

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
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**Exploring the Effectiveness of the Teaching and  
Learning of the Writing Skills: Asella College of  
Teachers' Education in Focus.**

**By**

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**Exploring the Effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning of the Writing Skills: Asella College of Teachers' Education in Focus.**

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## **Abstract**

*The objective of this study is to explore the extent to which the teaching and learning of the writing skill is effective at Asella College of Teachers' Training. To meet the stated objective, systematic random sampling technique was used to determine the target group from second year students taking English as a major course. The data were collected using test, questionnaire, observation, instructional material analysis, and interview. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.*

*The finding of this study shows that there is a significant mismatch between what teaching and learning to write communicatively claims and what is actually done currently in the process of teaching and learning writing in the class room. Although teachers' have awareness of the techniques of good writing, they have been found less committed to help their learners. The teaching instructional modules are not efficient and helpful. Its objectives were poorly stated and the contents were also weakly selected, organized and sequenced.*

*As a result of these, the students' composing skills are found very weak. However, the perception of the students about their way of learning writing and their teachers' way of teaching is found to be odd with their actual writing performance.*

*Finally, conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the findings and points for future research were also suggested.*

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Appendix

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language teaching, particularly foreign language teaching and learning, remains a challenge to all who have the concern about it. The existence of the problem forces the language experts and others who have relations with it to evaluate the progress of language teaching and learning by looking for all possible means which helps to take actions. Among these actions, for instance, a good deal of attention has been paid to make language-teaching tasks and methodologies more appropriate.

In teacher education, for example, there has been a corresponding movement to ensure that teacher trainers use appropriate approach during the training. With this regard, teacher training colleges have recently made a paradigm shift. The program is known as Teachers' Education System Overhaul (TESO). Depending on the new system, for example, changing 12 + 2 program to 10+3, materials have been developed in a modular form. As a main course of study, English language teaching materials for language majoring students have been designed in four consecutive courses. Besides, two supplementary course modules are currently put in practice. Now, it has nearly taken four years since the new system has been applied. It is with this background that this study is intended to explore the usefulness of teaching of English as a foreign language, particularly, on the effectiveness of the teaching of the writing skill.

The main reason for this study to focus on writing is that the skill, being one of the main and prominent means of instruction as to scholars' such as Grabe

and Kaplan's (1996), Raimes's (1985), Zamel's (1982, 1983), Silva's (1990) and others' note, yet it remains the most difficult skill lacked a considerable concern in the teaching of the language skills. The problem is still prominent in Ethiopian context. To cite few, for instance, the research made by Yonas Adaye(1996), Geremew Lemu (1999), Alamirew G/Mariam (2005), reveal the existence of significant problems with regard to teachers' teaching, teaching materials and learners' achievement in the skills both in high schools and university.

In the current teachers training colleges apart from producing and applying the teaching materials, no research has so far been made on the effectiveness of the resource being used, particularly in the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skills. As a result of this back ground, as it will soon be discussed in the statement of the problem, this research is designed to be conducted.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Writing is the skill that our students should develop. The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), "...writing is a technology, a set of skills which must be practiced through experience." It needs practice in all environments, especially, in the formal instructional settings. In other words writing is an activity which should be done with great care and thinking to communicate with a reader effectively. These imply that writing is a difficult skill which needs to be thoroughly practiced.

Thus, teachers and students have to accomplish such an unremitting responsibility to achieve the success of writing skill. In other words, in the ESL classroom, there should be active and interactive instructions to writing between teachers and students as well as among the students themselves.

However, with the current practices of teaching and learning writing skills, especially in the teachers' training, there seems to be a paramount existence of problems. The most evident one is that there is a disparity of views between the English teachers' understanding of their students' actual writing performance, and of the students' own writing ability, i.e. the students seem to believe that they can write well. Teachers are always heard severely blaming their trainees for their inability to write well. Most English Language teachers believe that most of their students are very poor in writing skills. On the other hand, students are complaining of getting fewer grades in writing.

Nevertheless, the causes for these problems could be either the teachers, learners or the teaching materials. Though it doesn't likely address the current EFL teaching materials in teachers training colleges, Yonas Adaye's (1996) research reveals similar problems in the area of learning to teach writing skills. Regardless of the difference in setting and the level, Alamirew G/Mariam (2005), in his doctoral dissertation, has identified that the writing skill is not effectively taught in high schools. As a result, Alamirew contended that students writing performance is low.

Geremew Lemu (1999), in his doctoral dissertation, found out that students' writing in different faculties of AAU is weak in treating a given topic both in content and form. He noted that students were unable to identify the relevant information from the irrelevant one and had lack of organizing skills of connected discourse in composing. Though there is no research made currently in this area, from his own teaching experience and from what other colleagues consider to be true in the other Teachers' Training College, the researcher believes that there exist inadequate students' writing skills as the process of discovering and making meaning.

Hence, it is with this regard that this study attempts to investigate whether the teaching of the writing skills and teaching materials in the Teachers Training Colleges are effective or not. It also explores whether the practices cultivate the trainees towards a better future career of their teaching. Therefore, this study will explore the effectiveness of the practice of teaching writing skills at Asella Teacher College. Together with the effective teaching, the study highlights the effectiveness of the teaching materials and test learners' concrete writing performance.

In view of this, the study attempts to answer the following basic problems:

1. How effective are the trainees in producing a piece of writing?
2. What kinds of approaches do teachers use in teaching writing lessons?
3. To what extent do the teaching materials meaningfully engage the students?
4. What possible solutions can be suggested to minimize problems to be identified, if any?

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

#### ***The general objective:***

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of writing skills at Asella Teachers' Training College.

#### ***The specific objectives:***

It is to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of writing skills at Asella Teachers Training College. Hereby, it examines the effectiveness of:

1. trainees writing skills.
2. teachers in teaching the writing skills.
3. teaching materials for teaching writing skills.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will:

- a. contribute a lot to alleviate trainees writing problems.
- b. help the teacher educators to design their writing lessons accordingly.
- c. help course writers to shape the teaching materials properly.
- d. initiate others to conduct further research on the area.

## **1.5. Limitation**

Due to time constraints and limited financial support, this study is limited to second year students at Asella Teachers Training College.

## **1.6. Delimitation**

The scope of the study is delimited to the teaching and learning of the writing skill.

# Chapter Two

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. The Writing Skill

Literature reveals that writing is a recent invention when compared to the spoken language. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), the theory and practice of both L1 (first language) and L2 (second/foreign language) writing raise issues such as *what writing is*, *why people write*, *what makes writing difficult* and *what constitute writing*. They also raise the relation and difference between literacy and writing, as well as oral and written language to seek answer for these issues.

Dealing with each of the above issues is beyond the scope of this paper. First, let us briefly see *the what*, *the difficulties* and *the need to teaching of writing skill*. Highlighting these issues is very important because the researcher believes that they have strong relation with this research topic. Then, the review raises the different beliefs and practices of teaching writing together with some research findings about its teaching and learning.

#### 2.1.1. The Meaning and Nature of the Writing Skill

Writing is one of the main language skills that students need to develop. The question *what is writing* can be answered from different and complex natures it enfolds. The definition of writing depends either on the level and purpose underlying it or the types of information it is required to transform or on how graphic symbols are set on surface. The Encyclopedia of Americana (1985), for example, defines writing as, "... the communication of idea, by means of conventional symbols that are traced, incised, drawn or otherwise formed on surface of some material such as paper" (vol. 20, p. 556). This very general definition gives writing a unique nature which makes it different from the rest language skills.



More specifically, Kelly (1998) describes writing as, "... a deliberate and more fully thought skill that needs precise and carefully crafted word by word for just the right effect." (p. 3). Here writing is not only putting information on surface but it is also the art of making it purposeful with the right effect intended to have on the reader. Lyons and Heasley (1984) also propose to define writing as " a communicative occurrence between a writer and an intended reader in which the writer creates a discourse with the imagined reader and derives from this a text by which an actual reader may approximate to the original discourse"(p.209).

Others still define writing in relation to what constitutes it. For example, Harmer (1991) describes writing as convention of text formation manifested by handwriting (or other means), spelling and layout, and punctuation. This in turn implies the knowledge and control of the structure of a written medium. To determine the definition and the nature of writing, one way is to distinguish writing that involves composing from that which doesn't involve composing. Some times the nature of writing is also studied in relation to its counter part, speaking, since both are believed to be productive skills. As a result of this, it is termed to be a complex and difficult skill (Byrne, 1988, Hedge, 1983, 2000, Grabe and Kaplan, 1996)

### **2.1.2. What Makes Writing a Difficult Skill?**

In every description of writing, scholars seem to agree on the fact that writing is a complex process. It is a complex process because it requires the mastery of grammatical devices, conceptual (thinking) and judgmental (having purpose and acting) elements (Heaton, 1990, Byrne 1988, Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, Kelly, 1998). Byrne (1988) classifies the above complexities into psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems. Regarding the complexities of writing, Grabe and Kaplan, 1996 say "... writing is a technology, a set of skills which must be practiced and learned through experience" (p. 6). Since the skills required do

not come naturally as stated earlier, but rather are gained through conscious effort and much practice, writing is a more complex skill. This is why it is said that writing causes great problems for students. These all help one to infer that the process of learning and teaching the writing skill requires developing sense of collaborative effort and the need to have interest to achieve it. What so ever difficult and complex will this skill be, it is still the most important skill needed to be taught in school curriculum.

### **2.1.3. The Need to Teach Writing Skill**

As stated earlier, writing is one of the major and different ways of communication. The purpose of teaching writing skills, according to Byrne (1988), is primarily to develop the students' skills of expressing themselves through graphics. Byrne also jots down different pedagogical purposes of teaching writing skills. The main pedagogical purposes of teaching writing skills, according to Byrne, are to provide learners with different learning style, tangible evidence, create variety in the classroom and create independent learning (pp. 6-7).

Added to these, Raimes (1983) points out three important ideas how writing helps students to learn. She says, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary we teach and secondly, when students write, they feel they control the language and take risk and thirdly, when they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language (p. 3).

Unlike its counter part, speaking, writing can be mastered only through instruction that calls for much attention in its teaching. Besides, writing is an important language skill that plays a significant role in the process of acquiring knowledge. For instance, Troyka (1996) mentions the following advantages that a learner can get from writing. First, "writing is a way of thinking and learning". By this he means that it gives the learner an opportunity to explore ideas and understand information. Second, 'writing is a way of discovering', which is the

central part of communicative language teaching (CLT). Third, ‘writing creates reading’. Troyka restates that, ‘writing creates permanent, visible, record of ones ideas for others to read’. (p. 2).

From these and many other benefits of writing, we can see that teachers need to help their students in any way possible to learn thoroughly how to express themselves through this skill. They must be confident of this skill as one of the important means of communication.

## **2.2. Approaches to the Teaching of the Writing Skills**

The teaching of writing skills (modern writing) according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996) began during 1750. Grabe and Kaplan mention three stages of the writing skills development. The period between 1750 and 1850 was commonly known as common literacy and the mid-nineteenth was the rise of schooled literacy. In the twentieth century began the use of psycho-metric testing that led to writing instruction and composition which became a university education as part of rhetorical studies (p. 11). Nowadays, the latter one is known as ‘current traditional approach’ to the teaching of writing skills. Since 1960s, however, many scholars have been arguing against this dominant approach.

Research in L2 writing began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Before 1965, according to Silva (1990), Raimes (1991), Grabe and Kaplan (1996), especially, in 1950s and 1960s, most teachers of writing, whether for L1 or L2 students, felt that writing instruction had a well established and effective methodology known as ‘current traditional’ approach. Even Silva (1990) seems to believe that ESL composition especially the controlled composition began since 1945 in USA which rooted in Charles Fries Oral Approach (p.12). Raimes (1991) identifies the following different L2 writing instructions modes that had been practiced since 1966 to 1980s depending on their focuses. These are the focus on form, the writer, content and the reader.

