activities. With this understanding, the researcher was initiated to investigate the issues further with the problems students encounter in learning writing skills.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

English writing lessons are important. They basically provide students with grammar and vocabulary items. On the other hand, learning to write is learning to use grammar with ease and facts in some sequential order as tools. In relation to this, Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996:85) note that writing is one of the most important skills for students in learning English for academic purpose. In view of its significance, writing is included in the syllabus and English text books in Ethiopia beginning from grade one. Supporting this, Geremew, (1999:2) explains writing has a great empowering effect in all our academic activities. Besides, writing is a line of thought that we shall develop because it is a thinking tool for language development and for learning in all disciplines (Bjork and Raisanen, 1997:8). Further, it is also a valuable part of any language course (Raimes, 1983:3). Similarly, McDonough and Shaw (1993) also confirm that writing is a very important skill in learning language, so *it is valuable to students if they are provided with writing environment.*

However, results of writing skill lessons show that learners are not effective in writing skill activities (Atkins, Hailom & Nuru, 1996:85). In relation to this Tesfaye (1991) points out that those students who have received of grammar focused English language teaching still experience

great difficult in writing grammatically acceptable and meaningful sentences. Additionally, the researcher was teaching English from grade nine to ten students at government schools called Gozzamen and Damot high schools in eastern and western Gojjam respectively for practicum I and II for at least 3 months. There, he observed that most students decline to do writing skill activities. The manifestations were that students used to come to class with out doing any writing activities, attempt any writing questions, but it was observed that the students copying questions alone, or copying answers from others. Finally, most of them used to fail in writing skills exams.

The researcher was also teaching tutorial classes to grade ten students when he was second and third year university student at public school named Negash High school in Wukro District. That paved ways for him to ask these grade ten students for feed-back on the teaching and learning process. The students said that writing skill is difficult and time consuming to think and to produce meaningful ideas for them. So, they consider writing in class is some what time consuming activity. Instead, they said that they need to spend most of the period on free speaking lessons.

Moreover, the researcher was giving tutorial classes to grade nine and ten students in Addis Ababa in the last summer for three months. Then, the researcher has observed similar problems in the student learning writing skills like the previous mentioned students.

In addition to class room observations some grade nine and grade ten students used to ask the researcher personally for advice on how to do writing skill activities, in connection to the school exams they were about to take. Even parents used to ask him for certain direction of doing writing skill activities. Besides, the researcher observed a shock and

complains from high school teachers, university instructors and company employers those students can not write to the proficient level. These all seem to indicate that student have serious problems in learning writing skill.

Locally few researches have been conducted on the teaching of writing skill. For example, Tesfaye (1991) has conducted an experimental research on teaching writing in grade 11: The existing practices versus the controlled and guided methods. His findings reveal that introducing the controlled and guided methods of teaching, writing skill in the Ethiopia secondary schools could have considerable contributions. Similarly, Yonas (1998), also worked on "teaching writing as a process at the 1st year level at AAU with special reference to college English," He found that the students have showed significant change in their perceptions about writing and writing abilities after using college English which has a process approach.

Moreover, Habtamu (2007), studies "Project writing in business course, student writing needs and faculty belief about writing: the case in Saint Mary's college." The findings, of his research indicate that writing project assignments are believed to develop students' creativity and problem solving by exposing them to the real world or work and students' believe the importance of writing ability to complete writing assignments and to succeed in exams.

Additionally, Alamrew (2005), worked on "the perception of writing instruction and students writing performance " his main objective was investigating the beliefs, efficacy and attitude of both teachers and students in the teaching learning of the writing skill, exploring how writing is taught and assessing to what extent students can write in

English. The above studies were done in preparatory class and it did not consider the problems in learning writing skill. Therefore, the present study differs from the above studies in terms of focus, setting and grade level.

Generally, the above studies show the relevance of teaching writing skill focusing at University and preparatory level. They also show the differing perceptions and needs of students and teachers in teaching and learning process of writing skill.

However, the writer of this thesis was concerned with the problems of learning writing skill. As far as the researcher has got an access no research is, conducted on this issue. Hence, the researcher is intended to conduct a thesis on the problems students encounter in learning writing skills: Grade Ten in focus at Higher 12 Secondary School in Addis Ababa.

The study uses writing problems instead of errors, the traditional concept for one reason. Error analysis, so to speak, confines itself to grammars per se and does not give the communicative aspect much attention (Richards, 1971) .It is on this basis that the researcher uses writing problems so as to include the communicative aspects in the overall analysis.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the problems encountered by student in learning the writing skills. In line with this, the study is particularly designed:

- To identify some of the problems experienced by students in learning writing skill.
- To show the difficulty level of writing.
- To point out the causes of writing problems.

Based on the above objectives the following specific questions are made:

1. What are some of the problems students face in learning writing?
2. To what extent is writing skill difficult?
3. What are the causes of writing problems?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The importance of this study emanates primarily from the significance given to English language at the national level. More specifically; the following institutions or individuals can make use of the outcomes of the study directly or indirectly.

- Institutes of higher education: institutes that train high school English teachers will also benefit from the study. They use the result of the study to judge the depth, breadth and the difficult level of the writing courses being offered in training for English teachers.
- English teachers and students: teachers and students too will benefit from the study of the result is to be accessible to them. Both parties can sort out where the weaknesses of the teaching learning process lie so as to try their best to improve it.
- The study may provide up –to –date picture of writing instruction in secondary schools. Hence, the findings of the study may help the English department to take action on the identified problems.
- The school teachers could benefit from the findings of the study to improve and facilitate the quality of writing instruction.
- Since the study is limited to one high school, the findings could serve as a reference for further detailed study on the problem at national level.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

It is useful to investigate writing skill learning problems in different part of the country, because the most reliable and valid information may be found if the research study includes a country context rather than a specific one.

However, to make it manageable, the study is limited to investigate problems encountered in learning writing skill by grade ten students. The problems associated with writing skills learning are deep and wide in their very nature. Teaching learning process in relation to such factors, as family background, parental expectation, and teachers' effectiveness and other problems within and out of school. However, it is very difficult to deal with all the factors exhaustively in this study. Therefore, to make the problem manageable size, the study focuses only problems students in encounter in learning writing skill, the difficulty level of learning writing skill and causes of poor writing.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

In order to evaluate the desired classroom teaching -learning competencies, continuous classroom observations were vital tools. However, in this study, observation was not employed. Due to time factor, it was not possible for the researcher to have observation sessions.

A second limitation of this study is that since the study is conducted only at one high school, conclusion deduced from such a narrow context and recommendations provided may not serve the case of all schools throughout Addis Ababa or the country. In spite of these however, the researcher attempted to make the study as complete as possible.

1.7. The Study Plan and Organization

The thesis has five chapters including this introductory one. Each chapter has its own introductions and sub-titles. Some of the concepts having to do with writing skill learning are reviewed briefly based on literature and related research in chapter two and chapter three deals with the methodology. Chapter four is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the present study. The last chapter is concerned with the conclusion of the study and recommendations put forward on the basis of the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The chapter focus on reviewing literature and the contents of the chapter are treated under the following sub- headings.

- 2.1. What is writing?
- 2.2. The purpose of Learning Writing Skills
- 2.3. The Role of Writing in Language Learning
- 2.4. Major Characteristics of Writing
- 2.5. Writing Activities:
- 2.6. Phases of the Writing Process
- 2.7. The importance of learning writing as a skill
- 2.8. Approaches in the Teaching of Writing
- 2.9. Why is writing difficult?
- 2.10. Problems of Writing
- 2.11. Causes of writing problems.

In the view of this, the chapter embodies information obtained from the many books, Journals and articles.

2.1. What Is Writing?

Writing is a productive language skill through which people put down their ideas on a piece of paper .In its simplest form , it may be just copying something already written , or reproducing in written form something which has been heard or read(River,1981) . For lower grades, writing may be sentence completion, substitutions, or just transformations (Raimes, 1983). These simple definitions require minimal composing ability, and thus need low- level Cognitive process (Danielson, 2000); and could be categorized as beginning level writing .

However, educators in the field of writing define writing in a more sophisticated manner. For example, Biggs (1988) says that writing is a tool for clarifying and extending thought. Similarly, Zamel (1982:197)

defines writing as “a process of exploring one’s thought and learning from the act of writing itself what these thoughts are”. Byrne (1988) also states that writing involves encoding of some kind of message, i.e. we translate our thought in to language. For Rivers (1981:29) writing, in its most developed form “refers to the conveying of information or the expression of original ideas in a consecutive way in the language.” Rivers (ibid) calls this “expressive writing” or “composition” .On his part, Byrne/1988) contents whatever the length of our writing is, we produce sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order connected in certain ways. Hedge (1988:89) who calls the production of piece of writing as drafting state that writing is “the way in which a writer puts together the piece of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an over all structure.

There fore, writing is not only the presentation of our thoughts in graphic symbols but also” a process of discovering and making meaning” (Zamel, 1983:166). Zamel (Ibid) further explains that through the act of writing “ideas are explored, clarified, and reformulated and as this process continues, new ideas suggest themselves and become assimilated into the developing pattern of thought.”

In general, educators seem to have slightly different focuses in their definition of writing. In this respect Danielson (2001:1) state’ “those who define writing as an expressive function focus on the writers experience ,while those who define writing as communication based on internal forms focus on content and the readers’ experience.”

2.2. The Purpose of Learning Writing Skills

The Primary purpose of second language teaching is to make the learners proficient in different language skills (*Rivers, 1981*). In addition to this, due to its inephemeralistic characteristics, it is used as along lasting

medium to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince each other.

In line with this, Pincas (1988) elaborate, like other language skills, writing is one of the fundamental skills which have potential contribution in day-to day academic performance of the students. As a result, in order to succeed in their academic performance, students must develop their communicative, linguistic, strategic, etc, competence; so that, they can produce a variety of efficient written works and conform with the real world practically.

Similarly, Hedge (1992:7) states that writing is also a skill which is essentially to be developed in order to be able to respond to a purpose and to kind of audience that we want to write. Additionally, Pincas (1988) says that in order to be able to produce a piece of writing, writing constructing grammatically correct and logically well - linked sentence is not enough. Over and above, it is crucial to be able to write appropriate sentences which suit the purpose and audience we have in mind. Thus, this brings us to the conclusion that there is no writing with out a reader and purpose.

In a nutshell, scholars and theorists suggest that writing could have a number of ^{purposes} proposes. However, we can divide the purposes in to two major categories: general and pedagogical purpose. According to Irmscher (1972) as cited in Italo (1999:23) the general reasons for writing are; 1) Writing is an important means of communication, 2) writing frequently reveals to us that what we know and feel or what we may think or we know, but can not verbalize, 3) Writing is also a means of organizing what we think, 4) writing also helps to weigh thought ,and 5) writing is in escapable mirror of the self. It is through writing that we share ideas, arouse feeling, persuade and communicate with people.

Secondly, the pedagogical purposes as listed by Byrne (1988:6) are; 1) to provide the learners and parents with some tangible evidences that they are making progress in the language, 2) to provide different learning styles and needs, 3) to offer exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium especially if skills are properly integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone, 4) to provide variety of class -room activities serving as a break from oral work, and 5) writing is often needed for formal and informal testing. These lists of purpose are the pedagogical purpose of both early and inter - mediate level: however, at post- inter mediate stage; writing becomes a goal by itself.

From this view, we can deduce that the ability to write is the ability to verbalize or explain ones ideas and thoughts. That is why, well (1981) briefly concludes that writing involves naming with words and explaining with words.

