Enhancing Students Writing Skill through Reading

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate how effective reading can enhance writing skill. Most of secondary students are weak in writing; this is because the students are not exposed to authentic materials to read. Reading expands student's vocabulary and provides them with useful expressions which they can use in writing. The study employed the descriptive analytical method .Secondary school teachers from Dongola Locality were the population to collect the data through questionnaire. The findings of the study stated that reading can lead to great improvement of students writing skill. Reading expands learner's vocabulary and improves their grammatical structure. Moreover reading helps learners develop their writing experience by inspiring them. The study recommended that, enough time should be given to the reading skill. Authentic reading materials should be included in the syllabuses. Teachers should apply new strategies for teaching reading.

Keywords: Enhance, careful reading, authentic materials

تحسين مهارة الكتابة لدى الطلاب بالقراءة

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المستخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى التعرف على أهمية القراءة في تحسين مهارة الكتابة, وذلك لأن معظم الطلاب في المرحلة الثانوية يعانون من ضعف في مهارة الكتابة وذلك بسبب عدم قراءتهم لنصوص جيدة، فالقراءة تزيد المفردات اللغوية لدى الطلاب وتزودهم بكثير من التعابير التي يمكنهم استخدامها في الكتابة استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي, وكان مجتمع الدراسة من معلمي المرحلة من الثانوية بمحلية دنقلاو تم جمع البيانات عن طريق الاستبيان. توصلت الدراسة الي عدة نتائج اهمها: ان القراءة تقود لتحسينات عظمى في كتابة الطلاب تزيد الحصيلة اللغوية للطلاب وتحسن معرفتهم بالتراكيب النحوية كما ان القراءة تطور خبرات المتعلمين وتعمل على الهامهم. قدمت الدراسة عدة مقترحات منها: ينبغي ان تمنح القراءة زمن كافي كما ينبغي ان تكون النصوص الاصيلة ضمن المنهج، كذلك ينبغي على المعلمين تطبيق الاستراتيجيات الحديثة في تدريس القراءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تطوير- القراءة المتأنية- النصوص الجيدة

Background

Writing is a method of representing language in a visual or tactile form. Writing system use sets of symbols to represent the sound of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation and numerals.

Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message.

Skill statements refer to the proficient manual verbal or mental manipulation of data or things. Skills can be readily measured by performance test where quantity and quality of performance are tested, usually within an established time limit.

Writing is the ability to write anything freely. It was Chomsky who , in the 1950 first appreciated the significance of the child's mastery of the syntactic determinants of grammar .It was he ,too, who put forward what has proverb most influential theory of syntax Lyons (1981, p.51) argues "English   writing skills including formal and informal resumes, letters and another business documents essays and lesson plan. English in beginning level writing helps designed to help improve beginning level English writing skills including spelling basic sentences and paragraph structure as well as essay and letter writing for English second learners classes and teachers".

This study takes in consideration the problems, which learners might face through their English learning such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and linguistics. The study concerns the learners of secondary level schools and the factors which may affect their learning English such as their age, their perceived ability in English, using of English for enjoyment through reading or listening and using of English for communication. The subject of the study was 40-50 teachers of secondary schools and that were analyzed after collecting data from the questionnaire.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout teaching English language, the researcher noticed that a lot of difficulties hinder learners at secondary schools in Sudan to learn English language and that is because the SPINE syllabus does not contribute with technology. There is no using of tapes, CDs, DVDs, memory cards and computer processes in general. The lack of using these educational means resulted in habituation of English vocabulary during listening. Learners cannot express what they want to say because they are shy or fear of making mistakes or of being criticized. The practice of English language skills is not sufficient in the Spine Syllabus, so the researcher is going to explain how to facilitate the difficulties which the learners of basic level might face.

Objectives of the Study
    a. Improving and developing English writing skill at Sudan secondary school level
    b. Suggesting activities by which teachers can help developing their learners in English writing skill.
    c. Preparing effective materials to help students enhance their   writing skill

Questions of the Study
    a. Why do Secondary Level student have difficulties in English writing skill?
    b. What is the role of reading in improving writing skill?
    c. Why do Sudanese learners at secondary school incapable to write competently in English?