The focus on the form or the controlled practice, according to Raimes (1991) is based on, 'the rhetorical and linguistic form of the text itself' (p. 408). As commonly known, the 1960s was dominated by the audio-lingual method of instruction. The underlying view of this method was that speech was primary and writing should serve to reinforce oral patterns (Raimes, 1983, 1985, Widdowson, 1979, Silva, 1990). Hence, the principle of learning was a habit formation (Kunz, 1972, Crystal, 1987, Nunan, 1988).

Based on this principle, writing took the form of sentence drills, fill-ins, substitutions, transformation and completion (Raimes, 1991: 405). These discrete linguistic elements were also developed to controlled composition tasks, by providing the text and force the students to manipulate linguistic forms (Furieux 1999: 56). In other words, the tasks were marked for linguistic error, and the focus was on the product of composing using the model. Nevertheless, the focus on the form began to face with severe complain by those who felt that the writer was the most important during composing.

Because of the strong pressure and influences by the L1 writing, Emig (1971) and Zamel (1976), quoted in Spack (1984), pointed out that research on composing process, saw the development of more than sentence combining, substitutions and controlled composition. Teachers and researchers reacted against a form dominated approach by developing an interest in what L2 writers actually do as they write (Raimes, 1991, p. 409). Raimes calls this period a writer focus. This will be broadly discussed in the section process approach of this paper.

During the mid-eightieth, there was criticism on the approach that focused on writer. Horowitz (1986) and Swales (1987) in Raimes (1991) contend that writing is ultimately judged by content not by its process. This has given opportunity to the emergence of *content based teaching* what Raimes (1991)

calls it the content focus. The content focus was appropriate for academic demands and for the expectation of academic reader.

The criticism on writer focus did not depend only on the content but also spontaneously raised the importance of the expectation of academic reader. According to Raimes (1991) they oppose writer-dominated process approach that favors personal writing, but give great emphasize to a reader-dominated approach. The approach perceives language teaching, Horowitz (1986) quoted in Raimes, “as a socialization into the academic community’ (p. 789). According to the reader (audience) dominated approach, the focus was readers inside the language classroom as peers and teacher responded to the ideas in the text.

Both the content and reader focused teaching shares some academic oriented features so named as English for Academic Purpose (EAP). (Raid, 1987, p. 34) quoted in Raimes (1991) indicates that it is a return to a form-dominated approach, the difference being that now rhetorical form, rather than grammatical form. In EAP, ESL learner should produce a written text which parallels the model “the structure or shape of content” of the language and rhetorical structure of academic discourse community (Furneauux, 1999, p. 57). Generally, since 1980s, a great deal of literature on the teaching of writing has centered on the issue of whether to adopt a process or product approach to writing. With this regard, all the aforementioned four focuses that Raimes raised can fall either to the product or to the process paradigm depending on the principle they underpin.

### **2.2.1. The Product Approach**

The product approach has got its origins in the traditions of rhetoric and has been characterized in several ways. It has involved the study of the model texts in order to raise students’ awareness of the different features of the texts. The features are discrete language elements and overall organization of the text. So it has often involved practice of these features, in sentence level exercises or in

the development of a paragraph. Its pedagogy offers the way to analyze student's writing after the text has been produced in order to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Traditional marking systems for the product have also tended to focus on accuracy as the primary criteria for good writing. All those learning principles discussed by Raimes (1991) under form focused are the salient features of this approach. Many local researches, for example, Alamirew G/Mariam (2005) proves the principle noted has long been used in Ethiopia until the introduction of CLT.

Silva (1990) states that during text organization, according to this approach, patterns could be clearly defined within written discourse in which smaller units of meaning combine to form longer stretch of discourse. Silva notes that its methodology involved the imitation and manipulation (substitution, transformation, expansion and completions) of model sentence or paragraph or passage carefully constructed and graded for vocabulary and sentence pattern (1990: 12). In this case the assumption underlies the approach is that students learn by mastering the component parts of a language such as sound, letter, words, etc. bits by bits, all carefully arranged and sequenced (Weaver, 1979).

The role of the teacher in this approach is to transmit knowledge to the passive recipients. The recipients' (the passive learners') role would be to practise the patterns of discrete linguistic element and forms by drilling. They would imitate the model and manipulate these discrete linguistic elements to produce an equivalent sentences and paragraph or essay. In other words, the approach called for keen memorization and gave emphasis or devotion to the habit formation that severely depended on the product than the process. As a result of applying this approach, a great failure of language learning in general and success in writing skills has been recorded.

What has so far been discussed is the extremity of depending on form, habit, teacher oriented and the presentation and practising of discrete linguistic

elements. Nowadays, there seems to emerge approaches to the writing skill being applied with sense of compromising the extreme product and process (the procedural approach), mixing some features of each. The difference is whether the learners can control their learning, have the awareness of the purpose and apply their cognitive knowledge, known as process approach.

### **2.2.2. The Process Approach**

Modern composition teaching has emerged primarily from observation of L1 freshman composition students, leading to a strong focus on writing process. The process approach to composition studies has come to replace the older traditional 'product' rhetoric that focused on correctness. To show the shift of views, Raimes (1983) severely claims about the old trend saying, "the old familiar themes of 'patterns', 'drills', 'rules', 'accuracy', 'sequence' are being replaced by a new set: communication 'functions', 'use', 'reality' and 'affective' approach," (p. 543). Neither the controlled composition nor the current-traditional rhetoric (the product oriented) enabled the students to foster thought.

As we all believe, the goal of writing is to foster thought and expression which the product oriented approach was unable to match this goal. For example, Silva (1990) notes "the linearity and prescriptivism of current traditional rhetoric which discouraged creative thinking and writing" (p. 15). Quoting Applebee (1986), Kroll (1990) notes that the process approach "provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, grammar)" p.8). Under this paradigm the teaching of writing has incorporated invention techniques. The invention technique and heuristic prewriting, according to Silva (1990), has long been practised in L1 freshman writing courses in USA.

The process writing, particularly in L1, has been studied from different perspectives beginning at the end of 1960s and continuing through the 1970s and 1980s. The first perspective has been investigating the writing of composition as cognitive process (Emig, 1971, Flower and Hayes, 1981) in Krapels (1990). According to these scholars, the primary aim of the process approach, therefore, is to help students to gain greatest control over their cognitive strategies involved in composing. They believe that writing is the result of employing cognitive strategies to manage the composition process.

From the other perspective, it has also been studied as a social process (Shaughnessy, 1977, Bruffee, 1986, Bizell, 1986, and Rose, 1989). These studies of L1 process of writing developed eventually into ESL composition scholars and practitioners (Connor, 1994, Kroll, 1990, Leki, 1991, Reid, 1988, Spack, 1984, White, 1988, Zamel, 1985). These researchers and practitioners have come up with different findings.

### **2.3. Research Finding on Composition Writing**

As it has so far been stated, research in L2 composition is a recent phenomenon. It has grown recently from L1 composition employing similar composition research approaches on groups of L2 students. As it has been said earlier, in the process paradigm, a piece of writing is the outcome of a set of complicated cognitive operation. Therefore, the main aim of L2 researchers in writing has been to identify cognitive (mental) operations (Connor, 1994, Kroll, 1990, Leki, 1991, Reid, 1988, Spack, 1984, White, 1988, Zamel, 1985).

To identify the complex process of writing, research has been conducted on the following different areas such as: student's language competence, the composing process of skilled and unskilled writers, the difference and similarity of L1 and L2 composing process, the writer's strategy in composing, and the influence of tasks in composing writing.



Research finding made by Jones (1982), Zamel (1982), Raimes (1985) reveal that lack of competence in writing in English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence. Jones (1982), in Krapel (1990), for example, investigated the writing process and the written products of two L2 writers, designating one “poor” and the other “good”. Jones observed that the poor writer was bound to the text at the expense of ideas, whereas the good writer allowed ideas to generate the text. Referring to Jones’s finding, Krapels point out that the poor writer had never learned how to compose, and this general lack of competence in composing rather than a specific lack in L2 linguistic competence was the source of the student difficulty in writing (Krapels, 1990, p.40).

Similar to Jones’s (1982) finding, Zamel (1982) also found that competence in the composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write. As a result of her study, Zamel pointed out that the writing process of her L2 subjects composing process indicated that L1 process oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing. She maintained that when students understood and experienced composing as a process, their written products would improve.

Raimes (1985) also underscored that her subjects composing competence didn’t correspond with their linguistic competence. She observed little planning before or during writing, a similar behavior that was observed in unskilled L1 and L2 writers by Perl (1979) and Zamel (1983). She also observed that these unskilled writers paid less attention to revising and editing, they seemed to reread their work to let an idea generate. Raimes (1985) strongly claims that, with students who exhibit lack of competence in writing, poor composing competence can be a greater factor in this than poor language competence. The finding by these scholars would therefore alert L2 teachers to give due consideration for the composing process besides the linguistic elements.

The other research made in the process of writing indicates that the skilled L2

writers composing process and L1 skilled composing process are similar and so do the unskilled composers. Zamel (1983) particularly identified that the skilled L2 writers in her study revised more and spent more time on their essays than the unskilled writer. The skilled writers, according to Zamel's finding are concerned themselves with generating ideas first, revising at discourse level, exhibiting recursiveness in their writing process and saved editing until the end of the process (p.172). Krapels (1990) in Kroll(1990) points out that the skilled L2 composers use similar writing strategies of those L1 skilled writers, which was described in L1 writing process studies (e.g., Pianko, 1979, Sommers, 1980).

Generally, Raimes 1985 guessed that L2 writers might not be "as concerned with accuracy as we thought they were, that their primary concern is to get down on paper their ideas on a topic' (p. 246). In more firmly stand, Raimes made the following comment on the strategies of experienced writers.

**They consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan. As they write, they read back over what they have written. Contrary to what many textbooks advice, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing and then revising. For while and writer's product- the finished essay, story or novel- is presented in lines the process that produces it is not linear at all. (Raimes, 1985, Ibid)**

Related with the effective composing strategies, Pfingstag (1984) cited in Krapel (1990), identified one of her subject with very little planning and had a very narrow range of strategies for generating ideas on a topic. She then did a composing aloud session to model effective composing strategies for the student. As a result, Pfingstag saw her subjects' subsequent composing aloud protocol exhibited improved composing strategies. Here, it should be remarkable to consider the importance of equipping learners with all possible composing strategies. The teaching and the practising of the composing must be flexible.

The research on composition writing also addresses that while composing, many factors can affect the L2 composing process. Raimes (1985) notes that L2 composition class may represent different culture, educational background, L1 itself, ages, different needs for able to write in a foreign language. Jones (1985) investigated monitoring as one of the factors that might affect L2 writing. He reported that “monitoring doesn’t lead to improve writing” (p. 112). According to Jones’s finding monitoring was a factor constraining the L2 writing process, which might result from instructional method, or in other words, it is the speculation about the relationship between instruction and overusing the monitor.

While writing in L2, research also reveals that there would be the interference of L1 to L2. Lay (1982), for example, identified that L2 subjects incorporated their L1 into their L2 composing process. Similarly, Jones and Tetroe (1987) note that certain features in one’s first language writing process transfer to, or are reflected in those some features in one’s second language writing process. Raimes (1985) and Martin-Betancourt (1986) in Krapels (1990) pointed out most of these features related to linguistic problems, especially in vocabulary. The types of topics that L2 writers deal with could also affect their writing.