2.3. The Role of Writing in Language Learning

In his definition of writing, Byrne (1979), states that writing is transforming our thoughts in to language. This shows that writing is all about communicating ideas. In relation with this, white and Arndt (1991), indicate that writing is an important means of communication.

Hence, there is no doubt the significance of learning writing skill in language learning in general and second language learning in particular. Writing on the importance of the skill, Lue, (1989) notes "some of you wish to be writers, some of you wish to be correspondents, and some of you wish to be translators, while others wish to be teachers. No matter what career you choose, the ability to write is a necessity in life." Similarly, Kroll and Vann (1981; 99) note that "the mastery of written

language is taken as critical in distinguishing us from the uncivilized or “savages; the ‘uneducated’ or ‘ignored’ and young or’ undeveloped.’

Therefore, in the earlier approaches of language teaching such as the audio-lingual approach, it was only speaking which was given attention and seen as the core element of language teaching (Raimes, 1983) and writing was not given that much emphasis and did not get prominence in language teaching. However, Foley and Thompson (2003), emphasize the importance of writing in second language learning by arguing that second language learning is not only learning the oral languages, i.e. speaking and listening, but it is also important to consider how to learn to communicate through writing, effective teachers, therefore acknowledge the accomplishments of English language learners who achieve basic communication in writing. In connection to this, Ur (1996), notes that the objective of teaching writing in a foreign language in general and English language in particular is to get learners acquire that ability and skills they need to produce a range of different kinds of written texts, similar to those an educated person would be expected to be able to produce in their own language. This indicates that basic communication is the first goal of writing development.

However, writing is not used as a means of communication, but also as a permanent record. Additionally Kroll and Vann (1981; 99), note that “writing is used as predominate archival resource in a literate society, as the means by which important cultural information is preserved and transmitted inter- generationally”. And the fact that people frequently have to communicate with each other is not only reason to learn writing.

Raimes (1983; 3), suggests an additional and very important reason, i.e. - --“Writing helps our students learn”. First writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary that we have been

teaching our students. In addition, she indicates that the close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of any language course.

Similarly, Kroll and Vann (1981:53), say that "writing seems to serve an important function as a tool for the discovery of thoughts." This is to mean that when students try to write on a certain topic; they apply their full effort in generating and organizing ideas.

2.4. Major Characteristics of Writing

Writing has various features that make it different from other language skills, particularly, speech. Some of the basic features have been printed out by different writers as follows;

- Unlike speaking, writing is not a 'natural' process that can be developed intuitively. It requires actual learning and practice to develop.
- It requires standard forms of grammar, syntax and vocabulary
- The only means of expressing meaning in writing is the words in the page.
- Spelling and punctuation are key aspects in writing.
- Most of writing is planned and it takes time going back and changing what has been written is also possible.

Additionally, effective writing demands high quality of organization, in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so as to avoid ambiguity of meaning; the application of difficult grammatical items for focus patens, and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to the topic and the reader (Raimes, 1983; 3-4 Byrne, 1988:4Hedge, 1988:5)

2.5. Writing Activities

There are number of writing activities or tasks that we have been familiar with either as a teacher or student. The tasks are broadly divided in to three; control sentences construction, free composition and home work

function (McDonough and Shaw, 2003). If the emphasis of the language program is accuracy controlling learners writing out put will predominate. As further listed by McDonough & Shaw (2003:178) the range of activities include; providing a model sentences and asking students to construct parallel sentences with different lexical items, inserting a missing grammatical forms, composing sentences from tabular information and joining sentences to make a short paragraphs and inserting the right conjunctions.

Further more, free composition tasks demand the students to create an essay on a given topic often as a part of language examination. The most common example is students will re- asked to write about themselves or any other topic. Free composition activities and controlled activities are quite different in approval, but it does not mean that they are exclusive. The home work function in general course works that could be given at the end of a unit as a supplementary work in class or a set for home work and returned to the teacher for correction.

2.6. Phases of the Writing Process

When most people think of writing they usually think of finished products or text. However, in reality it is difficult to write the finished piece of writing with out passing via different stages. According, to McDonough and Shaw (1993), one characteristic of traditional view of writing is focusing on finished products. However, recently it is known that the process of writing is more important than the product. This is because as Applibee (1986), in kroll (1990:8) notes the process approach "provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (Planning, revising and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organizations, spelling and grammar)."

Different scholars have provided the stages of the writing activity. For instance, McDonaough and shaw(1993), suggest three stages; gathering

ideas “ writing and planning, working on drafts and preparing the final version. Similarly, Hedge (1988), indicates that” the process of writing is often described as consisting of three major activities or group of activities”. These are prewriting, writing and rewriting and final editing. Moreover, Guth (1989) provides a more comprehensive one which considers the above stages in detail. Guth indicates five stages of the writing process: namely triggering, gathering, shaping, revising and editing.

2.6.1. Triggering

It is the 1st stage in the writing process, i.e. it is a stage “to set the process of writing in motion” (Guth, 1989:9). This stage is what is called pre - writing stage by other scholars like McDonough and Shaw (1993); Hedge (1988). At this stage as the above mentioned writers indicate before starting to write or put pen to paper , students have to consider two important questions, these are the purpose of the writing and the audience ; when we say purpose it has relation with the function of the writing (Hedge,1988). Hedge (1988:21) lists some purpose of writing as follows;

Is it a report which the writer hopes will be persuasive and stimulate action? Is it an explanation of how something works which has to be careful, detailed and clear? Is it a letter of invitation to some friends or a letter applying for a job?

This reveals that, if students become familiar with the purpose of writing, it will be easier for them to organize and choose the language which is suitable to their propose. In line with this, Byrne (1988:25), states that giving purpose for students is “one way of helping the learners by making writing tasks more realistic.”

Further more, audience is also an important aspect to be taken in to consideration before starting to write. Flower (1979) in Kroll (1990:30) also points out students should “appeal to their readers need and interests in order to mature as writers.” It is obvious that students will perform much better in writing if they are told to write to real readers instead of teachers always read their writing. Generally, Hedge (1988), says that this is the stage of planning which can lead to improvements.

2.6.2. Gathering

This stage is concerned with “to have material to work with” Guth (1989:79). In other words, it is stage of exploration and discovery about what to write concerning the given topic. Hay and Ruth (1983:155), mention that “in order to write, writers need to have discovered something to say.” This can be done via brainstorming, note taking, using interviews etc. (Guth, 1989). AT this stage the writer simply jots down the ideas that he/she thinks is important to be raised in the text.

2.6.3. Shaping

At this stage students try to make their first draft or lay out what they have collected (Guth, 1989; Hedge,1988). Students should only concentrate on the content rather than other issues. Regarding this Hedge (1988:23), say “good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like questions to be asked at this stage like, “what is the real issue? To bring the subject in to focus and “how does it all add -up? to provide overall conclusions. Besides, Hays, Ruth et, al (1983: xi) note that “it is the act of shaping through in writing that makes possible the elaboration of ideas, the establishment of relationship among those ideas and the consequent manipulation of those relationships that we associate with complex thoughts.”

2.6.4. Revising

Dheram (1995) , notes that revision is central to the process of writing , Kroll and Vann (1981;130) ,also assert that “ Going back over previous

marital is essential for stepping back into the role of writer in what has already been written.” Hedge (1988:23), in other words it is rethinking about what is written. In doing so, the writer can add information or omit unnecessary information. (Guth. (1998), states some possible changes that could be made at this stage like filling in examples and additional evidences, re- arranging for a better flow & filling the missing links.

2.6.5. Editing

This stage, according to Kroll and Vann (1981) is re- reading stage of a finished piece of writing in which the writer takes some what different personality role. Moreover, Hedge (1988) indicates that it is a post writing stage which involves reading through the text by applying readers perspectives. This stage is also called proof reading stage which looks for mistakes in spelling, capitalization and punctuations. It is also a stage which helps the writer to be sure what the writer wants to say. To put in another way, at this stage the writer looks for the right words. In general Hedge (1988:23), says that “the editing process makes the final readjustments and checks accuracy so that the text is maximally accessible to the reader. Over all, to be successful in writing piece of text, it is important to pass via the above mentioned stages. Even if some of the stage overlap, it is impossible to consider all these stages at a time by trying to produce the final vision at once. All the above mentioned stages of writing are important. However, it does not mean that writing is a linear process with a strict plan – write revise sequence (Hays, Ruth et, al, 1983). They advocate throughout the writing process, the writer return to his /her writing to keep the process moving forward.

2.7. The Importance of learning Writing as a Skill

It seems in contentious to say that any language skill has its own value for human beings with a person who is capable of using more skills usually ripping more value from a given language. As different scholars agree, a person who is equipped with a writing skill (which is learned through a deliberate effort) it is assumed to get more advantages from a

language than person who can not write. It seems in a support of this assumption that Kane ((1988:4) says "writing is "worth learning, it is of an immediate practical benefit in almost any job or career". Similarly, Mellon, 1969) cited in Neman (1995: 7) is more emphatic to say the, "writing is the greatest tool for thinking ever invented by man."

The merits of being able to write are reported to be several. According to Wyrick (1990: XII) writing could be vital in the following ways;

- Writing helps us to lay out ideas for examination and analysis
- Writing can provide a record of our thoughts that we may study and evaluate
- Writing helps us to see and know ourselves in a better way
- Writing helps us to communicate with others effectively

As Wyrick thinks, enormous amount of time, energy and profit might be lost because of a single unclear office memo.

In addition to these, condensing the various benefits of writing in to a single sentence, Kane(1988) says that writing is a way of growing. For Kane, writing helps us grow more complex and more interesting, i.e. more human. However, this highly important skill is reported to have been given scant attention in foreign or second language instructional settings (White and Arndt, 1991 cited in Italo, 1999) though there are reports at present which show some progress (Conrad, 1983; Keh 1990). Nowadays, different sources show that writing is treated as an integral part of a certain language teaching program.

2.8. Approaches in the Teaching of Writing

Several writers seem to agree on the fact that learning to write is a highly complex process (Widdowson, 1983 cited in Italo, 1999, Kane, 1988; Wyrick, 1990). Writing is a difficult process which at a time demands control of:

Word choice, use of appropriate grammar (such as subject verb agreement, tense and article use, spelling and hand

writing) and organization of ideas in to coherent and cohesive form----- writing also includes a focus on audiences and purpose,(Gebhard,1999:221)

From the above discussion it has been noted that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. It is the sentence level these include control of content format, sentence structure vocabulary, punctuation, and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information in to cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

Nevertheless, for the previously mentioned and other benefits this highly important, but enormously complex, skill needs to be taught, especially in second language instructional settings. According to Valette (1967), Rivers and Timperly (1978), and Neman (1995) state that written language has its own conventions which could be learned through appropriate instruction. As a result of this belief, several attempts have been made to teach second language writing in different schools, Different writers categorize these several attempts in to three broad teaching approaches; the product approach, the process approach and the communicative approach. The following sub sections try to present a brief discussion of these approaches.