Hypotheses of the Study

    a. Secondary level students have difficulties in writing English.

    b. A good teaching quality of reading materials enable learners to write in English perfectly

    c. Effective reading can enhance writing skill

Significant of the Study

The study may participate in developing students at secondary school writing skill in Dongola locality and the results can be generalized and extended to others area in order to make the maximum use of them. Syllabus designer can benefit from this study and its results to remove the deficiency in the syllabuses concerning writing skill.

Limits of the Study

This study is limited to develop and promote English writing skills in Secondary Level Schools in Dongola Locality. But the findings can be generalized.

Introduction

English has spread widely all over the world, first because of the influence of the British Empire and, second due to the pre-eminence of North American influence in the world. In Europe, English has advanced as an international language especially after World War II, leaving behind other preeminent languages such as French. Millions of speakers for a number of communicative functions now use English across Europe.

It has become the preferred language in a number of ambits like international business or EU institutions. Repeatedly it is also the language chosen for academic discussion as most scholars face the need to read and publish in English for international diffusion. English is also directly influencing other European languages at different levels but it is especially obvious in the field of technical terms – lexical borrowings are often introduced in many languages without the slightest adaptation. English seems to have been adopted as the language of globalization these days as the language of global culture and international economy (Graddol, 1997: 4).

English Narrative Text

According to Crystal (2008: 320), *"narrative is an application of the everyday use of this term as part of the linguistic study of discourse which aims to determine the principles governing the structure of narrative text. A narrative is seen as a recapitulation of past experience in which language is used to structure a sequence of (real or factious) events".*

In other words, narrative is a sequence of events which begins with a simple event. Then, the character starts to suffer a problem before finding the solution. In the end, the narrator evaluation or summarizing will be as a conclusion of the narrative text. Commonly, it is called a morale massage.

Generic Structure of English Narrative Text

A narrative is a text with a time sequence in its paragraph arrangement. The simple structure of a narrative text is begun with an event and a character problems as well as the solution of the problems. As Grace stated, "parts of narrative text are: orientation, complication and resolution". In the orientation the writer explains the background of the character. Then the writer exposes the starting point of the problems' appearance on the complication part. Finally, the solution is found on the part of resolution. The example of the sequence in narrative text according to Allen (2007: 160) is reflected as below:

"Orientation: An acquaintance, Gary, asked Arnie for a lift to a house out of town saying he wanted to get some „pot. Complication: He came out of the house and said hey, they've got some "pure" stuff! (Amphetamines or, speed, which happened to be Armies' drug of choice!) Sequence of events: Arnie brought drugs and, shot up immediately (intravenous use). Resolution: Arnie realized he had been set up. He could have gone back the next day for more but did not, although he had the money".

Language Features of English Narrative Text

There are several language features of English narrative text according to Grace, those are focusing on specific and individualized participants, using of action verb and using past tenses. The language features above will be described as follows:

a. Focusing on specific and individualized participants. It means the narrative text only expose a character as a main player from the beginning until the end of story.

b. Using of action verbs. The most statement in the narrative text uses action verb. An action verb is a verb that shows the action of the subject. An example in a sentence is "One day, a beautiful lady, named Miss Morstan, **came** to the house for some help". *Ibid*. 58

Past tenses show an action that happened in the past time. The signal of past time in a sentence is known from the time signal and the verb. An example on a sentence is, "She **got** up at 7 o'clock **this morning**" (Murphy, 2019).

Storytelling

Definition of Storytelling

A story is more generally agreed to be a specific structure of narrative with a specific style and set of characters which includes a sense of completeness. Through this sharing of experience we use stories to pass on accumulating wisdom, beliefs, and values. Through stories we explain how things are, why they are, and our role and purpose. Stories are the building blocks of knowledge, the foundation of memory and learning. Stories connect us with our humanness and link past, present, and future by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of our actions. It means that through story people can learn almost everything. By listening to the story people are possible to enrich their knowledge and refresh their mind. It is such both educating and entertaining activity to listen to a story.