The study of Lay (1982) and Johnson (1985) indicated that certain topics elicited more first language use in second language composing than other topics did. Therefore, during revising or the presentation of feedback or the correcting (marking) of the L2 composition, until the students develop the editing skill, teachers should be able to entertain and tolerate it( the interference). The topics for writing could also invite for L1 interference to the L2. Thus, considering the factors intruding into writing process as a result of topic selection is important.

The other most important finding in relation to the benefits of writing as a process is the application of much revising. Regarding revising, research

indicates that similar system was used to revise across languages (Arndt, 1987). Arndt (1987) reported that, “the composing strategies of each individual writer were found to remain consistent across languages” (p. 257). Arndt (1987) findings also indicated that “all L2 writers, proficient or otherwise in terms of writing as activity, need more help with the demands of writing-as-text” (p. 265).

The most research findings indicated above generally reveal the effectiveness of the process approach over the product one. Urzua (1987) pointed out the benefits of process oriented composition teaching for L2 learners. Based on the hypothesis that grew out of her classroom-based study, Diaz concluded that “not only are process strategies and techniques strongly indicated and recommended for ESL students but also when used in secure, student centered contexts, the benefits to these students can go beyond their development as writers” (1987: 41). Urzua, by assessing process oriented composition pedagogy in an L2 context, came to much the same conclusion about the effectiveness of process oriented teaching with L2 writers. She observed that the children acquired three significant composing skills, “a) sense of audience, b) a sense of voice and c) sense of power in language” (p. 279).

Generally the research findings on composition writing particularly in relation to the effectiveness of process-oriented composition display the identification of the recursive nature of writing. Referring to the research finding of Zamel(1982) and Raimes(1983), for instance, Silva(1990) summarizes that writing is not a straight forward plan but it is, “ a complex ,recursive and creative process”(1990, p.15).

## **2.4. Different Perspectives of the Writing Process**

### **(Writing composition model)**

Berlin (1982, 1987, and 1988) in Johns (1990) suggests that all complete rhetorical theories or approaches to composition must consider the writer, the

audience, reality and truth and the source of the language in written text. Let us see in short the first two ones: the writer and the reader each with underlying purpose. The L1 process approach, considers the writer as originator of written text and the process that this originator undergoes as important component of the theory. With this regard, Faigley (1986) identifies the cognitive and the expressive models of writing. Of course, the interactive and social constructive are also influential models.

According to Faigley, the cognitivist underpins that writing is a problem solving embedding two important words 'thinking and process' where the first one identifies higher order thinking with problem solving strategies for writing. The strategy requires students to plan extensively. Referring to Flower's (1985, 1989), Johns notes what planning involves with regard to problem solving in the following way:

**Planning includes defining the rhetorical problem, placing it in a larger context, making it operational, exploring its parts, generating alternative solutions, and arriving at a well supported conclusion. Once the problem has been identified and the paper has been planned, students continue the writing process by translating their plan and thoughts in to words, and by remaining their work through revising and editing (1990: 26).**

One of the yardstick and evidence for the assurance of process writing is the ability to use one's own thought to solve problems. To write is to communicate. One of the eyeball principal element of CLT(Communicative language Teaching) is problem solving. Generally, for the cognitivists, the writer's mental process is of central importance.

The expressivists, on the other hand, contend that writing is an individual act. They strongly stress that it is the competent writer who establishes purpose, meaning and form (Berlin, 1988, Murray, (1995), Elbo, 1973, 1981, Sulvian and Van Becker, 1982, Urzua, 1986). The writer 'creates' an audience that conforms to his/her text and purpose (Nystrand, 1986: 61).

Both the expressivist and the cognitivist views focus on the writer and the writing process which Miller and Judy, (1978) say “form and language came from content, and are the result of what the reader wants to say” (p. 15). Concerning the writer, though loosely known, is the interactive approaches which, according to Bakhtin (1973) quoted in Johns (1990), assume the writer as a person involved in a dialogue with his or her audience. According this approach text is what writer creates through a dialogue with another conversant, thus, both the writer and the reader take responsibility for coherent text. From this approach, ESL teachers should address the writer responsibility, i.e. the student writers must make their topics, their arguments, their organization and transitions clear to the reader.

In addition to the expressivist, cognitivist and interactive approaches, there is also other approach, which is known as the social constructivist view. According to this view, the written product is considered as a social act that can take place only within and for specific context and audience (Coe, 1987, Kuhn, 1970, Bruffee, 1986). For this view, the language, focus, and form of a text stem from the community for which it is written. This will again help ESL writing teachers, to consider the students’ different societal background, culture, etc. and apply different genres at ‘school-based writing’.

The second element that must be considered in the development of models of composition is the audience or the reader. The consideration of audience can be described against the different views of writers which have so far been discussed above. For instance, the expressivist, who contend writing is an individual act, the audience is the writers themselves. Nystrand, (1986) says, “teachers espousing expressivism encourage students to write with honesty, for themselves... others may appreciate and criticize their writing as long as the central purpose for producing text is to provide an avenue for creativity and individual expression.” (p. 6). Here, the writer seems to be given full right to create whatever comes to his feeling through power of words. This will invite learner deal with poetic and poetic languages at school.

The cognitivist seems to give equal weight for writers and audience. Flower (1979) cited in Kroll (1990), for example, suggests that students be urged to appeal to their reader's needs and interests in order to mature as writers. Berlin (1987) calls this cognitivist's view 'transactional', which closely relates to the interactive philosophies. Depending on this view Hayes and Flower (1983) developed an influential cognitive model of writing process. The model divides the composing process of a writer into three major components: the composing process or the task environment and writers long-term memory, where the operational process generates the written text, planning, translating and reviewing. These components of writing process will be discussed in the next section of this review.

The other view of audience, for those who claim writing as a social act, the writer (ESL student), is an "outsider", the reader/audience has the power to accept or reject writing as a coherent, as consistent to the conventions of the target discourse community (Bizzell, 1987). As argued by Cooper (1989), Faigley (1986), Witte (1992) cited in Grabe and Kaplan (1996) the essential point is that writing can only be understood from the perspective of a social context and not as a product of a single individual. This can be manifested mostly in the writing task where students are helped to identify their role as a writer and their audience as their reader. It will enable them to determine the type and style of language to be used during planning. Thus, to be acceptable, they can read each others work and comment on the acceptability of the content from audience perspective.

To put it in a nut shell, as a result of research made towards L2 composing behavior (e.g. flower and Hayes, 1980, 1981, 1983; Hedge, 2000; Krapels 1990; Jones, 1990; Zamel, 1982, 1983, 1985; Raimes, 1983, 1985; Emig, 1971; Perl, 1979; Faigley, 1986; Sommers, 1980; Arndt, 1987), the finding emerged can be summarized in the following way. Planning was not a single phase. Writers

have individual strategy to writing. The writing process is recursive and generative, with students regarding their work, assessing, reacting and moving on. This made difference between poorer and better writers. Revising takes place through out the process and generally involves considerable changes. Linguistic problems seem to concern the writer least, that is, divorcing formal grammar teaching from the process of writing has little or no effect on the writing ability of student.

## **2.5. Insights from Writing Theory and Writing Research**

### **2.5.1. The Role of the Teacher**

The role of teacher in CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) in general and in process approach to writing in particular are noted as a motivator, a designer of meaningful tasks, an interpreter of the task, a reader for information, an organizer and a resourceful person(Littlewood, 1981, Richard and Roger, 1986). Besides, teachers need to show a positive attitude, believing that students are capable of doing work and provide students with wide range of opportunities for writing, opportunities which are interesting for students and serve important developmental goal (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 254). In doing so, additionally, teachers should see whether the materials he/she is using has tasks which invite learners towards process oriented writing.

While determining the tasks Berkow (2002) says “teachers have to incorporate collaborative learning and collaborative writing into their writing course” (p. 223). In this particular case, the teacher is supposed to observe whether the students cooperate with their peer, because as Berkow believes, “Peer guide will multiply their thinking through the interaction of ideas” (p. 225).

In Colleges, teachers have momentous responsibility to equip and acquaint their trainee’s with all possible strategies of language learning and teaching in general and the writing skills in particular. The students in turn should be able to put into practise language learning strategies and the techniques when they



will be at actual work. This is one of the crucial purposes of the study that aims at searching particularly whether the teachings of the writing skills are performed effectively by the EFL/ESL teachers.

### **2.5.2. The Role of the Student**

One of the first tasks of curriculum design is to establish who the instruction will be for, what the learner needs, what factors will cause individual learner variation. Thus, the understanding of the experience, and range of variation of students will help to recognize those skills and attitudes which are important for the good learner. Leke (1992) as cited in Grabe and Kaplan (1996), describes good learners as students who take an active role in their learning and set goals and take responsibility to their learning.

From Leke's suggestion it can be summarized that in order to take responsibility of their learning, learners need to have a positive approach. That is, they need to believe that they will be successful in their writing development, they need to have open attitude towards writing task, and be willing to practice and revise their writing. They need to recognize that writing development is a gradual process which requires much hard work. Similarly, learners need some set of workable learning strategies which are applicable to the writing context and should be motivated to invest their time and effort during writing.

Furthermore the students who this research targeted at are going to be the language teachers, particularly teachers of English as a foreign language. At the end of the courses, they are expected to be equipped with the aforementioned writing skills, knowledge, and strategies now as trainees and soon as writing skills teachers. One of the main objectives of the study is to see their actual performance with regard to the writing skills.

### **2.5.3. The Role of Instructional Material**

Writing instruction makes use of a wide variety of information and resources. The information and resources can be found from texts, libraries/media, realia, students generated resources, activities/tasks developed by the teachers and from discussions made by students inside and out side classroom either in peers or in group. Different instructional situation determines the choice of resources, but 'any class can generate its own range of materials and activities to stimulate topics and tasks for writing' (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, p.257). The type and amount of the instructional material can play a possible role. The selection of tasks for writing should depend some how on the students' interest and relate to their background knowledge.

### **2.5.4. The Role of Feedback in Composition Writing**

Feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of second language (L2) writing skills, both for its potential for learning and for students' motivation. In traditional product oriented writing instruction, teacher evaluation is limited to providing written commentary on the student final product but it is found ineffective in producing writing skills gains. This is why Knoblauch Branon (1981) quoted in Leki (1990) draw the following conclusive statements.

**We need to look not at responses written on final drafts but rather at responses written on immediate drafts, and at how those drafts were reshaped as a result of the teacher's comments, and , we need to look at the on going dialogue between students and teachers.(Leki, 1990, p. 63)**

In process-based classrooms, feedback is seen as an important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self expression (Hyland and Hyland, 2006: 83). Keh (1990) also points out the same idea that feedback is a fundamental element of process approach to writing. It is possible to say that feedback is an input from the reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision.

### **2.5.4.1. Teachers' Feedback**

#### **2.5.4.1.1. Teacher's Written Feedback**

The teachers' written feedback can either be direct or indirect. By the direct feedback, according to Lalande (1982) cited in Hyland and Hyland (2006), the teacher identifies directly the errors and gives suggestions which mostly relates to form and more of accuracy while indirect method, is the reverse. Improvements seem to be more likely if indirect feedback methods are used. Hyland and Hyland (2006) suggests that the choice between promoting positive effect (teachers seek to mitigate their force of criticism) or confronting writing weakness may be decided by targeting some errors (global) and leaving others to later drafts or assignments.

#### **2.5.4.1.2. Students Views on Teacher's Written Feedback**

Surveys of students' feedback performances generally indicate that ESL students greatly value teachers' written feedback and consistently rate it more highly than alternative forms such as peer and oral feedback (Leki, (1991), Radecki and Swales, 1988, Saito, 1994). Most students want teacher feedback especially to highlight their grammatical errors, while some also want teachers to give them feedback on the content and ideas in their writing. Studies also suggest that students like receiving written feedback in combination with conferences and are positive about receiving.