2.8.1. The product Approach to Teaching Writing

This approach, as its name indicates, is concerned with what students produce. A teacher who is oriented towards this approach usually invests his/her time on teaching students what their final written texts should look like. He/she aspires, "To see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and abbeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on," says Nunan (1989) cited in Italo (1999:34). In other words, in the product approach to teaching writing

formal accuracy and correctness in grammar, Spellings, use of vocabulary, convention of layout, etc. are given the utmost priority" (Getnet,1993:9) . Teachers who are oriented to the product approach to teaching commonly use procedures (Methods) such as controlled composition, guided composition, drilling, and imitation. Towards the late 1960s the time when the assumptions of behaviorism were challenged, the product approach to teaching writing attracted criticisms from different directions. This is because studies on the teaching of second language writing came to indicating that;

- a) The stages in the process of writing might be more important than the final product
- b) The communicative value of a certain piece of writing is more important than its formal correctness
- c) Focusing only accuracy and correcting these every error might result in a destructive psychologically impact on the learner.

As result, the product approach gives its way to the process approach (see below)

2.8.2. The Process Approach to Teaching Writing

This approach which is considered to be based on recent views puts more emphasis on the writing process rather than on the written products (zamel,1980) cited in Italo: (1999); Conrad , 1983 ; Raimes , 1983;Kane,1988: Keh,1990; Lewitt, 199; Gebhard,199) . In other words as keh ,one of the practitioners of this approach , explains it, "Briefly Speaking , a process approach to writing sees, writing as a process of several steps, beginning first what generating ideas (Via Various methods) writing to discover what one wants to say, revising, getting feed back from various readers or between revisions and writing again (p,10)". Currently many scholars seem to agree that meaning of writing is created through recursive process. Among these scholars, Gebhard (1999:222) has the following to say:

When we write, especially some thing that is fairly complex, we do not ordinarily writes a perfect letter or memo or essay or proposal in a single draft, rather we go through a process of creating this piece of writing until we discover and clarify within ourselves what it is that we want to say and until we are able to express this meaning in a clear way.

Thus, taking a similar stand, Kane (1988:16) states that, “writing in its broad sense---- has three steps thinking about it, doing it and doing it again (and again, as often as, time will allow and patience will endure.” In this connection, (Conrad (1983) advises novice writers not to lose their hope when they are not able to produce a perfect piece of composition on a first trial. According to him, even experienced writers take longer to write a good piece of writing. Such writers usually;

-----thinkers with words and sentence ,they cross out and replace sections they go through two or three or five or seven or ten drafts and sometimes they throw the whole thing out and start over. These writers know by experience that writing is not a hit- or miss affair with only one try allowed but a process. They know that carefully polishing can yield astonishing results (Conrad, 1983:2)

Because of these psychological and practical evidences, in recent decades, the emphasis in the teaching of writing has shifted from a focus on a written product to a focus on the writing process (Raimes , 1983). Put on other way, there come a more away from focusing on, “The text to the strategies or stages in the writing process –the steps that writers go through,” says Myerrand Gray (1983:19).Although this approach has added interesting insights to the teaching of writing it is not free from

criticisms. Nunan (1989) cited in Italo (1999); Horwitz (1986) mention some of the weaknesses of the process approach as follows:

- a) It narrowly restricts learners to narrative type of discourse as a result they may finally have weaknesses in the other type of discourse.
- b) The process approach might lead students to write essays which are unstructured and have several mechanical and grammatical problems. And this may make them fail in writing examinations.
- c) It is applicable in most high school situations where the selection of topics is usually made by the writing teachers rather than by the students themselves.

2.8.3. The communicative Approach to Teaching

Writing

As indicated earlier, product oriented approach focuses on the correctness of the final written product. Process oriented approach, on the other hand, emphasizes on the mental processes involved in the production of certain written pieces. Because this approach was found to have weaknesses, there came a need for another more natural and communicative approach.

The communicative approach focuses on the purpose and audience of writing (Raime, 1983; Brumfit & Johnson, 1987; Widdowson & Allen, 1987; Widdowson 2001:159) states that the communicative approach, Concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative activities of various kinds. The approach, as Hymes (1987) argues, is an attempt to develop students' communicative competence, which is composed of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences. However, the approach was not at last found in capable of appealing to the need of all students. These days, it is reported that no any method is inherently, weak or

strong, as a result; scholars suggest sort of compromise methods (Taron & Yule,2001)

2.9. Why Is Writing Difficult?

Writing is a difficult activity for most students either in their mother language or second language. Byrne (1991) for example, classifies the causes of difficulty in to three categories one of the factors is psychological. This is to say that writing is a solitary activity in which the writer is required to strive on his/her own writing with out interacting with others for feedback.

The second one is linguistic factor. When we see this factor in some details writing , unlike speaking, is not a spontaneous activity which can be sustained through a process of interaction with interlocutor; rather, it is an activity which call for controlling a lot of language ingredients at sentences level and beyond .In writing , however, the writer is expected to keep the channel of communication open through his/her own effort by choosing the correct sentences structure and considering the way in which sentences are linked and sequenced so that the sentences that is produced can be interpreted on its own .

Thirdly, what make writing difficult is cognitive problems. This means people normally grow up learning to speak with out conscious effort. As a result, they devote much of their time to speaking. Writing on the other hand, is learned through the process of instruction. Consequently, it needs mastering a lot of skills and procedures.

Generally, speaking, writing is a challenging and demanding activity which requires controlling a number of factors. In addition, as white and Ardent account for the difficulty of writing results from lack of fixed standard. They further explain;

We believe that there is no point in pretending that is easy in deed; certain cognitive psychologists have described, it as the most complex and demanding of all cognitive activities undertaken by human beings because there are no rules writers are free agent; they can choose to say what they want ,how they want (white and Ardent,1991:12)

The above view depicts that writing is one of the most challenging activities which does not have formulated yardstick; thus, there is no opportunity to learn certain fixed patterns and implement in the real situations. Lehr (1980) also suggests that writing by its own nature is a cumbersome task as it entails the ability of generating (discovering) organizing and establishing relationships between ideas. Moreover, in the process of composing the writer is not only expected to generate these relationships but also should be aware of the new relationships for the first time.

2.10. Problems of Writing

Problems are the real indicators of the errors encountered by the learners by the learners. By identifying the problems encountered by learners the researcher can easily point out such areas which need to be focused on more. It is generally regarded that students face problems in the following language aspects in general: In this aspect Byrne (1991) discussed the following writing problems.

1. Graph logical problems
2. Rhetorical problems
3. Pedagogical problems

2.10.1. Graph logical problems

This part includes spelling, punctuation and other devices which learners face in learning writing skill.

A. Spelling

Mastery of the writing system includes the ability to spell. However, because in English the relationship between sound and symbol is a complex one, spelling is a problem for many users of the language, native and non-native speakers alike, and most of us are obliged to consult a dictionary from time to time. Therefore, English misspelling has interference in written communication. On the whole, however, spelling efficiency and improvement is likely to relate to reading (i.e. the amount of exposure) and this gain emphasizes the importance of reading in developing writing ability.

B. punctuation

Punctuations are the governing rules in the use of visual devices in writing. They are very important to demonstrate the communication value of certain written work. However, the ignorance, or misuse of punctuation has a great impact on the reader's understanding of a text. So the correct use of punctuation is demanding to be valued in certain writing.

C. Other Graph logical Problems

Other graph logical problems which are faced by the learners in the writing system include the use of headings, Footnotes, tables of contents and indexes. However, these all will not be relevant to all our students, but at least they should be aware that a heading enables the writer to give his reader some advance notice of what to expect, while a foot note enables him to extract a supplementary piece of information from the text and still make it accessible to the reader.

2.10.2. Rhetorical Problems

This term is used to refer to all the devices which are needed in writing in order to produce a text in which the sentences are organized into a coherent whole, in such a way that they fulfill the writer's communicative purpose of organization, much more rigorous than in speech, so that,

event if the learners are familiar with some of these devices, they will still have to learn how to use them in writing. This section is intended to produce a brief survey of these problems. Rhetorical problems are looked at here under three headings: logical, grammatical & lexical.

A. Logical Devices

Logical devices are words or phrases which indicate meaning relationships between or within sentences. These include those of addition, comparison, contrast, result, exemplification and so on. It is through device such as these that the writer is able to organize his ideas and to help his reader follow him from one sentence to another. But learners are seemed facing difficulties in using them appropriately. Then this results, mis-communication between or among the writers and the readers. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult to organize the content effectively without the appropriate use of logical devices.

B. Grammatical device

They are equally important for the cohesion of a text is the links established by certain grammatical devices, such as these, for example, which signal relationships between sentences. However, if learners miss these elements in their writings their papers not would be in consistent.

C. Lexical Devices

Almost any text displays a great deal of cohesion on lexical level. To some extent this might be felt to be inevitable, but nevertheless this is another significant way in which sentences are linked together. However, the mis-use of these devices has a great impact in writers work to be read and understand.

2.10.3 Pedagogical Problems

The pedagogical problems students are faced within this are clearly considerable. For the most part, oral work will have focused mainly on a mastery of sentences structure, which in itself is a formidable learning task with little or no attention being paid to the way in which sentences

are linked or sequenced. In any case, the nature of the medium calls for a different of organization, much more rigorous than in speech, so that ; even if the learners are familiar with some of these devices , they will still have to learn how to use them in writing .

2.11. Causes of Writing problems

Human learning in general and language learning in particular involves the making of errors (Norrish, 1983; Edge, 1989 Brown, 1994; choom 2004). Errors which are now considered as inevitable from several sources. Fore example, Brown (1994; 205) mentions some possible sources of errors in language learning as follows:

Errors – over manifestations of learners system – arise from several possible general sources inter lingual transfer of interference from the native language , errors within the target language, the socio linguistic context of communication psycholinguistic or cognitive strategies ,and no doubt countless affective variables.

Below is a brief discussion of the related literature on some of the possible sources of error in learning second or foreign language writing.

2.11.1. First Language Interference

As it has been tried to show in the preceding sections, during the 1950 and were in to `1960's a period at which the second or foreign language pedagogy was driven by the theory of behaviorism, errors produced by language, learners were believed to be resulted from one major source the learners' first language. Learning at that time was seen as the formation of new habits in this process of habit formation, old habits (of the first language) come to interfere and this interference was assumed to be responsible for most or all of the errors produced by the language learners (wikins, 1976; Oirsouw, 1986; Brown 1994). However recent research findings show that first language interference is not the only

source of errors. True interference from the first language can cause errors. And for some scholars like Richards (1978) cited in Mamo(1984) Edge,(1989)and Michalides (1990) ,it is found to be major cause of errors. Though this may some times be the case, many writers at present (Hendrickson, 1978 Norrish, 1983; Brown 1994) argue that interference from the first language is responsible for only some of the errors. According to Norrish (1983; 41), "Interference from the learner's first language is now believed to play a smaller part in causing errors." Hendrickson (1978) on his part says that although first language interference is the major source of phonological errors, its contribution for lexical syntactic, orthographic, and morphological errors seems minors. According to scholars such as Brown (1994) the number of errors which results from first language interference is higher at the early stage of learning and it reduces through time. Brown discusses this point as follows:

The beginning stages of learning a second language are characterized by a good deal of inter lingual transfer from the native language or interference in these early stages , before the system of the second language is familiar the native language is the only linguistic system in previous experience upon which the learner can draw(Brown ,1994:213)

2.11.2. Intralingual Transfer

Some times second or foreign language learners may wrongly over generalize the rules of that target language for example learners of English as a second or foreign languages after they have been told that simple past (tense) verb add-d or -ed may construct sentence like, 'I goed to the library yesterday. This error is most probably, due to intralingual transfer (within the target language itself). According to corder (1971) cited in Michaelides (1990) and Tyolr(1957) cited in Brown (1994),

interlingua transfer caused many of the errors during the early stages of learning a second or foreign language, while once the learners have begun to develop the target language system (inter language or transitional dialect), intralingual transfer becomes to take its part in causing errors in writing .