"Telling" involves direct contact between teller and listener. It mandates the direct presentation of the story by the teller. The teller's role is to prepare and present the necessary language, vocalization, and physicality to effectively and efficiently communicate the images of a story. The listener's role is to actively create the vivid, multi-sensory images, actions, characters, and events---the reality---of the story in their mind based on the performance by the teller, and on their past experiences, beliefs, and understandings. In other words, telling a story is such an action of sharing an experience in oral ways.

Types of Reading

The reading skill can be divided into two main types; intensive and extensive reading. Hafiz and Tudor (1989: 5). Compared between the two types:

In intensive reading activities learners are in the main exposed to relatively short texts which are used either to exemplify specific aspects of the lexical, syntactic or discoursal system of the L2, or to provide the basis for targeted reading strategy practice the goal of extensive

reading, on the other hand, is to flood learners with large quantities of L2 input with few or possibly no specific tasks to perform on this material.

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading refers to detailed focus on the reading texts which usually take place in classrooms. It tends to develop the strategies of the learners. In this respect, Nuttal (1982: 23) claims that: **"*The intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies.* However, sometimes the learner may prefer to read the text in which he/she divides it into parts and then to read each part alone in order to comprehend it very well.

In palmer's view (1964) on intensive reading, the learner focuses on using the dictionary in which he has to analyze, compare and translate while reading texts. Therefore, the use of a dictionary helps the learner to progress in his language learning process. However, this may interrupt the learner's reading speed. In the same line of thought, the Reading comprehension task for Harmer means not to stop for every word neither to analyze everything (Harmer, 2001) that is to say, the reader should not stop at every single point or analyze each idea alone, but rather he should make a general comprehension of the text and to extract the meaning by taking the content into account.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading refers to reading that learners often do away from the classroom for instance: reading novels, magazines, and newspaper articles ….etc. Hafiz and Tudor (1989: 5) mentioned that:

> "The pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners "command of the L2".

Extensive readers read for the sake of pleasure. This type is labeled as joyful reading by Rechard Day in 1998. Through extensive reading, the reader enriches his background knowledge, and expands his vocabulary; he also recognizes the spelling forms. Therefore, the learner chooses his\her own books and reads at his\her pace. Then, the teacher has to guide learners to select books depending on their levels of comprehension that lead to comprehensible input. According to Day and Bamford (1998) extensive reading is a part of second language curriculum i.e. as a separate course as a part of an existing reading course as a non –credit addition to existing course, and as an extra-curricular activity. Thus, students have to rely on themselves and gain knowledge from their readings outside the classroom.

Reading Sub-Skills

There are different types of learning strategies which help learners to solve their problems and improve their language competency. Many research works have been done on learning strategies and studied the effectiveness of using them in the learning process.

To start with, Oxford (1990) gives a definition to the concept of reading strategies as actions that make the learning task easier, enjoyable, effective and self –directed. The term strategy refers to learning techniques that help learners solve the problems they face whenever they read. For Anderson (1991) reading strategies means cognitive steps which readers can take into account in order to acquire, store and retrieve data. In reading comprehension, there

exist four major categories of strategies: skimming, scanning, careful-reading and predicting. These are considered at the same time as the sub-skills of reading. In this sense, Phan (2006:01) states that:

> "The strategies may involve skimming, scanning, guessing, recognizing cognates and word families, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, and separating main ideas from supporting ideas".

Skimming

Skimming is a common technique in reading comprehension. It is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and a general overview of the content. In other words skimming is to read more in less time and to help the learner to cover a vast amount of material very quickly. In sum, when skimming, learners go through the text quickly in order to gist of it and have an idea of the writer's intention.

Scanning

Scanning is a speed-reading technique and a useful reading activity in which learners need specific information without dealing with the whole text. This means, they do not read all the text word by word, but rather they extract specific information (names, dates, statistics) without reading all the passage. In short, when scanning, learners try to locate particular information by moving their eyes over the text rapidly, and then get the required information to complete a certain task.