#### **2.5.4.1.3. The Impact of Teachers' Feedback on Students' Writing**

Although L2 students are positive about teachers' written feedback, its contribution to writing development is unclear, both its immediate impact on primary draft and the longer development of their writing skills. Studies suggest that students may ignore or misuse or misunderstand (Ferris, 1995) the comment when revising drafts, or they understand the problems pointed out but are unable to come up with a suitable revision (Conrad and Goldstein, 1999) and this causes them to delete the offending text to avoid the issue raised (Hyland, 1998) in Hyland and Hyland(2006). We can infer from the

research that teachers need to provide a supportive feedback during planning, drafting and all revising. Hence discussion with students seems to be very useful.

#### **2.5.4.1.4. Teachers Conferencing and Oral Feedback**

The literature focuses on advice for effective writing to center on practices and conferences. With the research they undertake Goldstein and Conrad (1990) found that only those students who negotiated meaning successfully in conferences were able to carryout extensive and better revisions to their writing. Williams (2004) cited in Highland and Highland (2006) replicates the same finding. She found that there was greater uptake of tutor advice in terms of revisions when tutor suggestions were explicit. Williams, then, suggests that negotiation is important especially for highest level text-based revisions.

#### **2.5.4.2. Peer Feedback and Self-Evaluation**

##### **2.5.4.2.1. Peer Feedback**

Strong justification for the use of peer response is found in the theories of the process writing and collaborative learning. Peer response (also known as peer review, peer feedback, peer editing and peer evaluation) is seen as an important support for the drafting and redrafting of process approach to writing (Zamel, 1985, Leki, 1990). Concerning the benefits of peer response, Mittan (1989) cited in Barrels (2003), states that it, “gives students a sense of guidance, increases their motivation and their confidence in their writing, and helps them learn to evaluate their own writing better.” (p. 34).This helps to understand that peer editing allows students to practise learning to apply the mechanics and technical aspects of language. Students can comment or evaluate one another's writing, the process is collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning, according to Bruffee (1984) encourages students to ‘pool’ their resources and both complete tasks they could not do on their own, learning through dialogue and interaction with their peers (Hirvela, 1999).

Generally, effective peer response is important way of helping novice writes to understand how readers see their work. Interactional modifications assist learners by providing opportunities for practice, for revision and writing in response to their peer feedback. Generally, properly addressed feedback either by teacher or by peer-group will motivate and facilitate the improvement of their writing skills.

#### **2.5.4.2.2. Self-Evaluation**

Students can make their own revisions without feedback and improve their writing significantly. This partly relates to learner strategy and style. Self-evaluation, according to Hyland and Hyland (2006), develops writers' autonomy and gives them many opportunities to reflect upon their writing process. According to these researchers once writers develop autonomy they will also develop confidence and leads to developing motivation.

In general, feedback or getting constructive comments or 'correction' on a written work is believed to help the writer improve his/her writing skills. In line with this, Scrivener (1994) summarizes the following guides that the writing teacher can use as an alternative during feedback.

- Discuss the marking criteria with students, mark using green pen or blue, negotiate and agree on the mark or grade.
- Use the correction codes in the margin or write a letter in reply for their writing.
- Only write a comment about the meaning and the message of the pieces.
- Discuss the work with the individual students or encourage students mark each other's work.
- Create a composite essay using good bits and problematic bits from a number of students' work. Photocopy it and hand it out for students to discuss and correct, together and in groups or individually.
- Devise an exercise, quiz, games, etc. from a number of students' writing. Or, get students to make the exercise themselves based on their own mistake.

(Scrivener, 1994, pp, 159-160)

### **2.5.5. Effective Instructional Techniques in Writing as Process**

In the process writing, the notion that writing is a complex, recursive, not linear in its planning is central for instruction. As Grabe and Kaplan (1996) try to note, research on writing process indicates that good writer:

**Plan longer, have more elaborate plan, review and reassess his/her plan on a regular basis, consider more kinds of solutions to rhetorical problems in writing, considers readers point of view in planning and writing, incorporate multiple perspectives into the drafting, revise in line with global goals rather than merely editing local segments and have a wide range of writing and revising strategies to call upon. (1996: 240).**

From these important quotes above, let us briefly see some useful elements of writing as a process such as planning, drafting, revising and editing. Each of these three is intertwining in different phases from the beginning (thinking and planning) to the polishing stage of a writing process. In relation to what Grabe and Kaplan note, Johnson (1996) suggests, “Writing involves thinking, planning, rehearsing, rereading, evaluating and revising ... skilled writers engaged in all of these activities more than unskilled writers, spend more time on writing, and produce more drafts.” (p. 349).

#### **2.5.5.1 Planning**

The major activities that characterize the writing process are the application of planning and revising (Hedge, 2000, p. 305). Johnson (1996) points out that traditionally, planning is viewed as prewriting activity. However, as it has been seen else where in this paper, researchers (Zamel, 1983, Arndt, 1987) noted that planning occurred through out the writing process and that writers continually think, write and rewrite (Johnson, 1996: 348).

Hayes and Flower (1980) labeled the planning stage in process writing into three sub phases such as generations, organizing, and goal setting. The

amount of planning will vary in relation to the type of writing task. For instance, writing based on a quick mental plan like writing for near by friend varies from something carefully worked out before hand like writing for some authorities. Whatever varied the tasks be, Hedge (2000) indicates that planning involve thinking about the purpose of the writing.

#### **2.5.5.2 Planning and Drafting.**

According Hedge (2000), Johnson (1996), Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Hayes and Flower (1980) cited in JR (1986), the following can be summarized about the planning stage. In planning stage learners are presented with tasks, or the writing topics. Then, they identify the identity of their own and of their counter part, reader. This time, they determine their purpose of writing. This helps them create an area of focus. They can generate as many ideas as they can. Soon they can organize their ideas and make some sort of sequences or just make notes as they brainstorm or determine the number of contents wanted. They soon begin drafting and a redrafting their ideas. Generally, a student just gets down on paper what he/she wants to say. In this stage, there is no need to consider about form, students are guided to just depend on the content. The activities in the prewriting, according to Parson(1985), includes drawing, talking, thinking, reading listening to tapes and records, discussion, role playing, interviews, problem solving and decision making.

#### **2.5.5.3 Revising**

Writing is not a single phase but it is a thinking activity to which writers return again and again when composing (Hedge, 2000, p.303). Revising takes place throughout the process and generally involves considerable changes; for example, composing something new, deleting sentence, and shifting paragraph around and sometimes eliminating them (Hedge, Ibid). Here the student makes whatever changes he/she feels are necessary. Most feedback researchers believe that the revision stage is very helpful if it includes input from teachers or fellow students.

#### **2.5.5.4. Editing**

Polishing of the drafts takes place in this stage. The writer gives attention to mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. Because writing is a medium of communication taking place more without the presence of the writer(s), developing the skills of editing the technical errors that will distort the message conveyed in the final text (with out altering the content) is a very essential practice.

In general, closely looking into the aforementioned stages in the process writing, prewriting (thinking and planning), writing the first draft, revising, editing and writing the final draft indicate that there are different contexts that influence the composing process. Some of them are discussed below.

The other most important insight from writing theory and writing research is the effectiveness of various instructional techniques. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) point out that these techniques include direct instruction, especially meta-cognitive strategy training types of group interactions among teacher and students, techniques for guiding the drafting and revising strategies of writing, and techniques for providing effective feedback on writing. In effective instructional setting, students have plenty of opportunity for guided and independent practice with new concepts and skills.

Flower and Hayes (1983) have pointed out the importance of multiple drafting, time for planning, the role of recursive among planning, drafting and revising and the essential problem solving nature of writing. Referring to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), Grabe and Kaplan (1996) note the following:

**Instruction should introduce a simplified version of the complex strategies needed by students and then these strategies may be gradually appropriated by students. Writing tasks which will gradually help students to transfer advanced skills to new domains should be developed. Students need to have**



**teacher\_ modeling of problem solving composing processes. Students need to be aware of the goals of writing and need to be given challenging tasks. Students should be shown how to provide support and assistance to others. (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 245)**

Raimes (1983), Byrne (1988, Hedge (1988) and Ur (1981) have noted the following effective techniques of teaching writing.

1. Techniques in using pictures: These include:
  - a) Description: With the help of picture students describe the labels of the picture.
  - b) Comparison and contrast: Looking at the pictures, students write the similarities and differences between the pictures.
  - c) Paragraph assembly: By preparing index cards one sentence on each, which together form a paragraph about the picture
  - d) Paragraph completion: This is done by preparing a paragraph about the picture and writing it on the board but omitting the ending
2. Techniques in using reading: This includes, copying and summarizing
3. Techniques in integrating writing with other language skills: The following techniques are, for the most part, prewriting techniques that give students the opportunity to use all their linguistic skills to help them explore and get started with their ideas on a given topic. These are brainstorming, guided discussion and interviews.
4. Techniques in teaching practical writing: The practical writing has both a clear purpose and specific audience. Messages, forms, invitations letters and instructions are the types of practical writing. For example, letters are the most widespread forms of written communication. For this reason, the English writing teachers have to devote classroom time to teaching letter writing. Letters are written to invite, explain, apologize, commiserate, congratulate, complain, and inquire order (to or for someone).

Besides the effective techniques of instruction, the role of instructional materials, teachers and students as well as the role of feedback are also driven from the L2 writing research insight. Let us see each in short.

### **2.5.6. The Social Context**

The social context holds what is going on inside the classroom and outside world. According to Jones (1990), Raimes (1991) and Heath (1993), the interaction of students among themselves, with their teachers, and with larger world outside the classroom, has profound impacts on the development of writing. The difference between the skilled and unskilled writers, for example, can be affected by socio-cognitive aspect of writing (Zamel, 1983, Perl, 1978, Collins and Williamson, 1984). Better writers vary their writing in relation to their specific audience where the weak writers are less able to provide explicit structural information for their reader interpretation. The less skilled writers are also unable to address different genre forms for specific purpose and tasks in writing. In order to help the unskilled writers learn from the skilled ones, the teacher should make groups of mixed ability.

The socio-cognitive approach, noted in Grabe and Kaplan (1996), which evolved out of Vygotsky's theories of language and literacy development, states that 'the student learns to write by working with a more knowledgeable person on the skills and knowledge needed to perform specific purposeful actions through a kind of apprenticeship" (p. 242). This approach, according to Grabe and Kaplan,

**accommodates the interactive roles of experts and peers, stresses purposeful tasks, stress the interaction of language skills in the accomplishment of specific tasks and highlights the importance of practicing those writing tasks and goals which students need to learn rather than assuming general transfer of writing skills across purposes, tasks, topics and genres. (Grabe and Kaplan 1996, p. 243)**

This gives an insight into the forming of pairs, groups particularly those top achievers should be made to sit with slow learners (group dynamism) when students are composing and peer revising their work. This calls for the application of effective instructional techniques and ultimately help students, as Berkow (2002) says, develop sense of cooperative learning.

## **2.6. Evaluating the writing composition**

According to Heaton (1990), Silva, et al (1994) and Hughes (1989), the final composition will be evaluated using preferably analytic evaluation form. The analytic method (the list of criteria is given in the appendix E) addresses the area of content organization (message communicated), vocabulary & grammar, mechanical conventions (punctuation, spelling, handwriting) and, etc.

As a whole, the insight from writing and research promotes the effective practices of teaching and learning writing skills known as the process approach. During effective process writing, planning at different stages, revising through the whole process and, finally, polishing or editing of the final draft are the universal process. Effective instruction should hold all these useful elements together. To accomplish these useful elements of writing, teachers, learners, instructional materials, and feedback and comments play great role conjointly.