2.11.3. Carelessness

Because of a variety of reason, EFL/ESL learners may Sometimes Become Careless when they are writing or speaking in target language (Norrish, 1983; Edge, 1989; Michaelides, 1990). According to Norrish, carelessness may happen as a result of lack of Motivation. This lack of Motivation, on its part, may occur when the materials to be taught and the way these materials are presented do not suit the learners.

2.11.4. General Order of Difficulty

Recent research reports on second language acquisition show that there seems in order by which different language elements are acquired. Put another way, some features of a second language are learned at early stage of learning, while other features of that language stay unlearned until later stages (Brown, 1994). Based on the information from these reports, it is now suggested that at least some of the errors produced by second or foreign language learners may be due to the fact that the learners have not reached a stage of development which could allow them to produce these language features correctly. The common example mentioned as a later learned element in EFL/ ESL learning is the third person singular simple present verb marker-s

2.11.5. Material Induced Problems

It is reported that second or foreign language teachers often use inappropriate contexts and materials to teach some language elements (Norrish,1983) .This situation might make learners develop what Norrish calls “ false concept” on these language elements which may eventually become a source for some faulty language production .

To minimize or control material induced errors ,EFL/ESL teachers are advised to use meaningful contexts for their teaching .As Norrish (p,33) notes, "Motivation , naturalness, and sensible context for the language are clearly vital ,if we accept that learners will use the data presented to them actively" .To conclude, errors produced by second or foreign language learners are result of a number of social, physical, psychological, and environmental factors, though it still is difficult to determine what exactly causes a certain errors. Some errors may happen because of interference from the learner's native language. While others may occur due to interference from the target language it self. Some errors may happen as a result of the fact that learners are ignorant of rule restrictions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESREACHE DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the design of the study ,research setting and grade level selection, subjects of the study ,sampling procedure ,data collection instruments ,procedure of data collection ,data analysis procedure and techniques ,rate of responses and validity and reliability of the writing tests would be discussed here.

3.1. Design of the Study

The major concern of this study as indicated earlier ,is to investigate issues related to the problems of writing skill in secondary school of Addis Ababa . To this end, descriptive research method was employed as the method of the study .This method is appropriate mainly to reveal the current state of the problems in learning writing skill and gather several kinds of data related to the subjects under study. The relevance of the approach for such purposes has been noted by Best and Khan (1993: 113) and Manion (1994:101). Moreover, it is planned method of data collection that involves entering a subject population and measuring a specific set of responses (Jacob, 1987: 37, Sharma, 1986: 46).

3.2. Research Setting and Grade Level Selection

To choose one grade level, three conditions are considered. Firstly, the text book from grade nine to twelve follows almost similar approach of teaching writing skill. Where as, the text book for other lower grade levels seem to treat writing differently. Secondly ,grade nine students are new to the teaching approach of writing at high school level .Thereby , these students are not supposed to have better experience than other secondary school students . Thirdly, grade 11 and 12 students have been assigned to vocational and preparatory schools. Then the researcher exclude these grade level students from this study .Hence, the researcher suspect that the information obtained from the students of

either stream could not show the representative feature of writing problems that high school students face. Therefore, sampled grade ten students and their teachers will be assumed to be good source of data.

Additionally, the school was selected as the center of the study for two basic reasons. Firstly, the investigator is familiar with the study area, then it is hoped that he' could secure adequate Cooperation and assistance from respondents. Secondly, such study has never been carried out in the above study area.

3.3. Subjects of the Study

In the school selected for this research purpose, the total number of grade ten students in the second semester of the 2003 E.C is 1250. Among the students 187(almost 15% of the total population) were selected to fill the questionnaire prepared for them. Again, from the 187students who filled the questionnaire, 90 (50%) of them were selected for the test purpose. The researcher took this 50 students assuming that homogeneous status and believing that manageable size.

Further more, there are only ten teacher teaching grade nine and ten at the sample school. The researcher then took all teachers to fill the questionnaire which is prepared for them. Again, the researcher felt interview to be an appropriate tool to collect necessary information which was not revealed by the questionnaire, then the researcher select three teachers out of the ten to conduct an interview with them.

3.4. Sampling Procedure

Grade ten students of the above public school were sampled based on Vann Dalen (1979:128-134). According to this writer, sampling solves the dilemma of getting representative subjects of a study. The sample size depends on the type of investigations. For descriptive research 10% to 20% of the total population is often enough. The total number grade ten

students were 1250 as mentioned above. Then, the researcher took fifteen percent of this total population (187 out of 1250) since his research design is descriptive.

Besides; in order to select the 187 students who served as respondents of the study for the students' questionnaire, the researcher selected 6 and / or 7 students each from the existing 24 sections. This was done by making the students draw lots; each of the students has got a chance of drawing a lot; but those who drew selected were chosen.

Again, the 187 students who filled the questionnaire, 90 (ninety) were selected randomly for the test purpose. The reason of using simple random sampling for the students was to give equal chance for each respondent.

Similarly, for the selection of the sample teachers, available sampling technique was employed since the teachers teaching for the grade level understudy were ten. But out of the ten teachers three of them were selected for interview purpose. The three teachers were selected using purposive sampling. In this manner, Cohen and Manion,(1994:103) argue that in purposive sampling the researcher builds up a sample size that is satisfactory to his specific needs by picking the cases to be included in his samples .

Generally, the respondents involved in the study were expected to give important information about the problem of learning writing skill. But, the fear was some study participants might be involuntary to respond to the questionnaire, test and interview questions after they were sampled. Thus, the researcher tried to minimize it by making the objectives of the study clear to them in person and / or through instructions for the questionnaire, test and interview questions.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The concept of using multi-method approach in collecting data in single study is favored in recent trends for many authors. An increasing numbers of researchers are using multi-method approaches to achieve broader and often better results. Denzin (in Teshome, 1994 :46) for example, argues that because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods should be used in every investigation as a rule. He explains that triangulating such methods as interviews, tests, observations, questionnaires and documents builds checks and balance to a study design.

Brewer and Hunter (1989) and Patton (both in Teshome, 1998:46) noted that there are strengths and weaknesses to any single data collection strategy and using more than one data collection approach permits the researcher to combine the strengths and correct some of the deficiencies of any one source of data. By listing its advantages, Cohen and Manion (1994) also suggest to use a combination of methods. According to Wellington (1996:17) even in a single small - scale study, a mixture of methods can often be adapted. Therefore, the instruments employed to gather the necessary data for this study were questionnaire, test and interview.

3.5.1. Questionnaires

Two types of questionnaires were designed. One was for students and the other was for teachers. Both contained open-ended and closed ended types. The purpose of this questionnaire was to collect further relevant information regarding the major problems students encounter in learning writing skill. The questionnaire for students and teachers had 32 items. Again, the items were classified in three parts which focused on personal back ground information of the respondents.

The second part response category consisted of the following three scales which were requiring the respondents to rate their various writing skill

problem ranged as serious , minor and not problem .Additionally, this part includes the question about difficulty level of writing ranged as always easy, mostly easy, mostly difficult and always difficult .The third response category dealt with frequency of causes of writing problems that were indicated by five point scales ranges as(very greatly, greatly sometimes rarely and never). Moreover, the questionnaire contained two open ended questions requiring the respondents to state some significant additional problems that the students face in learning writing and some other factors causing poor writing.

3.5.2. Writing test

One of instruments used to collect data was writing test, developed by the researcher based on the syllabus and review literature and administered to grade ten students. The content of the test was writing. Letters per four days gab. The test was aimed at acquiring necessary information about some of the practical problems students face in learning writing skills. The test was rated by the following 8 break downs, i.e. spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, organization, explicitness and capitalization. The content of the test items were famed to this end (See the test items in Appendix D)

3.5.3. Interview

Structured interview formats were employed (items which were used for guided interview are given in appendix C). An interview guide helps in indicating the out lines of the topics to be covered and their sequences in the interview .It also provides guidelines to the interview on what to say at the opening and closing of the interview. Taking this in to consideration, interview guides were developed by the researcher in order to strengthen the study analyses.

Then, the three teachers' were interviewed in a week period. Interviews lasted 25-30 minutes and were conducted individually. The interview

was transcribed manually. Finally, the responses of the interview have been used in the process of discussing data.

3.6. Procedure of Data Collection

The investigation was carried out in six phases. The first phase was the phase where the preparation of proposal of the study. In the second phase an extensive review of related literature-books, journals, articles and related research finding was made. This stage was important to identify the issues to be included in the study as well as to develop instruments and strategies of data collection.

In the third phase two major activities were accomplished. First, the research instruments (questionnaire, writing test and structured interview) were given to two teachers in Addis Ababa University having the qualification of M.A degree in TEFL and attending their Ph.D. program. The teachers were involved in assessing and commenting the extent to which the items were appropriate in securing relevant information to serve the purpose of the study before applying to the main study & submitted to advisor. Second, research instrument were pre-tested.

As Robson (1993) explained a pilot study helps a researcher to avoid some of the inevitable problems of converting his/her design in to reality. Based on this view, a pilot study was conducted on 30 students & 3 teachers of Belay Zeleke high school to check the relevance of the instrument: the questionnaire, test and interview. Later on, in accordance with critical comments from my advisor, my friends and from the pilot-test certain modifications were made on some questions. For instance, in the questionnaire, items 2, 5, 9 and 12 were a little bit modified from part three. Similarly, two items were revised and some three items, which were not relevant to this study, were deleted. In the same manner, from the test some grammatical and punctuation items were little bit modified.

Moreover, one item was also removed from the interview guides. Then the instruments were retyped.

In the fourth phase; a contact was made with the school director & vice director then, official letters that clarifies purpose and objectives of the study was handed over to them, with more clarification about the purpose of the research work in their offices. After getting their good will for cooperation, a timetable was set for assuring convenient place and time for sampled teachers & students. Then the researcher was directly referred to the department head of the English language. In the department head office identification of inclusive sections with their respective number of the students was also made. In addition discussions with the students & English teachers were conducted at the school level for further understanding.

In the fifth phase of the study, the following activities were executed. First the selection of respondents was accomplished. Second, research instrument i.e. questionnaires & test were administered then interview was held. Lastly, the information gathered from different sources was tallied, categorized and analyzed.

3.7. Data Analysis Procedures and Techniques

Data analysis “--- refers to sifting, organizing, summarizing and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusion of the research” (Slinger and Shohamy, 1989: 201). To analyze, the researcher arranged the data obtained through test, questionnaire and interviews. First the data obtained from the writing tests were systematically analyzed and problems (errors) were identified, classified in all the linguistic aspects of L₂. Then the test analysis was supported by the questionnaire and interview responses in order to substantiate the triangulation.

Further more, the data for the second and third objectives which were designed to answer the extent of writing skill difficulty and causes of poor writing were analyzed based on the data obtained from the teachers and students questionnaire and the teacher interview. The data gained from the three elements were triangulated during the analysis in the succeeding chapter. The selection of an analysis technique depends on the nature of study, its design and the data gathered (Seliger and Shohamy, 189:201). The techniques used for analyzing descriptive data are descriptive statistics (frequency, central tendency and variability correlations (Seliger and shahomy, 189: 211).

In this thesis, frequency was used as a technique of analysis. It can be reported through verbal description, percentage or frequency tables and graphs like histograms (Seliger and Shohmay, 189:215). From these ways of reporting frequency, percentage or table and verbal description were used to analyze the data collected. The fractions are discarded in to the nearer percentage.