Careful Reading

This reading strategy requires from the reader to obtain detailed information from the entire text. Moreover, the reader is expected to read slowly and to reread the text for the sake of connecting and comparing information with his prior knowledge. In the same line of thought, Urquihart and Weir (1998) argue that this type of reading takes the meaning of reading to learn i.e., the learner reads for the sake of learning also its reading speed is rather slower than skimming and scanning since the reader attempts to obtain detailed information.

Predicting

Predicting is a very useful sub-skill that the reader may use it in which he makes predictions relying on his previous knowledge and then extracts the meaning of the text even if there exist unfamiliar words in the text .so that he gets the meaning from the whole passage. Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be read, viewed, heard and to actively adjust to comprehension while reading, for example before and after a chart, students' list predictions before and after reading. As they read, students either confirm or reject their predictions.

What is Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension consists of more than just reading the words on the page. Text reading, according to a cognitively based view is an interactive process rather than just a set of skills (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson, 1991). A good definition of reading comprehension might be the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002 p. 11).

In seeking to understand the comprehension of a text as a whole, mental model theories have been influential. According to these, when we read, or when we listen to someone speaking, we construct a mental model of what we have read or heard. This model is not the text itself, but a representation of it (Johnson-Laird, 1983). Using Johnson-Laird's framework, Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) proposed the term 'situation model' to mean a model which goes beyond the text representation and integrates inference and background

knowledge to construct meaning. According to McNamara and Magliano (2009) this first major processing model of comprehension has provided the foundation for most of the subsequent models. Kintsch developed the theory further and proposed a two-stage Construction-Integration model, whereby as words or phrases are read (or heard) they set off associations in a spreading fan (Kintsch, 1988). These associations are refined by the context until a stable interpretation emerges. Later this Construction-Integration model was modified to become more interactive (Kintsch, 1998). Instead of all associations being activated in a bottom-up fashion, they are activated by the strength of the associations in memory and, as the reader proceeds the context strengthens those associations which are more appropriate and inhibits those which are less likely. When the reader makes more connections within the text and generates more prior knowledge then a stronger situation model is made, which in turn leads to a stronger representation in long term memory (McNamara and Magliano, 2009).

McNamara and Magliano (2009) reviewed the principal models which build on the Construction-Integration model to a greater or lesser extent, i.e. the Structure-Building, Resonance, Event-indexing, Causal Network, Constructionist and Landscape models. They argue that the Construction-Integration model, the Structure-Building model and the Landscape Model attempt to describe the basic and overall comprehension processes, whilst the other four models are concerned with the processes that go on beyond the information in a target sentence, e.g. retrieving background knowledge and making inferences. The authors concluded that the models differ largely in terms of their foci and the fact that they describe different comprehension situations. Thus, the Construction-Integration model is concerned more with explaining the comprehension of more challenging expository texts, whilst other models explain the comprehension of easier narrative texts by readers who do not have any difficulties (e.g. the Structure-Building model). McNamara and Magliano go on to argue that the models are not therefore contradictory, but they may be too limited, in that they fail to account for differences in the reader and the text. Consideration is needed of the differences between skilled and less skilled readers and of how comprehension is affected by the reader's goals and the social context (according to Snow, 2002).

Another way of differentiating between the various models of comprehension was that proposed by Graesser (2007)who distinguished between those models which use a bottom-up explanation (e.g. Construction-Integration) and those which are strategy-driven (e.g. the Constructionist model) and therefore see comprehension as more of a top-down process. The Constructionist model (Graesser, Singer and Trabasso, 1994) is based on reader goals, coherence of text and explanation. Reader goals are one of the aspects of comprehension that McNamara and Magliano considered to be lacking in comprehension models generally and they suggest it may be because much research in the past has been carried out in the laboratory where readers are given a text and told to read it, thus leaving out any element of free will.

Coherence refers to the way that the reader seeks to make a situation model which makes sense at the local and global level, and explanation refers to the way skilled comprehends try to explain what is happening in the text. In contrast to the laboratory based research McNamara and Magliano consider to characterize other models of reading comprehension, the Constructionist model is the one they consider to be the most applicable to the study of comprehension in authentic educational settings, since it seeks to describe " *a highly-motivated, strategic reader who routinely engages in goal-directed, effortful processing during comprehension*" (p.330). According to McNamara (2007), the strategies a

reader uses, their metacognitive awareness and their goals are aspects which have large effects on comprehension.