As indicated in the background of the first chapter of this paper, teacher training colleges currently use EFL modules that they have produced since September 2003. While different research work have been stretched in universities particularly on College English and in high schools on the teaching of writing, none has been done on the current EFL modules made for college language teaching specifically on the writing skills. What has been tried is whether the teacher training exercises the communicative language teaching and so on.

To cite some of the recent research works done on writing skills, for example, Alamirew G/Mariam (2005), in his doctoral dissertation, has identified that the writing skill is not effectively taught in high schools. Geremew Lemu (1999), in his doctoral dissertation found out that students in different faculties of AAU were unable to identify relevant information from the irrelevant one and lacked skills of using discourse materials.

Yonas Aday (1996) reported that the process approach was not applied, and that writing skill was treated in integration with other skills. Earlier than Yonas, Teshome Daba (1995) did his MA thesis on the same material Yonas used, comparing task-based and traditional approach. Though scarcely suggested about the effectiveness of instruction, he concluded that students seemed to like the task-based than the traditional one. Fasil Damte (2005) also reported that students have benefited from cooperative writing techniques.

Regarding the current EFL modules used in teacher training colleges, as is stated above, there is no literature that deals with teaching and learning as well as the teaching materials of the writing skills. Hence, the present study is based on the EFL modules currently used in Teacher Training Colleges specifically at Asella Teachers' Training College in Oromia Region. It focuses on three main areas such as the how of the instructions, learners' performance and the content of materials targeting on writing skills. Primarily, it focuses on the actual process of teaching and learning of the writing skills, (the instruction through observation). The study also looks into the suitability of the content (tasks) of the writing skills in the modules (ENG. 211, 212). The third one targets at examining the students' writing performance. Besides, the study considers the students' understanding of the appropriacy of writing skills and teachers' view of the ability of their students writing

In order to explore the above three main research focuses, the techniques of data collection and procedures of the data analysis are discussed in the forthcoming chapter.

## **Summary**

As it has so far been discussed, writing skill is one of the imported means of communication. It is a difficult skill because it requires the mastery of

grammatical device, thinking and purpose and acting elements. In other words writing has the linguistic, cognitive and psychological problems. We need to learn writing because it is one of the processes of acquiring knowledge. It is gained only through instruction which calls for much attention in its teaching.

Until 1970s writing was taught to reinforce other skills particularly oral pattern which was dependent on more of controlled composition to manipulate linguistic forms. The approach is termed as product approach. However the old trend was proved no more effective and was forced to call for shift of views called process approach. Due to different composing research, the process approach is believed to foster thought and expression which the product approach was unable to address. Soon, different writing composition models were proposed. Among these, the most dominant ones are cognitive and expressive models of writing. Though their focuses differ, both models underpin the writer, the reader, and the writing process in general.

One of the central insights from the writing theory as a process is that writing is a complex, recursive, not linear in its planning. Hence, different phases of writing or also called useful elements of writing are given due consideration. These are planning, drafting, revising, reviewing/editing each of which can occur recursively and coexist harmoniously. Effective teaching and learning of writing skills should, therefore, consider the application of all these writing elements meaningful. To accomplish the above useful elements of writing, teachers, learners, instructional materials, feedback and comments play great role conjointly.

Based on this, this study tries to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skill in general and teachers teaching, instructional material and learners' performance in particular in the Teacher Training College.

# Chapter Three

## 3. The Research Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

As it has been stated in the first chapter of this study, the main objective of the present study is to explore the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skills in the teachers' training college. In order to achieve this, the following three specific questions, as mentioned in chapter one, need to be answered:

1. How effective are the trainees in producing a piece of writing?
2. What kinds of approaches and techniques do teachers use in teaching writing?
3. To what extent do the teaching materials meaningfully engage the students?

The nature of the study can be both exploratory and descriptive analysis. Though more descriptive analysis suits the study, the researcher has also used the qualitative method particularly to analyze the interview observation partially, and content analysis. In other words to find answer to the above questions descriptive and thematic analyses method are used.

The data collected through testing, questionnaire, and observation are tabulated and described numerically. The approach taken up is the "data first" stance as supported by Alright and Bailey (1991: 36). To get a reliable result, the composition test was analyzed drawing on the composition analysis criteria of Hughes (1989), Heaton (1990), and Silva, et al (1994). In addition, the teaching materials are analyzed objectively using the criteria developed by Scrivener (1994) and Cunningsworth (1995) in relation to the stated objectives of the content of writing skills. The data obtained from interview are analyzed

thematically. In general, the relevant information were identified, collected, categorized, analyzed and eventually interpreted before determining ways of resolving the problem under investigation.

### **3.2. The subjects**

The subjects of the study are second year language and the social science stream students, English language teachers at Asella TTC (Teachers' Training College) and the major English language course modules. In Asella, currently, 103 second year students are taking the major English courses. Half of them belong to the Language stream and the rest belong to the social science stream. There are five English language teachers who are currently teaching English in the college. The course materials, which both the teachers and the students currently apply, are modules. The modules are of two types one for the first semester and the rest for the second semester.

### **3.3. Sampling Techniques**

In order to determine the sample size from the total population of 103 students, a systematic random sampling was used. Hence, from each section, one third of the students were selected to obtain the total representative sample of 35 students. Since the number of teachers is small, using purposive sample, all the language teachers participated in the study. The writing parts (sections) of each second year major English language modules were identified and analyzed for its sufficiency and efficiency against the objectives of the courses and the checklists prepared for this purpose.

### **3.4. Data Collection Instrument**

#### **3.4.1. Writing composition test**

The representative samples of students were given a topic on which the students have enough knowledge to develop an essay of 250 words. The topic was determined from one of the following areas.

1. 'The disadvantages of chewing chat'
2. 'The effects of smoking cigarettes'
3. 'The uses of forests'

Studying the best topic from the list, students were finally required to write an essay on the last option\_ 'The uses of forests'.

#### **3.4.2. Questionnaire:**

The sample students were given three items questionnaire. The first questionnaire dealt with the student's personal information, the second one with students' writing practices and strategies of writing and the last one dealt with the practice and techniques of the teaching of the writing skills.

#### **3.4.3 Observation:**

The language and social science classes were observed particularly during the teaching and the learning of the writing sections. The instructional observation was made using the pre-planned checklist. The teachers' teaching techniques, the way they present and manage the writing tasks and the nature of the activities were observed. As far as possible, besides the observation, the lesson period interaction was recorded.

#### **3.4.4. Interview**

All English language teachers were interviewed about the effectiveness of the instructional process of the teaching of writing skills. To lead the interview, five main open-ended questions that related to the writing skills areas were prepared and addressed. The responses of the teachers were recorded.



### **3.4.5. Material analysis**

Second year major English language courses (instructional materials or modules) particularly the writing sections' objectives and contents were analyzed.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

After the data had been collected the responses to the questionnaire part and information obtained through observation and recordings were counted and tallied. Then, the simple descriptive statistics, percentage was applied. On the part of the interview observations partially and material content analysis, qualitative analysis was used. Both the descriptive and the qualitative analysis were also crosschecked.

### **3.6. The Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted on Adama Teachers' College second year Language and Social Science stream students majoring English language. Fifteen students participated during the pilot. From the pilot it was found:

- Most of the students were not clear that the composition was written in English. They were found writing it in their mother tongue. So they were given clear instruction both in written and spoken language during the actual study.
- Some students were unable to understand the message of the question. As a result they were given further explanation in their mother tongue \_ Afan Oromo.
- In order to help them use extra papers for drafting, outlining, revising, editing, etc. each student was given about six sheets of papers. However, there was no student using more than a page. So, the number of the extra papers were reduced for the actual writing.

- The time for writing the composition was assumed to take more than an hour. But none of the students stayed writing for more than 30 minutes.
- Two questions in the questionnaire, about students' writing strategy were found confusing, so that they were taken out of the list.

## **Summary**

The main objective of the study is to explore the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skill in the teachers' training college. To do this, the data were collected using test, questionnaire, observation, material analysis and interview. The subjects were second year language and social science stream students who are currently learning Major English courses, English language teachers and instructional materials. The sample size of the students was determined using random sampling techniques and purposive sampling for teachers. The data obtained were tallied and tabulated. Finally the data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

# Chapter Four

## 4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

### 4.1. Introduction

As stated in the preceding chapter, the main objective of the present study is to explore the effectiveness of the teaching of the writing skills in the teachers' training college. In order to achieve this, the following three specific questions, as mentioned in chapter one, are required to get answer.

- a) Are English language teachers effectively teaching the writing skills in the teachers' training college?
- b) Do the second year college students have grasped the necessary techniques and strategies of effective writing skills?
- c) are the contents of the teaching materials sufficiently presented with effective techniques of writing as a process?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher used descriptive and thematic analysis method. The data collected through testing, questionnaire, and observation are tabulated and described numerically. In addition, the teaching materials and interviews are analyzed in relation to the theme of content of writing skills thematically.

## 4.2. The Material and Personal Data

**Table 1: Material and Personal Data**

Students' Personal Data														
Gender					First language					Interest in teaching English				
Male		Female		Total	Afan Oromo		Amharic		Others	Yes		No		
No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
17	46	20	54	37	35	94.5	2	5.5	No others	25	67	12	33	
Perceived level of difficulty to teach skills														
Reading			Writing			Speaking			Listening					
No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%				
1	2.7		4	10.8		18	48.6		14	37.5				
Teachers' Personal data								Second Year major English teaching material						
Observed		Interviewed		Qualification			Total	First semester:		Second semester				
M	F	M	F	Dip	B A	MA		Eng 211		Eng. 212				
1	1	4	1	1	3	1	5							
Previous achievement in writing														
Excellent(5)			V. Good(4)			Good(3)			Fair(2)		Poor(1)		G.W.	%
No	%		No	%		No	%		No	%				
6(30)	16.2		17(68)	45.9		12(36)	32.4		1(2)	2.7		137	74	

**Key: G.W. means Grand Weight (Total)**

As can be seen from Table 1 above, the total numbers of the respondents in this study were 37. Almost all of them are primarily Afan Oromo speakers of which 67% are interested to teach English and 33% do not have interest to teach English. The first reason they raise is lack of ability to teach the subject. They said that they joined the language stream to be trained and teach in Afan Oromo. Of the total respondents, only four of them replied that writing is difficult for them to learn. Few of them (16.2%) said that they got an excellent grade in writing in the previous semester.

The number of teachers involved in the study was five. All of them were interviewed but only two of them were observed while teaching writing. The observation was confined to these two teachers because they are the only teachers who are currently teaching the targeted population in the college. The English teaching materials focused in this study are Eng. 211 and Eng. 212, which are given in the second year of the training program.