3.8. Rate of Responses

A researcher "-----should always report not only the size of his sample but also the number of dropouts" Van Dalen, 1979: 132).In this study the ten teachers sampled to fill questionnaire and three teacher selected for interview all responded to the questions. However, there were twenty three dropouts due to six absentees and seventeen unreturned questionnaires. But, the students selected for test were all responded. Therefore, the data collected from the remaining 164 (88%) of the total sampled population of the students and their teachers responses were analyzed in the chapter four.

3.9. Validity and Reliability of the Writing Test

3.9.1. Validity

According to Assamawi, (2002:69) research instrument can be validated via three ways: (1) self –validation , this involves asking one self whether each topic given in the instrument measures what it is intended to measure . Hence, for achieving self validation, the topics employed in this study are taken from the students' text book that the subjects had already written during their previous learning. (2) Experts–validation, three experts approved that the given topics were taken from materials appropriate to students standard and suit their age and that their grade level. (3) pilot –validation: the pilot study: the writing test was subjected to a pilot study to check whether the given topics would yield the samples which represent the student's ability in free and guided writing and that the resulted samples would be scored reliably. The results of the pilot study revealed that the writing tests were understood by the participants as they intended to be and able to elicit the participants responsible on the problem studied.

3.9.2. Reliability

According to Hughes, (1989:36) reliability can be achieved by the consistency of scoring by two or more scorers (raters or coders). In the present study, the scoring process was performed by two instructors of English, who volunteered to score the students' answer papers. Both have long experience in this domain; they are familiar with writing skill teaching and the problems (errors) too. The answer scripts were read three times once by the researcher to identify the error committed in the writing test and once by each of the two coders. The researcher counted and classified errors according to each coder. Number of errors for each error from each coder was recorded and listed. The two results of the two coders were compared. The comparison revealed that the two coders reached an agreement that errors on the 8 break downs of writing were used erroneously in the students writing test.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This part of the thesis deals with the presentation and analysis of the data gathered from High school of the study area to seek appropriate answers for the basic questions of the study raised in chapter one by reporting, analyzing and interpreting data obtained from the test, questionnaire and interview.

In this section, the data obtained through test and questionnaire were tabulated and reported in percentages and /or numbers, then analyzed and interpreted. In addition, the view of the interviewees that have been gained from the interview items and open – ended questions were used to substantiate the interpretation, analysis and the discussion wherever deemed necessary.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Data Obtained from the Research Tools

Table 1: background information of all student respondents

Respondents								
Students								
Grade Level	sex				Age			Total No of respondents
	Male		Female		Range	No	%	
10 th	No	%	No	%	15-17	130	73	164
	85	52	79	48	18-25	34	27	

At the beginning all respondents were requested to provide their background information. As table 1 indicates 164 students from Higher 12 secondary school were included in the study. Of these 52% are males

and 48% are females. The majority of 73% respondents are in age ranges of (15-17) and where this one can conclude that most of the students are at similar age level and the number of males and females is proportional. Then, the study is done in almost homogeneous students in their age level. Therefore, the balanced age and sex in class room is helpful in developing the socialization of learning and conducting appropriate research.

Table 2: Background information of teacher respondents

Respondents									
Teachers(10)									
Sex				Qualification		Experiences			Total
M		F			No	%	Year	No	%
No	%	No	%	First degree holders	10	100	1-5	2	20%
7	70	3	30				6-10	3	30%
							11-20	4	40%
							21-25	1	10%
									10

As to background of teachers Table 2, shows that all teachers 7 males and 3 females are teaching in the grade level. Regarding the qualification, all of the teachers or 100% of them are first degree holders. And in relation to their teaching experience, 30% have an experience of teaching that ranges from 6-10 years. Where as, 40% of them have served (11-20) and 20% of the teachers work experience is found in the ranges of 1-5 years. In this respect, the data collected and tabulated shows that the majority of English teachers seem to have adequate qualification and relatively enough working experience. Additionally, the data shows that as the majority of the teachers are males.

Table3: Some EFL Learners' Writing Problems

No	Item	Respondents	Responses							
			Serious Problem		Minor Problem		Not problem		Frequencies of Writing problems from the test	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Spelling problem	Students	146	89	10	6	8	5	73	81
		Teachers	8	80	1	10	1	10		
2	Capitalization problem	Students	92	56	67	42	33	20	77	85
		Teachers	6	60	4	40	-	-		
3	Punctuation problem	Students	100	61	64	39	-	-	79	88
		Teachers	6	60	4	40	-	-		
4	Poor organization	Students	139	85	16	10	8	5	90	100
		Teachers	9	90	1	10	-	-		
5	Inexplicitness	Students	130	79	33	20	-	-	84	93
		Teachers	9	90	-	-	1	10		
6	Vocabulary problem	Students	143	87	10	8	8	5	69	77
		Teachers	9	90	1	10	-	-		
7	Preposition errors	Students	146	89	15	9	3	2	88	98
		Teachers	10	100	-	-	-	-		
8	Auxiliary Verb Errors	Students	159	97	5	3	-	-	82	92
		Teachers	9	90	1	10	-	-		

As already have been pointed out in section 1.3, the first basic question of this study was designed to answer the question whether students face Problems as a result of learning writing skill or not. Thus, in table 3,

students and teachers were required to rate the degree of the problems that the students face during learning writing skill.

As it shown in table 3, spelling Problem (Items 1) was rated to be as a serious problem by more than half of the students (89%) and teachers (80%) respectively. Similarly, the interviewees have indicated in whole as spelling is a serious problem to their students. The interviewees exemplified their answers as spelling plays an important role in the formation of words. Meaning of a word depends on the graphemes or letters which occupy in it. Letters also distinguish and differentiate the meaning of words. The spelling rules of the language enable both the writer and reader to comprehend appropriately in the written mode. However, the spelling rules of English are quite complex, and there are some regularities and irregularities which are exceptional in nature in the English spelling systems. Further, one or more than one letters corresponds to one sound. Therefore, the complexity of the spelling rules too tends the students or learners to produce miss spelt words. If the letters used in the words are changed or altered, the meaning of the words will be lost. Alternation or dropping of letters in words leads to confusion. Some times mis spelt words will make one comprehend some other meanings. The sample of erroneous words found in the students papers are discussed as follows:

Sample	Correct form
Mandey -----	Monday
Difficualt -----	difficult
May maether -----	My mother
I will du -----	I will do
Was riting -----	Writing
I'm rating -----	writing
My cLAss meat -----	my classmate

The above analyzed data show that it is identified in the students' papers that 81% of the students have committed spelling errors in their writings. Therefore, the misuse of spelling in the students writing makes words not to be understood properly for the readers and hence the readers may face challenging to deduce the intended meaning .By and large, the interview, questionnaire and test results show that the students under study have serious problem in using the appropriate spelling system in their writing.

Regarding capitalization (Item 2) the results in table 3 shows that 56% of the students and 60% of the teachers responded that capitalization is a serious problem in learning writing skill. However, the rest 42% of students and 40% of teacher respondents have rated this problem as a minor problem in learning writing skill. In contrast to the second view, the interviewee teachers have revealed that capitalization is a serious problem in the students writing .Further, the interviewees explained their answers that using capital letters correctly is a writing norm which is required in English. However, the students always commit capitalization error in their writing system at any time. The anomaly of using small letters at the beginning of a new sentence, using capital letters at the middle of words, using small letters at the beginning of a new paragraphs and a using capital letters in the middle of sentences are typical example noted in the students' usual writing. Further, the corpus revealed that many students (about 85%) use capital letters instead of small letters and vise versa.

See the following samples:-

... **MAY** **C**lass room ... **I** **A**m.....
 ... **P**rog**R**A**A**m**M** ... **M**a**T**H**e**R
 ... **D**iffic**u**l**T**ies ... **h**A**v**e ...

It is observed from the above samples, that the students seem to have serious problem in using capital letters appropriately .It is seemed that

the students do not know the proper usage of Capital letters which is important not only for exercise and examination but also for communication purpose as well. But, failure to use Writing norms appropriately may lead to misinterpretation of information.

All in all, it's possible to conclude that the students under study have a serious problem in the proper application of capital letters in their writing norm.

As can be seen in table 3, 61% of the students and 60% of the teachers have responded as punctuation is serious problem (Item3). Where as, the 39% of the students and 40% of the teacher respondents have replied punctuation is minor problem in writing. However, the interviewees have revealed that in whole punctuation is relatively a common problem for the students. Large numbers of the students always commit punctuation errors. From this, it is possible to say that this problem is 'serious. Similarly, results of the test show that 88% of the students under study use punctuation marks in appropriately. Their, Writings seem to indicate that these students do not understand how to use the punctuation marks correctly in conveying information accurately and effectively. The students use full stop to some extent adequately. However, the commas, semicolons and question marks are used extensively in the students writing inadequately and incorrectly. This reduces not only understanding but also accuracy. The students under study do not seem to appreciate punctuation marks that are very important in writing. Therefore, it is possible to infer from the above statements that punctuation is the serious problem in the students learning. .

Sample

Student 1

Mandey I go to library to study math's, then I met may frinds riting asiments. My program for Tusdey will study English and Biylogy.may friend do you read English; KAn you help me and study me what is your programs for next wek, tell the this by phone, okay?

Student 2.

I will go home eat lunch and call friend to, school so, week and I and my friend study in library. Then after lunch, I go to cinema with my mother and I come home to study examine become coming Monday maths there told exam. I will study hard to get enough result. My friends will like me and my teacher. I will study exam the same week. If question difficult my friend help and I will tiring

According to the data in table 1, 85% of the students and 90% of the teachers respondents reported to the questionnaire organization is the serious problem in learning writing (Item 4). Similarly, the teacher interviewees explained their answer poor organization is the most manifested problem in the students writing. The interviewees further expressed that their students always write distorted sentences and paragraphs. Their students often fail to appreciate the value of organizing linguistic materials strategically so as to secure maximal impact. Again this problem is always seen within and across the students' sentences and paragraph writing.

An example of a paper with sense of poor organization:

dear my friend

I To day, I was Always write assignment and ask my friends question difficult may class boys and girls are not good in english and I got out library for read books. Because . I'm always read to exam coming If study hard to day, I because pass exam. Tomorrow I have plan study Biology and geography my friend comes and read me in mine house. I call my friends to house.

Sincerely

As it is clearly shown in the above sample paper this problem is as serious as in the other students' writings. Therefore, the raters have identified from the corpus 100% of the students under study were found to have this problem. In relation to this, if this problem is not addressed seriously, the conveyed message would be totally distorted. In order for

the readers understand the intended written messages in English paragraphs, the sentences have to be systematically organized and logically ordered. Generally, from the above given information it seems that the students are very poor in producing an organized pieces of writings.

With regards to the issue of explicitness (Item 5) in the above table shows that, 79% of the students and 90% of the teachers' respondents replied that in explicitness is serious problem in learning writing. It is estimated that the students and teachers may observe this problem in their usual writing practice. Additionally, the interviewees argued that the problem of inexplicitness is as serious as poor organization. It is one of the important aspects which are demanded in English writing but students fail to appreciate it. Moreover, to quote the statement of one teacher respondent during the interview about the adverse effect of in explicitness in writing, "it is one of the serious problem facing students in English learning. Then students do not seem to appreciate the value of explicitness in written communication. Relations of elements within and across sentence are not clearly marked". This statement shows that the students' writing is not clear and their syntax is elliptical. In the same manner, in the students papers it was noted that 93 % of the students understudy were not observing the writing norms of being explicit. Writing features which are necessary in order to help the readers to understand the intended meaning were inadequately used. For example, these relationships of elements within and across the sentences were not effectively exploited. See the sample below:

Daer my friend, you faine, I'm reeding book- morning . English is may good subject and math is I dislike. Then, I will study morning for English test. At Evening I go film cinema teatre. I watching the film. I come house and help mother. Always I does this. Tommmrows ? I was reading Englsih at Night after mother sllep Gegraphy write note from my frend; The Night was good study. And

Yesterday day I was keep shop and . Sunday But, tomorrow I Saturday both English histORY. After that with my friends I pley foot ball. Foot ball is good favorite me . Come my frend house. Your love.