Teaching Reading Comprehension

Teaching reading comprehension is a challenging and demanding task which is at the same time difficult to improve the learner's capacities. Good readers are flexible and have the capacity to choose the suitable reading strategy according to the specific text; they read according to the type of the text they are going to read. For instance, reading a poem is not like reading a newspaper. Skillful readers skim to extract general ideas of the text and scan to have specific needed information from it, hence, skimming and scanning are useful reading strategies.

In addition to that, teachers should train learners to skim, for example to extract the key sentences of the text. Skillful readers also interrogate texts of all sorts by looking for clues in titles, sub-titles and the written text itself. Pre -reading questions are useful and helpful for a better understanding of the passage since they emphasize on the attention of learners on the types of data they are going to read. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to dialogue with the writer and guess what will come next. To develop strategies and methodologies in teaching reading comprehension, pre-reading while reading and post-reading activities have been suggested.

Pre-Reading Stage

Pre-reading is a very important stage in which the topic and type of the text are introduced first. Harmer (1991: 188) clarifies this by saying: "We will not get students to interact properly with spoken and written materials unless we ensure that their desire to read or listen has been awakened. Especially where the subject matter of the texts may not be immediately appealing to them we have the responsibility to make students interested and to encourage them to tackle the text with positive anticipation". In this phase, the teacher can use various techniques in order to make the reading activity easier:

a. Using picture or any visual aid that can help the learner to make predictions.
b. Ask questions related to the topic.
c. Prepare the learner for the content of the text.
d. Think of some of the vocabulary items that will appear in the text.

These steps may arouse the student's interest and help to pre-teach some vocabulary as well as they set the mood for reading. Also, the teacher should move gradually from easy to difficult in order to reach a better understanding. The pre reading stage seeks to:

a) Improve the interest of the students in the topic.
b) Lead them to make predictions\guessing for the reading passage.
c) Relate the students' background knowledge with the topic.
d) Prepare them for the content.

While-Reading Stage

During this phase, the learners read the passage silently and the teacher plays the role of the monitor. Richards sees reading or the while reading stage: "*as an integration of top-down processes that utilize background knowledge and schema, as well as bottom up processes that are primarily text or data driven.*" (1990: 87)

The while- reading phase or simply the reading stage attempts to:

a) Develop the student's comprehension of the writer purpose.
b) Develop the student's linguistic knowledge.
c) Make the student recognize the meaning of unfamiliar words.

d) Develop conscious reading.

e) Teach the student how to skim and scan.

Post-Reading Stage

At this last phase, the teacher acts the role of the evaluator; he has to look whether the objectives of the reading task have been achieved or not, taking into account the understanding of the text and recognizing the new vocabulary and the grammar and then evaluating the text .Students might ask comprehension questions.   After the reading comprehension task, it is better to follow it by giving the learners other activities that have relation with the text like asking questions about reading comprehension \true, false statements, matching activity…etc. Therefore, readers can improve their reading having comprehension achievement by expanding their vocabulary knowledge having the ability to understand sentence structures.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

This part defines the term strategies and investigates the characteristics of reading comprehension strategies.

Strategies

Scholars interested in cognitivism defined all the cognitive processes as 'strategies' (Pressley, Goodchild *et al*., 1989). Over time the term strategy was spread and it is now widely misused or misunderstood. One of the main problems is that the term is used as synonymous with skills. Although skills are also cognitive processes, these are considered as "*automatic actions [which are performed] with speed, efficiency, and fluency*" (Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris, 2008, p. 368). The term reading strategy has been redefined and adjusted to fulfill authors' needs. Several definitions share the principle that reading strategies are cognitive operations that help "*to enhance reading comprehension failures*" (Singhal, 2001, p. 2) - see also (Hacker, 1998). Unlike skills, strategies are conscious and controllable processes used to 'work towards a goal' (Hacker, 1998; Grabe and Stoller, 2002; R. Pritchard,1990; Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris, 2008). Strategies can be used in different contexts so they can be used and adapted to a specific situation with positive results (Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris, 2008). It is worth noting that, practice might lead strategies to become skills in the same way that a skill used in a conscious way may serve as a strategy (Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris, 2008) In brief, the main difference between skills and strategies lies in the reader's awareness and control of the processes. Reading strategies are perceived as problem solving tools that help readers to overcome comprehension problems. Whenever the word strategy appears in this work, the author refers to the definition of (Harris, Alexander and S. Graham, 2008, p.89)