### 4.3. Analysis of Current Learners' Actual writing Performance

**Table 2: Composition Rater's (multi rater's) average result of students' writing composition**

Code	No. Words	Comm. Ability			Organization			Gram. & Voc.			Mechanics			Fluency			Total Mark	
		R1	R2	Av	R1	R2	Av	R1	R2	Av	R1	R2	Av	R1	R2	Av	Out of 25	%
01	232	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2.5	4	3	3.5	3	3	3	15	60
02	161	4	4	4	3	2	2.5	4	3	3.3	3	3	3	4	3	3.5	16.5	66
03	193	2	2	2	2	1	1.5	3	2	2.5	2	2	2	2	1	1.5	09	36
04	107	1	1	1	2	1	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.5	6	24
05	171	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.5	6.5	26
06	160	4	3	3.5	4	4	4	4	3	3.5	4	3	3.5	4	3	3.5	18	72
07	80	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.5	5.5	22
08	192	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	2.5	3	1	2	10.5	42
09	217	4	3	3.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3.5	17	68
10	102	2	2	2	1	2	1.5	2	1	1.5	1	1	1	2	1	1.5	7.5	30
11	180	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	9	36
12	195	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2.5	2	2	2	10.5	42
13	147	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	9	36
14	215	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.5	9.5	38
15	67	2	1	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5.5	22
16	124	3	4	3.5	4	2	3	3	2	2.5	2	3	2.5	1	1	1	12	48
17	60	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	20
18	160	2	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	2	3	2.5	13	52
19	104	3	3	3	3	2	2.5	2	3	2.5	4	3	3.5	3	3	3	14.5	58
20	158	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	7	28
21	34	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	20
22	195	3	3	3	3	2	2.5	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	3	2	2.5	12.5	50
23	222	2	3	2.5	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	3	3	3	3	2	2.5	12.5	50
24	207	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3.5	4	4	4	18.5	74
25	355	2	3	2.5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	2	2	2	11	44
26	147	1	2	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1.5	1	1	1	6	24
27	116	3	2	2.5	4	4	4	3	2	2.5	4	2	3	3	2	2.5	14.5	58
28	185	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	2	2	2	1	2	1.5	2	3	2.5	10.5	42
29	130	2	2	2	2	1	1.5	1	2	1.5	2	2	2	2	2	2	9	36
30	103	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.5	3	1	2	1	2	1.5	9	36
31	123	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1.5	9.5	38
32	201	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3.5	15.5	62
33	247	2	3	2.5	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	1.5	11	44
34	98	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	20
35	139	1	2	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5.5	22
36	60	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	20
37	155	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	13.5	54
Av.	155= 62%	2.18=43.6%			2.04= 40.85			1.92= 38.4%			2.16= 43.2%			1.97= 39.4%			10.27	41.08

**R1= 10.38, R2=10.14. Difference=10.38-10.14=0.24 or 0.96%**

**Key: R1 means the first rater of the composition  
R2 means the second rater of the composition  
Av. means average.**

Of the 250 expected words, the respondents used an average of 155 words (62%) in their essay writing. Though there was no limitation of time during their writing, the respondents used an average of 22 minutes to complete their writing. Even though clear information on whom they write it for and why they write was given, none of them wrote much and spent time on planning, drafting, etc. either. They just wrote little and submitted what they produced.

Each of the target students' written composition were photocopied and given to two English language teachers who were selected by the researcher as his raters. Both selected teachers were given composition assessment criteria, please look at appendix **E**. The raters were also given enough orientation and had practice rating on some the compositions written during the pilot before the actual rating. The criteria was adapted from Heaton (1990), Silva et al (1994) , Hughes (1989). Finally, as can be seen from Table 2, the average results of the two raters was taken for the analysis. The results of the two raters are almost the same, i.e. the average difference of the two raters is 0.24 or 0.96% which is not significant.

According to the assessment of the average result of the two raters, as it can be seen from Table 2 above, the students' communicative ability is 43.6%. This shows that the students have great difficulties in informing the contents of their writing to their readers. The students' current skill of organizing their idea is 40.8%. This again shows that the students' have difficulties in achieving coherence and cohesion in their writing. That means they are unable to develop ideas logically and utilize appropriate cohesive devices (connectors) in their writing.

Another problem area in the students' writing is Language. Their ability to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary in their writing is 38.4%. This pinpoints that the students have difficulty to control their grammar and vocabulary. Added to this, their level of fluency is 39.4%. Their writings were found jerky which is difficult to understand. Most of them used simple sentences with broken grammar. Although there are many errors in spelling and inappropriate use of punctuation marks, when compared to their composing skills, the students seem better in mechanics. Generally, the overall current actual writing performance of the students is 41.08%. This indicates that the students are yet unskilled writers because they are in severe difficulties in composing their writing.

The results mentioned above match with previous research findings of Raimes (1985), Perl (1979), Zamel (1983) who reported students' problems in planning, composing and writing in L1 and L2, respectively. However, the research finding made by Jones (1982), Zamel (1982), which state that the lack of competence in writing in English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence, partially disagrees with this finding because these students exhibit lack of both composing skill and linguistic competence. Because, as can be seen from table 2 above, their ability to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary in their writing is 38.4%.

#### 4.4. Analysis of Students' Responses on the Practice and Strategies of their Current Writing.

**Table 3: Student's Perception of their Practice and Strategies of Writing**

Item	Planning	Learners' judgment their practice and strategies in writing skills									
		St. agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		St.agree	
		R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
1	Having purpose and specific reader	16	43.2	16	43.2	3	8.1	2	5.4	0	-
2	Brainstorming on the writing topic	10	27	16	43.2	3	8.1	4	10.8	3	
3	Doing prewriting	9	24.3	12	32.4	9	24.3	7	18.9	0	-
4	Adjusting writing to the needs of the reader.	18	48.7	12	32.4	5	13.5	0	-	2	5.4
	Total average	Responses = 27.3 (73.6)				5	13.5	Responses= 4.5 (12.2)			
	Revising and editing										
5	Writing without revising	5	13.5	7	18.9	6	16.2	1	2.7	8	21.6
6	Make necessary changes after finished writing	23	62.1	7	18.9	4	10.8	2	5.4	1	2.7
7	Adjust one's word choice to his/ her writing purpose.	23	62.1	10	27	2	5.4	0	-	2	5.4
	Feedback										
8	Need to get no comment during drafting	11	29.7	14	37.8	4	10.8	5	13.5	3	8.1
9	Like help of someone to look at one's draft and give him/her comment	17	45.9	12	32.4	3	8.1	2	5.4	3	3.8
	Giving attention to Form or Content										
10	Give attention more to the punctuation, spelling and tense error than to the information he/she writes	10	27	5	13.5	7	18.9	6	16.2	7	18.9

**Key= R means responses**

**St. means strongly**

The students were required to identify the extent to which they applied most of the effective practice of writing process noted by Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Hedge (2000), Johnson (1996) and former research findings of Hayes and Flower (1980). While students were filling in this items, all necessary feedback obtained during the pilot were applied.

As indicated in Table 3, for item 1, most of the students (86.4%) believe that they have purpose and reader in mind when they write. As can be seen for item number 2 and 3, 70.2% reported that they do brainstorming while 56% said that they consider the prewriting activities when they write respectively. Moreover, 81% of them confirmed that they adjust their writing to the needs of their readers. For item 1\_4 above, generally, 73.6% of the students believe that they were aware of applying the different stage of planning processes during their writing.



However, the understanding that the students have about the application of planning during their writing contradicts with the result of their actual writing that has been indicated in Table 2. Even though their perception of the application of planning during writing is high, they are unable to apply their theoretical knowledge for the actual practice of process writing. For instance, as it was observed during their composing, they spent very less time (an average of 22') to finish an essay of 250 words. Unlike their belief of applying planning, only 48% the students believe that they use revising, which is one of the helpful techniques of writing. In stead, 81% of them like to make some changes to their finished writing (text). However, Zamel's (1983), Arndit's (1987), Hayes and Flower's (Ibid) finding show that good writer plan and revise at any stages of their writing. Thus, this finding likely prove that the target students were unable to engage in thinking, planning, rehearsing, revising, and, etc. as Johnson (1996, 349) indicates.

From this, we understand that although the students have the intention to edit their finished work, they are not well acquainted with the skills of composing process. They might have followed the method of their teacher who might have depended more on the product of what is written than on the how of the writing process. This is evidenced by 40% of the students who replied saying that they depend more on forms such as punctuation, spelling, and tense error than on the information they process. Some of them (18.9%) were not sure about the form or content they rely on during writing and only 35% of them seem to bother about their contents during writing.

This finding matches with Jones (1982), which indicates that the poor writer is bound to the text at the expense of ideas whereas the good one, allows ideas to generate the text

Table 3 shows that students have not yet developed a sense of cooperation in giving and receiving feedback instead what they liked most is sense of dependency. For example, 67.6% of them responded that they don't like

showing their draft to either their friends or their teacher until they finish what they are writing.

#### 4.5. Analysis of Learners' Response on Their Teachers' Practice and Strategies of Teaching Writing

Table 4: Analysis of Learners' Judgment of their Teacher's Practice and Strategies of Teaching Writing

Item No	Planning	Learners' response judging their teacher's practice and strategies of teaching writing										Total W	%
		Always(5)		Usually (4)		Sometimes(3)		Rarely(2)		Never(1)			
		R	W	R	W	R	W	R	W	R	W		
11	Presenting information clearly and effectively on the topic the students are going to write.	11	55	9	36	11	33	3	6	3	3	133	71.8
12	Encouraging questions and class discussions before and while writing	3	15	5	20	18	54	8	16	3	3	108	58.3
13	Encouraging group work before and while writing	11	55	5	20	13	39	0	0	7	7	121	67.2
Mean											121.5	65.8	
<b>Revising and Editing Process</b>													
14	Helping/guiding student revise their paper.	3	15	7	28	11	33	8	16	7	7	99	55
15	Encouraging students to peer-revise their draft	6	30	7	28	12	36	4	8	7	7	109	60.5
16	Talking to students while they are writing or while they are trying to write	4	20	7	28	7	21	4	8	15	15	92	49.7
17	Giving students enough time during writing.	5	25	10	40	13	39	7	14	2	2	120	64.8
18	Commenting on their first draft and encourages them to rewrite the final draft	5	25	7	28	9	27	10	20	6	6	106	57.2
Mean											105	56.7	
<b>Feedback</b>													
19	Correcting errors in students' writing	14	70	10	40	3	9	4	8	6	6	133	71.8
20	Putting {✓} mark on students' assignment	10	50	6	24	9	27	2	4	10	10	115	62.1
21	Giving them writing assignment for marking (grading)	7	35	7	28	10	30	10	20	2	2	115	62.1
22	Reading students' essay (paragraph) and changing some words, sentences and replaces with his/her own	11	55	4	16	12	36	5	10	5	5	122	65.9
23	Ordering students to write paragraphs or essays when exam time comes	8	40	7	28	8	24	6	12	7	7	111	60
Mean Weight											118	63.6	

**Key:** R. → response      W. → Weight= (Total weight = the sum of the number of responses times (5), (4), (3), (2), (1))

Table 4 indicates that the students have a positive reaction towards their teachers' practice of teaching writing particularly on the parts of planning. The response they gave on judging their teachers' teaching strategy of writing skills is similar to what they have said about their own planning strategies. Most students (65.8%) indicate that their teachers have taught what to do before writing, which they perceived as planning. A substantial majority of the learners (71.8%) thought that their teacher usually presents enough information on the topics they would be going to write. In addition, they responded (67.2%) that their teacher usually encourages group work when they are writing while 58.1% of them responded that he/she encourages questions and class discussion before writing.

Added to what has been discussed in the previous section Table 3, here again, it seems that the principle of planning is rarely applied meaningfully both by the teacher and the students. The concepts of generating, organizing and goal setting that have been stressed by Hayes and Flower (1980) have not been internalized. Although 65.8% of them believe that their teacher helped them to plan their writing, what the researcher observed in the classroom was quite different from this as discussed in the next section. One can view that only knowing the word planning or being told about doing planning before writing is perceived by the students as if they were able to apply planning.

In contrast to their response to planning, an average of 56.7%, responses show that teachers help students less frequently (sometimes) to apply the skills of revising and editing while they are composing. As can be seen from Table 4, 49.7% of the students believe that their teachers initiate them to draft and redraft. On the other hand, 15 students (40%) responded that their teacher never talk to them while they are writing.

From this it can be inferred that the teaching of writing skills is taking place at the surface level with out deeply exploiting all possible effective technique properly and continuously. There are other plentiful data to be referred to

about the teaching of the writing skills more at the text level than at the grassroots or the process level. As can be seen from Table 4, 63.6 % of the students' said that their teachers give support by checking their finished written work.