Much can be said about the paragraph quoted above. For instance, the first sentence of the paragraph which connected by <And> does not explicitly mark the direct relation ships with the preceding sentences. The next sentences implies that elements like and, but, because etc... which functions as a link devices have not been used appropriately in the paragraph in general. Considering the above accounts, the problem of in explicitness seems serious for the learners in their writing.

As it could be seen in table 3, teachers and students were asked to rate the extents of vocabulary problem in learning writing skill (item 6) .In this regard, 87% of students and 90% of the teacher respondents revealed that misuse of vocabulary is serious problem. Likewise, the interview results of teacher participants also confirmed that the existence of vocabulary problem is serious. The interviewees stated that in English language certain linguistic elements share commonness semantically that is to say that most English words have synonymous, but there will not be any complete synonyms for any word. So, certain words can be used in certain contexts. But, the students under study have serious problem in selecting right words. Besides, it is found that 77% of the students have committed errors and have wrongly selected the vocabularies. Example;

--- English subject has problem for me Probably to say that difficult
 ----I was buy book from my school Libera ----probably to mean that borrowed
 Lack of material in me attack my study probably to mean that affects
 I was study fiction offer meal Probably to mean that - - - read
 - - - With mother I go book film to theater - - -
 Probably to mean that to watch

In general, using appropriate vocabulary is very important for every academic writing. And Proper selection of word is one aspect of language writing. However, the students under study do not seem to appreciate the value of using the intended words in their paper. Therefore, the results obtained from the test, questionnaire and interview showed that the students in this study seem to under the serious pressure of vocabulary using problem.

According to the data in table 3, Item 7 regarding the problem of using preposition, 89% of the students and the teacher (100%) of them reported that the use of preposition is serious problem in learning writing skill. The data obtained from the teacher interviewees also favor the above responses. The interviewees exemplified their answer in whole prepositions are often placed before a noun or pronoun to indicate place, direction, method etc... Further, it connects a noun or pronoun with some other words in a sentence and makes clear the relationship between the two. However, the students are not performing well in using prepositions appropriately. This is always indicated that in the students writings. It is observed that the students always add unnecessary prepositions, delete prepositions and some of them also repeat the prepositions in their writings. The students' papers do not seem properly written with the attention of using the appropriate connectors. So this is very serious problem in the writing lesson of our students. According to the raters also the following are typical prepositional errors noted:

Sample

In correct selection

correct

- study in night ----- at
- - I write assinment in Sunday ----- on
- - I goes to school on the morning ----- in
- - will going for school morning ----- to
- - travel in - - I tax to school -----by

As can be seen above, it is observed that 98% of the students understudy were unable to apply (use) correctly the prepositions. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the students have serious problem in using prepositions properly.

As table 3, shows (in Item 8) the problem of Using auxiliary verbs, nearly all students (97%) of them replied that they face serious problem in using auxiliary verbs. The data obtained from teachers questionnaire and interview also favor the students' idea. Regarding this, 90% of the teachers reported to the questionnaire as their students have serious problem in using auxiliaries' verbs. Additionally, the interviewees support the questionnaires view. Further, in the test it is observed that 92% of the students were unable to apply correctly the necessary auxiliary verbs in their papers. The following are typical auxiliary errors noted by the raters:

I. addition of auxiliary verbs	Addition
--- I am went to school at morning ---	am
--- I am saw film in teatre -----	am
--- I am mother was came with 'I' ---	was
--- I am studied English today -----	am
--- I am have plane to read bylogy -----	am

The students understudy have unnecessarily added the auxiliary verbs 'am' and 'was' in between the subject 'I' and verb (past form). The students intention was to convey the past event or action. Then, the students have conveyed the sense what they have done in the past, but "am" and 'was' are wrongly used with 'I'

II/ wrong substitution of auxiliary verbs

Sample	Correct form
----- I am writing bylogy in the morning -----	was
----- I am reading when my mother came -----	was

All in all, the students seem to have a serious problem in the proper application of auxiliary verbs in formal writings.

Lastly, teachers and students were asked to mention some additional problems of writing skill. In whole, the teachers and students reported the following. That are problem of agreement, articles, adverbs, adjectives, organization; some of the them also report their papers with out putting any idea, etc. In addition to this the raters also revealed the above mentioned problems from the students' papers. Therefore, it is concluded that the students under study have serious mechanical grammatical problems.

Table 4: Responses on Whether Writing is Difficult or Easy.

Respondents	Responses							
	Always easy		Mostly easy		Mostly difficult		Always difficult	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Students	2	1%	15	9%	131	80%	16	10%
Teachers	-	-	1	10%	7	70%	2	22%

As it is already pointed out in section 1.3 of chapter one, the second basic question of this study was designed to answer the question whether writing skill is difficult or not. Thus, in table 4 the students and teachers were requested to rate the difficulty level of writing skill. According to the table, 80% of the students and 70% of the teachers reported to the questionnaire that writing is the most difficult part. Similarly, 10% of the students and 20% of the teachers rated that writing is always difficult. Additionally, the three teachers participated in the interview also in whole answered that writing skills is the most difficult to the students. But, the rest 9% of the students and 10% of the teachers responded that writing is not the most difficult skill. Therefore, these responses seem to show that most students get writing skill difficult. In this regarded, (Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh, 200:1) said that writing is a complex process which is difficult to develop and learn, especially in EFL

context. Supporting this idea, (Byrne, 1991:12) stated writing is one the most difficult task which does not have a formulated yardstick. This indicates that there is no opportunity to learn certain fixed patterns and implement in the real situation. Similarly, Lehr (1980) also reported that writing by its own nature is a cumbersome task as it entails the ability of producing, Organizing and formulating relationship between ideas which are expected from the writer.

Thus, from the responses and from the literature it can be concluded that writing is the most challenging and demanding task. Therefore, the students seem feeling more under pressure in dealing with writing difficulties. Giving the fact, the writing skill is difficult then; the responsible teachers have to ensure their students writing in order to practice and learn properly to meet the appropriate position of writing

Table 5: Responses on some students' factors causing writing problems

No	Items	Respondents	Responses									
			Very greatly		Greatly		Some times		Rarely		Never	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Weak back ground	Students	131	80	10	16	10	7	4	-	-	-
		Teachers	9	90	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Limited Vocabulary Knowledge	Students	82	50	49	30	33	20	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	6	60	4	40	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Limited Grammar Knowledge	Students	115	70	46	28	3	2	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	6	60	3	30	1	10	-	-	-	-

4	Students negative attitude towards learning English	Students	71	43	38	27	48	29	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	7	70	2	20	-	-	1	10	-	-
5	Lack of Practice	Students	107	65	57	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	4	40	5	50	-	-	1	10	-	-
6	Lack of confidence	Students	82	50	64	39	-	-	13	8	5	3
		Teachers	6	60	4	40	1	10	-	-	-	-
7	Lack of Writing habit in leisure time	Students	64	39	85	52	3	2	11	7	-	-
		Teachers	4	40	6	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Students fear to make mistake	Students	115	70	16	10	16	10	30	8	3	2
		Teachers	3	30	7	70	-	-	-	-	-	-

Basic question of 3 in section 1.3 was designed to answer the causes of writing problems. Based on this basic question students and teachers were required to rate the frequencies and occurrences of some factors that causes writing skill difficulties.

Responses of students and teachers towards weak background the students for writings skill. Most of the students (80%) of them reported that weak foundation affects very greatly in learning writing skill. And 90% of the teachers also reported that it very greatly affects their students writing ability. Similarly, the teachers in the interview reported that in whole weak background is the main factor that very greatly

affects the students writing. Moreover, to quote the statement of one teacher respondent during the interview about the adverse effects of weak background in language at the primary level as “the language teaching at primary level was not to make the students improve the language skills. The poor English becomes a serious problem and challenging when they joined secondary school where the medium of instruction for all subjects is in English”.

Thus, the above idea revealed that the weak foundation as a major impediment to students in the writing progress, because of the poor teaching background. Therefore, from the above majority teachers and students responses, it is possible to conclude that weak foundation is a great factor that affects students writing.

As shown in table 5, students and teachers were asked if the limited knowledge of vocabulary affects writing. Regarding to students, 50%, 20% and 30% of them responded very greatly, greatly and sometimes respectively. Similarly, the teachers reported to the questionnaires, 60% and 40% of them very greatly and greatly respectively. Additionally, the teachers' knowledge is a very great factor that causes poor writing ability. Thus, from the students and teachers responses, it is possible to deduce lack of vocabulary knowledge is a very great factor that limits the students from writing an appropriate piece of classroom paper.

In the same manner, the students and teachers were requested to rate the effects of limited grammar knowledge in writing skill. In this respect, 70% of the students had reported very greatly and 28% greatly. Similarly, most of the teachers (60%) responded very greatly and the rest 30% responded greatly. Besides, the teachers in the interview replied that limited Knowledge of vocabulary is a great Factor that affects the students writing. All of the interviewees responded that if there is no

grammar knowledge there will be no well organized piece of writing. Grammar knowledge is the main ingredient to produce the meaningful writing. In this level students are writing meaningless and difficult to understand papers because of the limited grammar knowledge. Therefore, from the interview and questionnaire responses, it is possible to conclude lack of grammar knowledge is affecting the students writing very greatly.

Regarding the negative attitude students have towards learning writing skill. Both the students and teachers were requested to rate how often it affects students writing. In respects to students' responses, 43%, 27%, 29% of them reported very greatly, greatly and some times respectively. Besides 70%, 20% of the teachers also responded that very greatly 'and' 'greatly'. In the same manner, the interviewee participants also support the above responses, in whole they replied negative attitude is one factor that make writer passive, so having positive awareness is the important factors for good learning in writing skill. Therefore, it would be decided that negative attitude towards learning English very greatly affects the students under study.

Based on the above table, students and teachers were asked if lack of practice hinders students writing. In this aspect most of the students and teachers (65%) and (35%) reported to the questionnaire very greatly and 'greatly' respectively. Coming to the teachers answer 40% and 50% of them respectively reported very greatly 'and' greatly. In a similar manner, the interviewee teachers also supported the above answer. In whole, the interviewees gave their answer practice is one of the important aspect to improve any part of learning process. The interviewees added that practice is a significant activity since it helps the students to progress their ability in producing well organized and sequenced writing.

Therefore, considering the above interview and questionnaire responses, it is possible to deduce poor practice is a pretext for poor writing.

According to table 4 it was tried to answer whether lack of confidence affects writing or not. In this aspect the students and teachers were required to rate how often lack of confidence affects students writing. Referring to students answer, 50% and 39% of them reported very greatly and greatly respectively. Coming to teachers' answer most of them (60%) and (40%) responded that very greatly and rarely respectively. Moreover, in view of the teachers' interview, the participants in whole replied that lack of confidence was greatly affecting the student writing. To quote one teacher statement, "lack of confidence is always make students abstain from writing .It was observed that students keep silent even if they know the process how to write. Then as to me lack of confidence has adverse impact in doing the writing skill activities. Because of this lack of confidence is a great factor for my students." In general, it is depicted that lack of confidence is an adverse factor that is affecting the students writing very greatly.