> "A strategy is a special form of procedural knowledge that is intentionally Purpose fully and effort fully applied to a given task or situation for which one's typical or automatic pattern of thought or behavior is perceived as inadequate or non-optimal"

Reading strategies are used by readers as self-regulated tools which allow them to have control over information and their own learning (Schunk, 2000). Strategies have been classified into cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are perceived as processes that facilitate the interaction of the reader with world knowledge in order to construct meaning (Akyel and Ercetin, 2009. Hacker, 1998; Pressley, 2000). Metacognitive strategies are processes which allow to control and monitor this interaction (Hacker, 1998).

Definition of Writing Composition

The composition is defined as a literary written form. In other words, it is a type of essays on a subject expressing a personal view. Writing a composition is a complex activity that includes the mechanics of writing, including handwriting, spelling, and the basics of language knowledge (i.e., word morphology, syntax, and vocabulary). It consists of the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

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EFL Students' Writing Difficulties

According to Arikan (2006: 105) writing is a generally difficult skill to learn for EFL learners. Some of the causes of difficulties in writing include the fact that, writing is not a spontaneous activity but has to be learned. It involves some conscious mental efforts and not just the ability to put words on paper. In consideration of the nature of writing, and the difficulties of L2 teaching and learning, it is important to continue to explore the ways or strategies to minimize the difficulties EFL students encounter and to help them overcome their fear of writing. Although some of the strategies teachers use encourage their students to be creative and organized, that is not enough. Students must take into account many aspects at the time of writing such as: vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, organization and content and not only one of these items because to create adequate compositions students must take into account every single detail.

The problem is that they do not care about the kind of essays they are creating and they do not follow the correct steps that will provide all the sources for their compositions. They just care about the grade they will receive at the end of a homework assignment. However, the use of the essay as an expression of logical reasoning and argument is a totally foreign concept to many of EFL students. They see the essay as an opportunity to report everything they have read, often taking huge chunks of text from the original source and presenting it as their own. This problem arises when students fail to understand the importance of using quotation marks. Such as grammatical errors or spelling mistakes and quite committed to the given assignment. He just paid attention to global revisions such as changing the ideas of the whole paragraph. It is possible that he relied on the last revision time when he would go through the final draft with his friend. He appeared to consider the requirements of the tutor a lot and try hard to complete the essay as clearly Khalil (1985, 346) argues

> "semantic deviations are more likely to reduce the intelligibility and interpretability of utterances than are grammatical deviations. For the EFL teacher the implications are clear: not only must attention be paid to the teaching of syntax but also, and perhaps more importantly, the teaching of those meaning related skills that will enable the student to communicate effectively in English."

The Role of Reading in Enhancing Writing Skills

To write effectively in English, it has been argued that reading has an important role to play. In other words, possession of the basic skills of reading can enhance the skills to compose and write (Ross and Roe 1990:27) believes that reading and writing support complement and contribute to each other's development. Other authors such as Cox (2002:173) argue that, both reading and writing should be taught together. In fact they argue that, the processes involved in learning both skills are the same. However, English Language is considered one

of the most substantial elements of education and literacy. Its efficiency and commands come with the mastery in receptive and productive skills. According to Bello (1997:83) writing, as a productive language skill plays an essential role in promoting language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences, and large chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they learn in class.

Bello (1997:83-85) explains that "*one of the major failing in the traditional curriculum could be attributed to lack of attention given to writing, which is an important avenue for thinking*". As for writing in EFL, French and Rhoder (1992:70) argue that, writing could be viewed as the main area in the curriculum that we associate with creativity, noting that writing is one of the most tasks that we can be asked to perform .Thus, improving students' composition writing is believed to be important skills which EFL learners need to develop throughout their schooling.