The teachers' reliance on the surface level of the text is evidenced by most students. For example, 68.1% of them responded that their teacher corrects errors in their writings. In addition, 62.1% of them said that their teacher put a "√" mark on their finished texts. A significant number of students (65.9%) responded that the teacher changes some words and phrases when giving feedback to their finished written work. As can be inferred below, Leki's (1990) comment on the teaching of writing, however, is contrary to the above finding on the provision of feedback. Leki points out:

**We need to look not at responses written on final drafts but rather at responses written on immediate drafts, and at how those drafts were reshaped as a result of the teachers' comments, and, we need to look at the on going dialogue between students and teachers. (Leki, 1990, p. 63)**

#### **4.6. Analysis of Data from Classroom Observation**

In order to collect the information on the actual teaching of the writing skills the researcher has produced a checklist (Please refer to Appendix F) that has eight main topics, which are believed to have an ideal connection with the teaching of writing skills. The checklist was adapted from the review literature particularly from the works of Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Hedge (2000), Raimes (1985), Johnson (1996). The classes of two English language teachers who are teaching English major courses to second year were observed. Altogether, five instructional periods specific to the teaching of writing skills were observed. Each period lasts for 1:40 minutes. The recorded lesson and listed five checklists were tabulated and commuted.

As mentioned in chapter three of this paper, five double periods each lasting for an hour and forty minutes were used to observe English teachers teaching Eng. 212. One of the teachers was observed three times while the second one was observed twice. During the observation, most of the lessons were recorded and the checklists filled in. Notes were also taken where possible. The observation took a total of eight hour and 20minutes.

Table 5 (Please look at appendix A) shows that the ultimate instructional implementation and application of the writing skills is only 38.6%. Of this, 20% stands for activities, which are not included (never exist) in the writing activities. As can be seen from Table 5, the extent to which the teachers help learners with the skills (techniques) of generating ideas is 48%. Furthermore, the support which teachers give to the students to organize the ideas they generate is 40%, revise their draft is 43.2%, and edit their revised work is 42%. Likewise, the support students receive to develop a sense of collaborative effort in writing is 42%.

According to the observation collated in the checklist, the data obtained indicate that student' engagement in exercising effective writing techniques is very low (27.25). This really shows that both the teachers and the students are not using appropriate techniques of writing skills.

During the observation, it was sensed that in the teaching writing skills, teachers:

1. completely rely on the modules.

With regard to the modules, as can be seen from Table 6 (please refer to Appendix B), and Table 7 in the next section, the objectives stated for the writing section in the modules rarely address pertinent elements of effective writing process. More than this, the tasks and activities, designed to implement the poorly stated objectives do not

help students to achieve the goal of effective process writing. Thus, the modules are poorly organized and fail to incorporate the necessary skills to learn writing skill.

2. seemed not to teach writing for the purpose of practicing writing skill such as:

- giving topic.
- brainstorming on the topic through different prewriting activities.
- helping students to perform different level of planning.
- initiating students to take sufficient time to practice as many drafting and revising as possible and, etc.

3. perform dominantly form oriented exercises.

Teachers pass most of their time telling what planning, outlining, topic sentence, body conclusion, etc. are. None of the teachers were observed involving learners practically on what they have told the students.

## **Content Analysis of the Writing Sections**

In order to analyze the effectiveness of the contents of the writing sections of the modules, two tables are applied. Table 6, (Please refer to Appendix B) presents the types of the modules and the number of units each holds, address the objectives stated under each units, identifies, tasks and activities given to implement the objectives and compare whether the given activities and tasks help to achieve the objectives. Finally it states its relation to the effective means of teaching and learning writing as a process. As indicated in Table 6, there are two currently used major English language-teaching modules. Each

of the modules has five writing sections. The stated objectives rarely address pertinent elements of effective writing process. None of the objectives give the learner the opportunity to identify the possible stages of a meaningful process of writing. For instance, the objectives stated in Eng.211 units 2 and 4, do not help learners achieve the stated general objective.

Added to this, the tasks and activities designed to implement the objectives do not help students to perform the stated objectives. 45.6% of the activities, which are expected to help learners, are more of form oriented. They are controlled exercises such as sentence and paragraph combining, filling in with missing connectors, writing a parallel paragraph, etc. Tasks are scarcely given to use the notes given on the meanings of cohesive devices, coherence, topic sentence, and etc. Generally, the tasks/ activities given do not encourage students to generate their own ideas by applying those important principles of writing.

The objectives of the second module just like the previous one are not well stated. They rather seem worse than the first one. The activities designed to meet the stated objectives are crumbled and unpractical. The objectives tell the students to summarize a text, interpret data, and make a book-report at the end of lessons in the units.

However, there are no texts to be summarized, data to be interpreted and types of books to be read and reported in the modules. Moreover, students are instructed to write an essay on the given topic. But there is no topic given. These problems are dominant in units 2, 4 and 5 of the module. Hence the writing activities in the module seem to be inappropriate for teaching writing skills. Students are rarely given tasks which lead them to use notes on the meanings of cohesive devices, coherence, topic sentence, etc.

**Table 7: Checklist for Content Analysis of the Writing Sections**

NO	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	The topics are developed from: a. pictures, maps, diagrams, data b. stories told in the class c. reading passage d. interviews made in the classroom. e. Letters writing such as invitation, congratulations, apologies, consoles, etc. f. students own interest. g. the given context h. the given model paragraph				√	
						√
					√	
						√
						√
						√
						√
					√	
				√		
2	The topics have close relation to students' interests, social and cultural background.				√	
3	The writing tasks have purpose and specific reader.				√	
4	Definitions and notes about the parts and patterns of a paragraph or an essay are given .		√			
5	The activities/tasks force or invite the students to actually and meaningfully exercise <u>paragraphing or essaying (apply effective techniques of process writing)</u> .					√
6	<u>Checklists for effective writing are presented.</u>					√
7	The tasks are integrated with the other language skills.					√
8	Varieties of writing tasks are graded and sequenced logically and appropriately.				√	
9	The modules handled: a. controlled writing b. guided writing c. semi free or free writing	√				
				√		
					√	
10	The emphasis is given to: a. accuracy b. fluency		√			
					√	
11	Different genres and styles of writing are presented.					√
12	The language sources specific to the written form such as punctuation, spelling, layout, etc. are presented.					√
		45/110= 40.9%				

**Adapted from Cunningsworth (1995), Scrivener (1994)**

Very sufficiently = 5      sufficiently =4    insufficiently=3    scarcely=2    Not at all=1  
 Very frequently = 5      frequently= 4    Sometimes= 3      rarely= 2  
 Never=1

Table 7 above specifically shows to what extent the selection of the topics enable learners to write on having purpose and specific reader, how sufficiently or frequently the contents indicated are selected, organized, sequenced and are given to students. As can be observed from the table, the topics for writing are



rarely and insufficiently selected from varieties of areas and wide context. For instance, there are no letter writing activities at all. The topics are widely dependent on model paragraphing. Topics that address learners' interest and encourage writing for meaningful purpose are totally lacking. It can be seen that the topics presented have scanty relation to students' interest, social and cultural background. This poor selection of contents in the writing sections makes the writing lessons in the module less engaging. Students are not encouraged to compose their own ideas in the module. This again can have an over all negative effect on the development of students writing skills.

## **Summary**

The average result of the two raters indicated that the overall current actual writing performance of the students is 41.1 % which means that their writing proficiency is very low. According to the response obtained from students' questionnaire, 73.6 % believe that they were able to apply planning during their composing, 48% of them believe, they were using drafting and revising during their writing whereas 81 % of them responded that they used to edit their finished work. 65% of the students also believe that their teacher taught them about planning and helped them during their writing, 49.7% of them said that their teacher helped them during revising and 68.1% believe that their teacher corrected their final works. Generally the students response with regard to their writing behaviors as well as on the way their teachers teach writing contradicts with the evaluation of their actual composing skills the do have at present.

The finding of instructional observations showed that the effectiveness of the teaching and the learning process of the writing skills is 38.6%. The extent to which the teachers help learners with the skills (techniques) of generating idea is 48%, organizing their idea they generate is 40%, revising their draft is 43.2%, editing their revised work is 42%, and developing some of collaborative effort in writing is 42%. The students' engagement in exercising effective writing techniques is 27.3%. Thus, the

findings obtained from test, instructional observation and material analysis indicate that the performance of the teaching and learning process as well as the materials being applied are not effective.

The analysis of the teaching materials indicated that the stated objectives for the writing sections give students very few opportunities to identify and apply effective writing techniques. The tasks and activities designed to implement the objectives are more of form oriented. The modules lack methodological significance of designing tasks that fosters communicative ability contextually.

#### **4.8. Analysis of Teachers' Responses to the Interview**

To gather reliable information, five teachers were asked the following basic question.

##### **4.8.1. How useful are the modules for teaching the writing skills?**

From responses to this question, the following inferences were made. All English language teachers currently teaching at the College of Asella Teachers' Education believe that the modules (Eng. 211 and Eng.212) are not useful. According to these teachers' responses, the writing sections are better than nothing, because they don't have sufficient writing topics related to students' interest. They don't have warm up, brainstorming, or getting ready activities and even purpose to write. Even some teachers comment that the writing sections, which are found at the end of each module unit, are simply presented as an extra activity to reinforce other skills learned before it. The teachers complain acutely that the modules are not well prepared. Their contents are not well organized and are scattered unreasonably here and there. Added to this, the methodological significance of presenting the contents is lacking.

Generally the modules do not incorporate all necessary skills, which help to develop the writing skills. In other words, the modules are not effective resource to teach or to learn writing skills. As a result they need much more improvement.

**4.8.2. What techniques and strategies do you use to help students learn writing skills? How often do you follow the stages like planning, revising and editing?**

With regard to this, three teachers say that they select topic and give class work or home take assignment. Four teachers say that they rarely use the procedures of writing such as planning or prewriting, revising, and editing. One of them even responded that using these procedures is unthinkable, because they are time consuming. The teachers also confirm that the procedures are not found in the modules. Besides, they report that although they try to help their students, only few of them will attempt with the procedures or techniques. The reasons they gave for this are students' poor English background, lack of interest to write, time constraints and teachers' period load.

Though the students do not apply these procedures of process writing, they have some understanding about the procedures. They do not dislike the procedures totally. But one teacher replied differently on the techniques he used. Very often, he said that he has applied brainstorming, role-plays, hot sitting, methods which he learned from HDP (Higher Diploma program). He used drawing and pictures as part of activities. Some times he helps students to sit, think and work together.

#### **4.8.3. What is your practice in giving feedback?**

All teachers responded saying that giving continuously sufficient and different alternative ways of feedback for these great numbers of student is very difficult. One teacher said that unless the writing is shorter than a page there are no possibilities and even willingness to offer feedback. On the other hand, they said because students rarely stay on the processes of writing such as planning, drafting, revising and editing, they do not cooperate well. There are very few of them who are able to give and willing to receive peers or groups feedback. The other teacher said that his students do not have the behavior of cooperating, helping one another to draft or revise what they write. What they do is to depend totally on those who they think are good at writing. So, they usually depend on their teacher, books, and friends.

#### **4.8.4. What do you think about the students' current knowledge of English, particularly their ability of writing skills? Would they be efficient English language teachers?**

With regard to this, the teachers responded that they believe the students are not efficient language teachers. In most cases, the students have very poor background in English in general and the writing skills in particular. They believe that the students cannot develop the skills overnight. This is an absolute hopelessness in the production of writing. Students have no ways of organizing ideas, no grammar, no vocabulary source and lack of composing skills. They believe, there is no way to think that these students would be efficient writing skills teacher.

#### **4.8.5. Do you have comment in relation to the teaching of the writing skills in college?**

The respondents have finally suggested the following possible comments which they think can bring about changes in writing.