To the question about lack of writing habit in leisure time, 39% and 52% of the students responded very greatly" and greatly respectively. Besides, 40% and 60% of the teachers also replied 'very greatly" and greatly respectively. Similarly, the responses of almost all interviewees revealed that lack of writing habit in leisure time influences the writing habit mostly. According to the interviewee responses, they explain that as their students do not write in leisure time. Because of this the students understudy writing habit is still poor. The teachers observed their students playing and chatting for nothing rather than practicing and studying. All in all, these responses seem to indicate that students do not write in their leisure time and this degrades the students understudy writing ability.

In reply to the question about the effect of students fear to make mistakes in writing, most of the students (70%) said 'some times; In the same line, the teachers questionnaire showed 30% and 70% of the teachers replied some times and rarely respectively. Further more, the evidences from the interview showed fear of making mistake affects the student writing teachers' motivation and the classroom atmosphere. But, if the classroom environment is conducive one might not fear to make mistake, if the classroom is serious, students may fear to make mistake so, the effect of this factor depends on the situation. Generally, this might show that students' fear of making mistake is less likely to affect writing comprehension if the classroom condition is conducive.

In general, as table 4 portrays, it seems possible to say that almost all the variables identified under the category of students' related factors make writing difficult. Thus, the analysis results seem to lead one to assume that these items cause the students' poor writing. As the researcher personally depicted, much of the factors are very serious that affect the students writing very greatly.

Table 6: Reaction to the impact of environmental reasons on writing

No	Items	Respondents	Responses									
			Very great		Greatly		Some times		Rarely		Never	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
9	Negative peer influence	Students	102	62	62	38	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	7	70	3	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	Cultural gap	Students	136	83	-	-	12	7	-	-	16	10
		Teachers	7	70	-	-	-	-	1	10	2	20
11	Few opportunities to practice writing	Students	8	5	112	68	39	24	8	5	5	3
		Teachers	-	-	6	60	3	30	-	-	1	10

1 2	Parents negative attitude towards learning English	Students	25	15	31	19	64	39	28	17	20	12
		Teachers	2	20	5	50	-	-	-	-	3	30
1 3	Bad home condition	Students	5	3	62	38	80	49	10	6	7	4
		Teachers	-	-	4	40	5	50	-	-	1	10

Concerning the negative peer influence, 70% and 30% of the teachers replied that peer influence on writing habit distorts very greatly and greatly respectively. In relation to this, 62% and 38% of the students answered that peer influences affects very greatly and greatly respectively. Additionally, the interviewees also revealed that peer influence has great impact in practicing writing. One interviewee exemplified that one student was so active in an other school. When he joined this school, he became weaker. The reason the teacher found out was that the student adapted his new friends' passive characteristics. Then, all the interviewees support the above idea. Thus, the researcher comes up to conclude that peer influence has very great effect for poor writing.

Concerning the cultural gap, 83% of the students reported that affects greatly. And 70% of the teachers also said cultural gap causes writing difficulty very greatly. However, 10% of the students and 20% of the teachers replied that cultural gap has no impact on the writing ability. In contras to the second view, the interviewees explained their answer cultural gab can influence the writing ability of students. The interviewees added really the cultural gap between English native speaker and Ethiopian is different but teachers can localize the foreign culture in to the students' culture. By doing this, teachers can simplify the work of their students. Unless teachers fail in doing these students

may face challenges from the new atmosphere they are exposed. Then writing would be difficult. Finally, from the above idea the writers of this paper can conclude that cultural gap can affect the students writing if teachers fail in making it local to the students' culture.

Students and teachers were asked to rate the effect of few opportunities to practice English writing. Referring to the students responses, 68% and 24% of them had answered 'greatly' and 'sometimes' respectively. Coming to the teachers response, 60% and 30% of them have replied 'greatly' and 'sometimes' respectively. Similarly, the interviewees revealed that their school has not enough resources that are supplementary for writing. The interviewees added that the periods provided for writing are not enough, and teachers give it less emphasis during teaching learning process. This intends students to be careless enough while they are asked to write in class room tests and exams. Therefore, it seems that the students have no focus for writing because of the limited resources around their school and less emphasis from the teachers.

About the impact of bad home conditions like the burden of house hold activities, 38% and 49% of the students replied 'greatly' and 'sometimes' respectively. Likewise, 40% and 50% of the teachers responded 'greatly' and 'sometimes' about the effect of bad home condition. Similarly, the interviewees revealed that bad home conditions have a great effect on writing. Generally, there are many students coming to school without doing any assignment. This shows how much the home atmosphere has a great impact on the teaching learning process. Thus, it seems deducible that certain bad home conditions are likely to be writing habit barriers.

Students and teachers were asked whether parents' negative attitude causes writing difficulties. About the effect of parents' negative attitude on writing activities, 15%, 19%, 39%, 17% and 12% of the students

responded as very greatly, greatly, sometimes, rarely and never respectively. This does not seem to show whether students responded against or for the negative parents' attitude. However, 20% and 50% of the teachers replied that very greatly, and greatly respectively. Moreover, the teachers participated in the interview have replied that parents negative attitude has much more impact in learning writing skill. In conclusion, the teachers and students different answers seem to indicate whether negative parents' attitude hinders students writing or not; then the researcher failed to give conclusion on this item.

Table7: responses on the target language factors on writing

No	Items	Respondents	Responses									
			Very great		Greatly		Some times		Rarely		Never	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
14	English complex spelling rules	Students	62	38	75	46	13	8	13	8	-	-
		Teachers	7	70	2	20	-	-	-	-	1	10
15	The influence of spoken English	Students	79	48	52	32	-	-	33	12	-	-
		Teachers	-	-	8	80	2	20	-	-	-	-
16	Complexity of the writing skill process	Students	79	48	70	43	5	3	10	6	-	-
		Teachers	8	80	1	10	-	-	-	-	1	10

In response to the question English complex spelling rules, 38% and 46% of the students responded respectively that complex spelling rules posed writing difficulty very greatly and greatly. Secondly, almost all the teachers (70% and 20%) also answered complex spelling rules affect writing 'very greatly' and 'greatly' respectively. In the same manner, the interviewees added that the English spelling system is very difficult because the writing system and pronunciation are different. Then, to master the writing system of English words is very difficult. As a result, English spelling system causes great difficult in our students writing. From these responses, it seems possible to draw a conclusion that spelling rules are difficult to make effective writing.

Students and teachers were also asked about the influence of spoken English. Almost all the teachers (80%) of them responded that spoken English causes writing difficulties greatly and the rest 20% answered 'sometimes'. Besides, in the students questionnaire, 48% and 32% of the students reported very greatly and greatly respectively. Moreover, the interviewees also supported the above ideas; all the interviewees revealed that the nature of spoken English has great influence on writing system. They further, explained the dissimilarity between spoken and written English causes miss pelt writing system. Thus, based on the data obtained from the students and teachers, it seems possible to conclude spoken English has a great influence on creating writing difficulties.

About the effect of complexity of writing process on writing, 48% and 43% of the students replied as very greatly and greatly respectively. Additionally, 80% and 10% of the teachers also responded that complexity of writing process creates writings difficulty very greatly and 'greatly' respectively. Similarly, the interviewee also added that complexity of writing process is very challenging to practice it in a real life classroom atmosphere. The interviewees further explained that knowing the writing process, steps and procedures are quite different from the practical activities of writing skill. That is why students fail in assimilating the complex nature of writing and its practical process. Therefore, it seems reasonable to deduce from the questionnaire and the interview responses that complex nature of writing process results in writing difficulty.

Table 8: Responses about the effect of factors related to teaching - learning on writing.

No	Items	Respondents	Responses									
			Very great		Greatly		Some times		Rarely		Never	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
17	Teachers low proficiency in teaching English	Students	133	81	16	10	8	5	7	4	-	-
		Teachers	1	10	-	-	2	20	6	60	-	-
18	Students over generalization of grammar rules	Students	30	18	20	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	-	-	-	-	7	70	2	20	-	-
19	Writing is done in mother tongue	Students	-	-	-	-	75	46	64	39	-	-
		Teachers	-	-	-	-	10	100	-	-	-	-
20	Students ignoring grammar rules	Students	79	48	80	49	5	3	-	-	-	-
		Teachers	10	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Students and teachers were asked to rate the effect of teachers low proficiency in language teaching in causing poor writing. Most students (81%) and (10%) answered that 'very greatly' and 'greatly' respectively. However, more than half of the teachers (about 60%) reported to the questionnaire, low proficiency of teaching rarely affects the students writing and the rest 20% also answered 'sometimes'. But, 10% of the teachers respondents answered very greatly. The teachers' responses do not support this item because they might be suspected that related to their profession. In contrast to the teachers answer, the interviewee participants revealed that some of the teachers are not sufficient enough in teaching the skill properly because some are inexperienced and other are less effective in their subject matter. Then, this item is likely a great factor in causing poor writing. Lastly, the researcher is failed in giving conclusion because of the above different responses

About the impact of over generalization of grammar rules, 24% and 38% of the students replied 'rarely' and 'never' respectively. However, 70% and 20% of the teachers revealed that 'sometimes' and 'rarely' respectively. Likewise, 18% and 12% of the students reported about the effect of over generalization 'very greatly' and 'greatly' consecutively towards English grammar rules. The interviewees also revealed that this can be a cause some times for poor writing. Therefore, it seems deducible that certain over generation of grammar rules are likely to be writing obstacle.

In reply to the question about the effect of 'mother tongue' in writing, all the teachers (100%) said, 'sometimes'. In the same manner, 46% and 39% of the students reported 'sometimes' and 'rarely' respectively. Furthermore, the interviewee answered that 'sometimes' Writing is done in the students' mother tongue for clarification. The interviewees added that 'sometimes' few teachers' use Amharic in English lessons instead, so, this has effect in the learning teaching process of writing. In general, the above answers show that using mother tongue in English lessons is likely to affect the learning process of writing 'sometimes'

In response to ignorance of grammar rules, all the teachers (100%) replied that 'very greatly'. In the same line, 48% and 49% of the students reported that 'very greatly' and 'greatly' respectively. Additionally, the interviewees revealed that ignoring grammar rules can seriously affect writing ability. Thus, it might be possible to say that the influence of ignoring grammar has great impact on causing poor writing ability.

Lastly, teachers and students were asked to add some other factors that can affect learning writing skill. Students did not give any response. Two teachers also said there is lack of writing resources around the school example the library is incomplete and the students do not have an interest to read. Beside one of the teachers added that large class sizes

by it self a problem. Further, other three teachers also replied that students generally have low motivation, low confidence and negative attitude in learning the language. Other four, teacher also said that most teachers do not know how to teach writing skills as they lack knowledge of writing themselves. This teacher added that the poor learning, poor teaching and some unfamiliar context make writing difficult. As a result of these differing views and lack of students' response, the researcher failed to crosscheck and reach at a conclusion

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the general study and then conclusions on the basis of these findings. Finally, feasible recommendations are provided.

5.1. Summary

Some local researchers like (Tesfay, 1991; yonas 1998; Habtamu, 2007; and Alamrew, 2005) studied several areas of concern for English writing skill regarding perception, a writing teaching method and students need in learning writing skills. In view of the issues discussed so far, such kind of study with regard to the problems of students face in writing skill is highly needed in our secondary schools.