Stages of Writing Process

During the writing process a stage may be skipped but can be returned to later. There are many stages of the writing process as follows:

Prewriting

Prewriting is a planning stage for writing. Planning is an important step of the writing process; it allows the writers to organize their writing before they even begin. Teachers might help students who have a difficulty in determining a topic using various strategies such as, graphical editing, free writing, and associative writing (Oberman and Kapkave, 2001).

Drafting

In the draft stage, students are expected to put the arrangement they did in the planning stage on to paper. In this stage, spelling rules for the written text are ignored. The students primarily try to create the content (Alber, 2001).

Revising

This stage consists of the students' review of the written draft, sharing the draft text with a writing group that was formed in the classroom, and rearranging the content according to feedback from friends in the writing group. In this stage, the students might expand the text with new ideas or remove the parts that they think unnecessary. Revising is a difficult stage for students (Oberman and Kapkave, 2001).

Editing

In this stage spelling rules and punctuation, which are called the mechanical aspect of writing, are checked. Before sharing what they have written with others, the students review the draft for the last time and make corrections for readability. An editing checklist might be prepared illustrating the spelling errors. The students might benefit from this list for their learning in the future. Different evaluation materials might be used in teaching students about the 3rd and 4th stages. While it is possible to develop evaluation material together with students, existing evaluation materials might also be used.

Publishing

This is the last stage of the writing process. In this stage, the students share the text they have written with the readers they determined in the prewriting stage. What is important here is that teacher makes writing meaningful for student. It is stated that sharing what has been written is a good way for students both to recognize writing as an effective communication tool and motivate them to write (Lehr, 1995). It is important for students to learn the writing process. Because the writing process is a tool used to enable students to efficiently express their

feelings, thoughts and knowledge. The more students learn how to use this process efficiently, the more they can express themselves efficiently (Tompkins, 2004). However, studies conducted in Turkey at the elementary level share the view that young students are incompetent at writing skills and teachers are not able to use the writing process efficiently. This study aims at describing the instructional applications of the writing process which is one of the models utilized in the balanced literacy approach to develop writing abilities.

The Importance of EFL Writing

EFL writing is regarded as an important skill in teaching and learning. EFL writing is useful in two respects: First, it motivates students thinking, organizing ideas, and developing their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. Second, it strengthens students¡¦ learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. Tompkins (2004:81)explains that, composition writing is significant to the learning of EFL student teachers of English because it facilitates student teachers' acquisition of the basic study skills needed for understanding what they study and expressing it in their own words. In addition, competence in essay writing will help students pass all their academic courses successfully. Moreover, being proficient in essay writing in English will enable student teachers of English to be successful teachers and action researchers in the future. However mastering the writing process is important for the students as this enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings successfully. In the process of writing, learners can use their imagination. Therefore, the more the students learn the writing process, the more they will be able to express themselves. Brookes and Marshall (2004:99-103) argue that:

> "Imagination and originality are valued more than the standardization of thought and truthfulness while characterizing creative writing. While assessing the student for creative writing, they are given space to fabricate the content."

However their creative writing and cognitive skills can be evaluated. Learners should be encouraged to write creatively, it is important that learners thoughts should not be restricted Brookes (2004:53) explains that,

> "Planning, or generation and discovery of thought are prerequisites for creative writing. If the students are restrained they will not be able to maintain the originality of their work and the creativity might be compromised as well."

However to make the students write creatively, they should be given opportunity to express the real life events and observe it and they can write creatively without any fear.

Method of the study

The descriptive analytical method is used to conduct this study

Population of the Study

The population of this study was English language teachers at secondary schools in Dongola locality, Northern state.

The Sample

The sample was randomly selected from EFL teachers of the secondary level chosen from the sample (five teachers).

The Tool

The data of this study has been elicited through a questionnaire to the teachers who teach at the secondary level at Dongola. A questionnaire is used for collecting the data for this study.