1. The modules need much more improvement. They have to be revised or rewritten by experienced, concerned and responsible course writers. The ideal module should call for actual and meaningful teaching and learning of writing skills.
2. Producing a different module particular to the teaching of different level of writing that consists all effective composing skills simple to complex if possible that can be given continuously. Additional module that focuses on writing should be produced.
3. Learners who have great interest to teach English should join the stream

## **Summary**

Similar to the summary of the content analysis above, teachers also believe that the modules are not helpful to develop meaningful writing skills. According to the teachers' response, the writing tasks and activities are generally not well prepared, well organized and sequenced logically. They fail to incorporate the useful techniques and necessary skills which help to exploit writing as a process. Teachers believe that they rarely used the procedures of writing. They also believe that they do not give a continuous and sufficient feedback because of large number of students. According to the responses of the teachers, students rarely stay on those processes of writing phases, only few students hardly ever cooperate for commenting, receiving and giving any types of feedback. Students would rather develop sense of total dependency on those whom they think are good at writing. Generally teachers believe that students are not efficient English language users and they don't believe these students would be effective English teachers with this current ability.

# **Chapter Five**

## **5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Depending on what has already been accomplished through a good deal of data elicitation, collation, discussion and interpretation of its findings, this Chapter now aims at summarizing the main findings, outlining the major conclusions arrived at and recommendations forwarded. Specifically, the main components of the study such as the objectives, the research methods and pertinent findings all that lead and pave ways to conclusion are highlighted in the summary section. In other words, the summary is intended to give the study a clear, sound and comprehensive finish. The conclusions are pooled together for final understanding, apart from some interpretation, generalization and explanations made earlier inclusively. Relying on the review literature navigated so far and the finding obtained from the data analysis, possible recommendations are also suggested.

### **5.2. Summary**

As it has been mentioned in chapter one, three and four of this paper, the principal objective of the study is to explore the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skill. From this main objective, the following research questions are emanated. 1) How effective are the trainees in producing a piece of writing? 2) What kinds of techniques do teachers use in teaching writing skill? 3) How useful and effective resources are the modules for

teaching learning writing skill? 4) What possible solution can be suggested to mitigate problems that may be found as a result of the study?

Capitalizing on exploratory and descriptive research method, the data were collected using testing, questionnaire, instructional observation, instructional materials analysis and interview. To do this, a sample size of 37 second year students taking English major courses were selected from 103 populations using systematic random sampling techniques. Since the number of teachers is small, a purposive sampling is used to gather relevant data from the teachers who were involved in this study.

The above mentioned tools were used to collect data in the following manner. Primarily the target students were made to write a composition. The same students were given two types of questionnaire, one on their writing practice and strategy, and the other on their teachers' ways of teaching writing. Five writing lesson periods of two teachers who are currently teaching the target groups were observed. The writing parts (sections) of each second year major English language modules were identified and analyzed for their sufficiency and efficiency against the objectives of the courses. Finally all English language teachers of the college were interviewed.

To begin with, in order to determine the current writing proficiency of students, a test of writing composition of 250 words was given to the sample students. The students' composition was evaluated by two English language teachers (raters). The average result of the two raters indicated that the overall current actual writing performance of the students is 41.1% which means that their writing proficiency is very low.

For these target students, two types of questionnaires were also given. The first questionnaire with ten items aimed at exploring students' practice and strategies of their current writing skill. According to the students' response,

73.6 % believe that they were able to apply different level /stages of planning during their composing. 48% believe that they were using drafting and revising during their writing where 81 % of them responded they used to edit their finished work.

The second questionnaire given to these students required them to comment on their teachers' practice of teaching writing. The data obtained from this indicated that students had almost the same impression to their teacher that they had for themselves again. 65% of the students responded that their teacher taught them about planning and helped them during their writing. Whereas, 49.7% said that their teacher helped them during revising and 68.1% believe that their teacher corrected their final works.

Contrary to what students responded, however, the finding of instructional observations indicates that the ultimate (grand mean) instructional implementation and application of the writing skill is only 38.6%. More specifically, the extent to which the teachers help learners with the skills (techniques) of generating idea is 48%, organizing their idea they generated is 40%, revising their draft is 43.2%, editing their revised work is 42%, and developing collaborative effort in writing is 42%. Above all, what is very amazing is that the students' engagement in exercising effective writing techniques is 27.3%.

The analysis of the teaching materials (modules 211 and 212) indicated that the stated objectives for the writing sections give students very few opportunities to identify and apply effective writing techniques. The tasks and activities designed to implement the objectives are more of form oriented. They gives more emphasize to controlled practices. Notes given in the modules intend to tell the what of writing and its formats than presenting varieties of tasks that initiate learners towards exercising composing skills. Generally, the



modules lack methodological significance of designing tasks that fosters communicative ability contextually.

Similar to the summary of the content analysis above, teachers also believe that the modules are not helpful to develop the meaningful writing skills. According to the teachers' response, the writing tasks and activities are generally not well prepared, well organized and sequenced logically. They fail to incorporate the useful techniques and the necessary skills which help to exploit writing as a process.

The responses given to the interview indicated the teachers rarely used the procedures of writing such as planning in different stages (prewriting), taking time to revise many times while writing and editing and polishing the final draft. They raised many reasons for not applying the phases of composing. Some of these were, 'the procedures are time consuming', 'if they use them only few the students can apply the techniques because they are very poor at English', 'students do not like them, 'the teachers have shortage of time' and 'they are loaded'. Though teachers have the awareness and believe the importance of teaching writing using the effective writing techniques, we can see that they are not interested to apply it.

One of the evidence from their response is that they said that they were unable to give a continuous and sufficient feedback because of large number of students. They said, since students rarely stay on those processes of writing phases, only very few students cooperate for commenting, receiving and giving any types of feedback. Students would rather develop sense of total dependency on those who they think are good at writing. So, all the teachers believe that their students are not efficient English language users and they don't believe these students would be effective English teachers either. As it can be observed from the responses, the teachers did not help their students to demonstrate good writing proficiency. Hence, their students are very weak in

their writing proficiency. Therefore, the present ways of training students to write in English in colleges is inefficient.

When the above findings are triangulated, the finding gained from evaluation of learners' writing performance, instructional observation and English language teachers response to interview contradicts with the finding obtained through questionnaires from students. There is a significance difference between the finding of the students' perception of their writing particularly on the application of effective technique of writing and the result of the assessment of their current actual writing proficiency.

Similarly, the findings of the students' belief about their teachers' practice and strategies of teaching writing (the students believe teachers taught them well) contradicts with the finding of instructional observations and the findings of the responses of teachers on their own practice of teaching writing particularly about the inconveniency of intentionally using all the possible phase of process writing. Thus, it is possible to state that the data collected using testing, observation, interview & document analysis are more reliable than the questionnaire in this study.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The main objective to conduct this study is to explore the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the writing skills currently practised in the teachers' training college. Now, the significant questions have ultimately got answers. To this end the following set of conclusions is pooled together for final understanding, apart from some interpretation, generalization and explanations made earlier inclusively.

The most pertinent finding of this study shows that there is a significant mismatch between what teaching and learning to write communicatively (writing for the purpose of communication) claims and what is actually done currently in the process of teaching and learning writing in the class room. Thus, the current teaching and learning of the writing skill in the teacher training college is not effective. It is reflected in the following different contexts.

English language teachers, though they have the awareness, rarely help their students to exercise continuously by providing them with interesting, attractive and purposefully context oriented writing tasks and exposing them to the fruitful techniques of the process writing. For example, during their teaching of writing, they usually keep on discussing the names of terms or their definitions such as planning, revising, and editing, introduction, body, conclusion, or coherence cohesive device, and the meaning of paragraph or essay etc. This means they are teaching the skill at the surface level without encouraging learners to use them through creative and meaningful writing contexts.

As a result of these, the students have lack of composing skills and are found very weak in their composition. Added to this, in spite of their awareness of the inappropriateness of the modules, the teachers were found completely depending on it. They would rather complain about the shortage of time, being loaded and developing negative attitude of the fact that teaching process writing is time consuming.

Regardless the current identification of learners' low performance of writing (low writing proficiency), the overall perception and the interest of the students towards writing in English remain beyond the scope of this study. Here, very limited number of students enjoys writing or write even sparingly fair composition may be because of their very limited amount of language which

they do have at their disposal for writing or because they feel writing has very little value for them in their social interaction.

Hence, the evidence obtained from the study indicates that the students scarcely do write any types of letter for their immediate problem solving. From this stand, it may go usual that a number of college students (that would be expected of EFL teachers tomorrow) cease to use this skill unless they are required occasionally to do something like assignment or when they are asked to write for testing. Thus, generally, these frustrating and unrewarding practices of writing in English need to get urgent solution.

The other congruent variable found to develop the gap between what learning writing for the purpose of communication and what is applied in the process of teaching and learning writing now is the instructional materials (the modules). The objectives stated in the modules are so poor that they fail to give sufficient opportunity for students to learn writing skills. Besides the selection, organization and sequence of the contents are rarely demanding. The tasks and activities are more of form oriented that learners' practise them on the surface level without deeply using them for developing the writing skill. Thus, the teaching materials (modules) are not efficient and are not helpful.

One of the remarkable finding of this study is that the perception of students about their way of learning writing and their teachers' way of teaching is found to be odd with their actual writing performance. 74% of them believe that they got very good grade in writing skill and only few of them (10.8) believe that writing is difficult for them while they are found with the actual writing proficiency of only 41%. This indicate that students have not yet learnt or grasped the true techniques and strategies in the process of writing so that they are unable to identify what make a composition very good. They have not yet developed sense of giving or receiving feedback and cooperative writing except dependency.

Though it needs further investigation, the responses of students also gave that they joined the language stream not because they are interested in English language but need to get trained to teach in their mother tongue (Afan Oromo).

Generally one could not be successful in what ever he/she practises unless he/she is interested in the area. Consequently current college English teachers seem to have less interest and commitment to help their students. The students themselves are with poor background of their English and are less interested in and devoted to their learning. This in turn will lead these trainees to lack possible qualities of an ideal EFL teacher.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

From the interpretations, summary and conclusions drawn so far, the following recommendations are made.

1. The English major course modules (Eng. 211 and 212) currently applied in the teachers' training colleges have to be changed, if not, the modules should be revised or rewritten. When revising or rewriting the materials, it should be good to consider that the would be course writers or editors ought to be a well concerned, responsible, and experienced ones who just have a close acquaintance with very recent approaches of teaching language communicatively.
2. The colleges need to develop additional courses which focus on the teaching writing skills. The ideal courses should therefore inculcate all portions revised from elementary and intermediate courses of writing with reasonable grading and sequencing to the advanced level that a college student

expected to equip with and have substantial knowledge and skill. Adapting the contents of College English I and II and Intermediate English courses delivered in Universities could also help to develop the ideal course(s).

3. Efforts should be exerted to make college EFL training as fruitful as possible. For instance, it is significant to select students who have keen interest and good background in English during the admission (induction) of new students to the stream. Specific to teaching and learning of writing, again, identifying students' need of different genres is very important because students do not write always a model composition writing which is out of ways. They need to practice writing with different genres such as short lists or item lists, letter writing, instructions for operating something like cameras, radios, etc. They also need to practice writing from picture, drawings, post cards, etc, so as to make realistic and useful in their future writing.
4. Concerned bodies, particularly Oromia Education Bureau, should do their best to motivate EFL teachers in colleges. At the college or even at the department level encouraging English language teachers to get informed and be aware of the importance of those techniques proposed in teaching writing as a process. Providing teachers with writing guides and checklists will help them develop sense of encouraging students with the most effective procedure. The guides and checklists would be more useful even for students if they are posted on the learning venues as posters.

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