Hence, the purpose of this study was into the problems students encounter in learning writing skills in the secondary school of Addis Ababa , examine the difficult level of writing skill and to point out the causes of poor writing are the main concern of this study . In order to achieve these purposes, the following major research questions were raised and their answers sought in the course of investigation.

1. What are some of the problems students face in learning writing skill?
2. To what extent writing skill is difficult?
3. What are the causes of writing problems?

The study was carried out in one high school which is found in yeka Sub city of Addis Ababa.

To this effect, the descriptive survey approach was employed as a method of study. In order to seek answers to the above research questions, test, questionnaires, and interview were used to obtain data pertinent to the investigation.

The questionnaire was distributed to the whole 187 students' using simple random sampling technique and to the ten teachers using available sampling techniques.

In addition, the tests were administrated for ninety students of grade ten using simple random sampling technique. Besides, interviews were conducted with selected three teachers of grade ten using purposive sampling technique. The data obtained through the above instruments were analyzed using percentages, and descriptive statements. On the basis of the above analysis made on the data secured through the above procedures, the major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

As it was indicated in the analyses the sampled teachers have BA degree in English and out of the ten three are females. Regarding to students the sample has almost balanced ratio between female and male respondents. This has played great role in obtaining valuable data.

- The finding revealed that the students under study have serious mechanical and grammatical problems in their writings.
- Majority of the students find out writing as difficult task.
- The study indicated that students are poor in writing because of the environmental, method of teaching, students back ground and complexity of English language nature.

5.2. Conclusion

On the basis of the major findings derived from the reports, analysis and interpretation of the data collected through questionnaires, test and interviews the following conclusions are made:

- The students under study confront several problems in relation to learning writing skill. In general, it was revealed that while carrying out their writing tasks, the students face serious problems in vocabulary , punctuation , organization of ideas, spelling ,in using prepositions and auxiliary verbs, capitalization and their papers

are full of unclear explanations. Thus, it has been indicated that the aforementioned problems cause a lot of confusion for the teachers involved in teaching high school students and for the proposed readers of the papers written by students. Therefore, based on the results of the present study, it is indicated that the over all performance level of the students was found to be low in writing.

- To the majority of the respondents it was pointed out that they get learning writing skill mostly difficult. It seems that the difficulty level of writing skill is very serious even now.
- The results of this study further point out that the students under study seem to ignore grammar rules and the teachers use mother tongue in writing lessons. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the classes of writing instructions were not equipped to appropriate writing.
- The study found out that majority of students to have been affected negatively in their writing tasks because of the target language factors such as complex spelling rule, spoken language and complexity of writing skill process.
- ① ▪ The results of this study indicate that most students have limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge. They also seem to have negative attitude, low confidence, and poor writing habit in leisure time and weak back ground. Additionally, the students seem poor in practice to write and always fear to make mistakes .This might lead to conclusion that the students are ineffective in writing skill.
- From the findings, it can be concluded that some environmental reasons like negative peer influence, cultural gap, few opportunities to practice English and negative home conditions are supposed to be causes of poor writing. As a result, the findings indicate that these factors have been affecting the students writing negatively.

5.3. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, it seems reasonable to suggest the following recommendations.

- To minimize the problems in writing, students have to practice to write the number of writing tasks and the written items have to spot by the teachers and then the reasons for the problems have to indicate to the students. Further, self editing and peer review have to be practiced by the students.
- It is proposed that the teachers, curriculum experts and text book designer have to increase the number of writing tasks that suits to the age, background and grade level of the students' .This can enhance the writing ability of the students. ✓
- In relation to writing difficulty level, it is advisable for the teachers to initiate their students to make extensive writing practice .This is to help familiarize students with the writing process which are helpful to minimize the difficult level of writing .
- It is suggested that students ought to read extensively in order to increase their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge which are core elements of writing. Additionally, it is advisable that teachers have to be aware their students to write in rest time, to have motivation and to avoid fear in writing lessons.
- To prevent the environmental reasons that affect wring skill, it is supposed that teachers, parents and the school have to make a great commitment on arranging sensible atmosphere where by the students write and read during their leisure time.
- To minimize the ignoring grammar rules and the teachers use mother tongue in teaching and learning writing. It is supposed that teachers have to master the subject matter effectively and they ought to employ multiple teaching techniques in order to improve students writing.

- To reduce the spelling and spoken language errors, an appropriate pronunciation drill ought to give to student's .And teachers have to teach the writing process appropriately.
- The researcher failed in giving conclusion for items like teachers low proficiency in teaching and parents' negative attitude because of differing responses. Therefore, it recommended that further research to be conducted.
- Finally, it is important to give orientation and motivation for the students in order to improve their writing ability so that students could at least minimize the problems.

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APPENDIX A
ADDIS ABABA UNIVESRSITY
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Questionnaire to be filled by students

I am conducting a research into the problem students' encounter in writing with regard to grade ten students. Your sincere responses to the questions below are of great help for the success of my study. Therefore, I kindly request you to give genuine responses that will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PART ONE

Direction: - 1 Do not writes your name

2. Put X mark on the space provided and fill the blank with the

most appropriate responses

Provide the following background information

A. sex ----- B. Age -----

PART TWO

1. According to your experience writing in English is -----

A. Always easy

C. Mostly difficult

B. Mostly easy

D. always difficult.

Direction: - the following are some possible problems that can be faced by you in writing skill class. Indicate how serious these problems by putting X are mark, in the provided column as appropriate for you using the following measuring scales.

The number represents:

1. = A serious problem

2 = A minor problem

3. = Not problem

No	Item	Scale		
1	Spelling			
2	Capitalization			
3	Punctuation			
4	Organization of idea			
5	Prepositions			
6	Vocabulary			
7	Inexplicitness (unclear)			
8	Auxiliary verbs			

PART THREE

Direction: Indicate the extent to which the factors below make your writing difficult by putting a 'X' mark on one of the five point scales (= Very greatly 2= greatly 3= sometimes 4= rarely, and 5= never)

No	Factors that make your writing difficult	1	2	3	4	5
1	Weak foundation					
2	Your limited vocabulary knowledge					
3	Your limited grammar knowledge					
4	Few opportunities to practice English					
5	Bad home condition					
6	Teachers low proficiency in teaching English					
7	Writing is done in mother tongue					
8	Parents negative attitude towards English language					
9	Negative peer influence					
10	Lack of habit to write in leisure time					

11	Your negative attitude towards learning writing skill					
12	Fear of making mistake					
13	Lack of Practice					
14	Influence of spoken form					
15	Complex spelling rules					
16	Cultural gap					
17	Over generalization of the grammar rules					
18	Complexity of writing skill process					
19	Lack of confidence					
20	Ignorance of the grammar rules					

1. State additional problems related to writing ?

2. Mention other factors that make your writing difficult?

APPENDIX B
ADDIS ABABA UNIVESRSITY
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Questionnaire to be filled by teachers

Dear Teacher

The aim of the questionnaire is to investigate the problem encountered by students in writing. Your genuine and conscious response is highly appreciated I would like to assure you that your response to the questionnaire would be under strictly confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation

PART ONE

Direction:- 1 Do not write your name

Put 'X' mark on the space provide with the most appropriate response

Provide the following back ground information

A. Sex _____

B. Qualification

C. Experience _____

PART TWO

2. Do your students get writing skill difficult/ easy _____?

Does this happen to all, most some or few students' _____?

Direction: - the following are some possible problems that can be faced by your students. Indicate how serious are these problems by putting 'X' mark in the provided column as appropriate for your observation.

The numbers represent:-

1= A serious problem

2= A Minor problem

3= Not a problem

No	Item	Scale		
		1	2	3
1	Spelling			
2	Capitalization			
3	Punctuation			
4	Organization (sequencing) words			
5	Prepositions			
6	Vocabulary			
7	Inexplicitness (unclear)			
8	Auxiliary verbs			

PART THREE

Direction: - Look at each factor and put an 'X' marks on the given scales to Show the extent to which it blocks your students writing .

The number represents:-

1 = very greatly

3= some times

5. =Never

2 = greatly

4. = Rarely

No	Factors that make your writing difficult	1	2	3	4	5
1	students Weak background					
2	Student limited vocabulary knowledge					
3	Student limited grammar knowledge					
4	Few oppportunities to practice English					
5	Bad home condition					
6	Teacher low proficiency					
7	Writing is done in mother tongue					
8	Parents negative attitude towards English language					

9	Negative peer influence					
10	Lack of habit to write in leisure time					
11	students negative attitude towards learning writing skill					
12	Fear of making mistake					
13	Lack of Practice					
14	Influence of spoken form					
15	Complex spelling rules					
16	Cultural gap					
17	Over generalization of the grammar rules					
18	Complexity of writing skill process					
19	Lack of confidence					
20	Ignorance of the grammar rules					

1. Write other factors that make writing difficult for your students.

2. Try to list some additional problems that can be faced by students in writing.

Appendix C

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What do you think is the most serious problem hindering your students writing ability? How do they affect your students learning?
2. Do your students get writing skill difficult or easy? Is it difficult for all of your students?
3. Are punctuation, organization, capitalization, using prepositions and auxiliary verbs, vocabularies and spelling the problem areas in your students learning writing? Discuss how serious they are?
4. Do your students write clear and meaning full sentences and paragraphs? Are these problems serious for your students?
5. What do you think the causes of poor writing? Explain how often affect the students writing?
6. Are the Spelling system, the nature of writing skill process and the nature of spoken language influence the learning process of writing? How often they affect the students writing?
7. What do you think the impact of peer influence, parents' negative attitude and cultural gap and student home conditions on writing?
8. Do your students need to practice English in leisure time? If your answer is no, how often this factor affects your students writing?
9. Do the students have positive attitude towards learning writing skill? If your answer is no, why?
10. What do you think the confidence of the students in learning writing? Do they fear to make mistakes?
11. Do you think students have adequate grammar and vocabulary knowledge? If no what is the adverse effect of in writing?
12. What do you think about the background of the students? Do they have enough former knowledge on writing?
13. How did you see the teachers' effectiveness in teaching writing? Does it have any impact in learning writing?
14. Did you observe the students ignoring and over generalizing the grammar rules in their writing tasks?

APPENDIX D
ADDIS ABABA UNIVESRSITY
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Allotted time 1:20

Writing Test for students

Direction for students

Do not write your name.

Purpose: this is designed into the problem students' encounter in writing. So, your genuine responses to the test will be kept confidential.

Instruction: Read the following question carefully and write your answer at the sheet provided.

TEST ONE

1. Write a letter to your friend expressing your self. What did you do

Yesterday, what are doing today and what will you do tomorrow?

The address is not necessary.

TEST TWO

2. Imagine that this is your diary showing some of your activities on certain days. First fill in your activities for these days which have been left blank. Then, using the information in the diary, write a letter to a friend telling him/ her how you are spending your time. The address is not necessary.

No	Day	Activity
1	Monday	Study
2	Tuesday	
3	Wednesday	Writing assignment
4	Thursday	
5	Friday	
6	Saturday	
7	Sunday	Exam

DECLARATION

I, the under signed, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work done under the guidance of Tibebe Alemayehu (Associate professor) and it has not been presented for a degree in any other university. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Hailemariam Welegebrial

Signature



Place

Addis Ababa University

Date May, 2011

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university advisor.

Name: Tibebe Alemayehu (Associate Professor)

Signature _____

Date May, 2011