The questionnaire was designed and written in English language to test the hypotheses of the study.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The Analysis of the Questionnaire
Table (1): Effective reading can enhance writing English skill

	Options	Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	13	26.0
	Agree	20	40.0
	Strongly disagree	15	30.0
	Disagree	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (1) shows the distribution of the responses about "Effective reading can enhance writing English skill". From table (1) it is clear that (66%) of the participants agreed at the above statement.

Table (2): Time allotted to English reading skills not enough

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	5	10.0
	Agree	40	80.0
	Strongly disagree	3	6.0
	Disagree	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (2) shows how the responses about "time allotted to English reading skill is not enough "are distributed. In table (2), it is clear that (90%) of the participants agreed upon the above statement.

Table (3): Vocabulary teaching is inadequate to enable learners to express what they like to say

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	12	24.0
	Agree	28	56.0
	Strongly disagree	9	18.0
	Disagree	1	2.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (3) show that, (80%) of the respondents agrees that vocabulary teaching is inadequate to enable learners to express what they like to write and (20%) disagree to the statement. Therefore the statement is accepted.

Table (4.): There should be available materials that help in teaching   reading

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	9	18.0
	Agree	28	56.0
	Strongly	4	8.0

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	disagree		
	Disagree	9	18.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (4) shows how the responses about "there should be available materials that help in teaching reading" are distributed. In table (4), it is clear that (74%) of the participants agreed upon the above statement.

Table (5): Learners should be advised to read more in English

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	22	44.0
	Agree	14	28.0
	Strongly disagree	10	20.0
	Disagree	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (5) shows how the responses "learners should be advised to read more in English are distributed. In table (5), it is clear that (72%) of the participants agreed upon the above statement.

Table (6): Some of English teachers are not well trained so that they are incapable to teach

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	12	24.0
	Agree	29	58.0
	Strongly disagree	6	12.0
	Disagree	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table (6) shows how the responses about "some of English teachers are not well trained so that they are incapable to teach" are distributed. In table (6) it is clear that (82%) of the participants agreed upon the above statement.

Table (7): Some of schools and classes are not well prepared to motivate learners to learn English

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	6	12.0
	Agree	35	70.0
	Strongly disagree	2	4.0
	Disagree	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

The statistical analyses of statement in table (7) shows that (82%) of the respondents agree that (12%) of the sample choose the answer to some extent and (16%) disagree that motivation is be the major factor of determining success in learning. Thus the statement is accepted.

Table (8): Reading provides learners with vocabulary and a lot of expressions   for better writing

Options		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly agree	17	34.0
	Agree	23	46.0
	Strongly disagree	7	14.0
	Disagree	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table and figure (8) shows how the responses about "Reading provides learners with vocabulary and a lot of expressions for better writing "are distributed. In table (8) it is clear that (80%) of the participants agreed upon the above statement.

Table (9): In order to improve writing, teachers should teach stories

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Strongly agree	12	24.0
	Agree	29	58.0
	Strongly disagree	3	6.0
	Disagree	6	12.0
	Total	50	100.0

According to the statistical analysis of statement (9) most respondent (72 %) agree that, in order to improve writing, teachers should teach stories. Only (18%) of the sample disagree (10%). Thus this statement is accepted.

Table (10): What is the problem that encounters your learners during writing?

Options		Frequency	Percent %
	Spelling mistakes	27	54
	grammatical mistakes	23	46
	Total	50	100.0

Table (10) shows that problems encounter learners during writing (54%) is spelling mistakes and (46%) is grammatical mistakes. These are the main problems encounter students during writing.

Conclusion

Findings and Recommendations:

Findings

1. Writing skill is important element in learning a language.
2. Effective reading   can enhance students   writing skill.
3. A   good syllabus includes useful reading materials
4. English language lessons are not given enough time at classrooms at secondary schools.
5. Teachers are not exposed to training courses to achieve the process of teaching perfectly.

Recommendations

1. Ministry of Education should concern of English language learning.
2. Syllabus designers should insert suitable curriculum corresponding to the needs of students at secondary level.
3. Students should be exposed to authentic materials such as novels and short stories to help them in writing skill.
4. For the sake of a perfect teaching, teachers should be trained regularly.

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