

The Problems of Writing that Face Beginners at Basic Level (Case Study in Elobeid 2016-2017)

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Abstract - The aim of this study is to find out the factors that cause basic level learners not to master need writing skills. The most important factors are: problems of writing skill, well equipped school environment which includes boards, and other tools are essential for acquiring good handwriting skills. The study's questions are what are the problems of writing skills that face the beginners, what types of writing that beginners need to learn, what are the problems that teachers will face in teaching skill of writing? The study's hypotheses are; there are problems in writing that face beginners, there are types of writing that beginners need to learn, and there are problems that face the teachers in teaching writing skill. The study follows the analytical methods, data has been collected through questionnaire and by using the program "SPSS", it has been analyzed. The study reached the following results: Copying from the board is better than copying from the book (75.00%), it is necessary to draw shapes are similar to English alphabet (75.00%), it is necessary prewriting activities develop handwriting of beginners (75.00%). The study recommends that; further studies should be on suitable ways of improving good handwriting, teachers must focus on good writing because the pupils will imitate their teachers, schools should prepare the suitable tools; boards and writing materials.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a variety of writing tools that can be used as a child grows and develops. Many pupils demonstrate difficulties with correct letter formation and often form letters that are erratically sized. Pupils may form letters "bottom to top" they may reverse letters and numbers, omit parts of letters, leave part of letters disconnected and/or use too many strikes to form letters. All of these can be led to illegible and slow handwriting and difficulty with near – point or for-point copying activities.

Writing is an art of making graphic symbols, which represent the sound people make. In speech, words are patterned otherwise they do not mean anything. Sentences follow a certain norm, and they are linked coherently and cohesively in a logical order.

Writing is very necessary for communication between teacher and pupils, sentences and words include all writing of penmanship, spelling, punctuation, imagination, and art penmanship the aim would be degree of legibility.

Statement of the Problem:

The problem of the present study lies in the fact that pupils at basic level fail to form the English alphabet accurately, with a quick glance at any exercise book, one can notice that the majority of them lack the skill letter formation or having good handwriting. This being the case, the researcher would like to investigate the possible causes that lead to this problem.

Questions of the Paper:

The paper tries to find ways for tackling problem that face the students during their writing letters, words or sentences and the research treatments that in writing about many ways among beginners.

1. What are the problems of writing skills that face the beginners'pupils?
2. What types of writing that beginners'pupils need to learn?
3. What are the problems that teachers face in teaching skill of writing?
4. How teachers deal with writing problems for beginners'pupils?

Hypotheses of the Paper:

It hypothesizes that:

1. There are problems in writing that face beginners'pupils.
2. There are types of writing that beginners'pupils need to learn.
3. There are problems that face the teachers in teaching writing skill.
4. Teachers have specific dealing with writing problem for beginners'pupils.

Objectives of the Paper:

The paper's objectives are:

1. To highlight the essential elements of significance that can be created through purposeful writing.

2. To draw attention to the importance of the writing sub-skill.
3. To try to find solutions for these problems.

Significance of the Paper:

Writing obviously rates high and has a significant rate to play in the communication process.

It has significance for teaching supervisions and teacher and pupils as well.

Methods:

The research uses descriptive analytical method and questionnaire for data collection.

Literature Review

Introduction:

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

Definition of Writing Systems:

Here are several ways to define writing systems:

- 1- A system of permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered exactly without the intervention of the uttered. Daniels et al (1996:3).
- 2- A set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who know the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system. Coulmes et al (1999:560)
- 3- All writing systems use visible signs except for the raised notation systems used by blind and visually impaired people, such as Braille and Moon.
- 4- In a history of writing, Steven Fischer argued that no one definition of writing covers all writing systems that exist and have ever existed. Instead he stated that a "complete writing system" should fulfill all the following criteria:
 - a. It must have as its purpose communication.
 - b. It must have consisted of artificial graphic mark on a durable.
 - c. It must use marks that relate conventionally to articulate speech or electronic programming in such a way that communication is achieved.

The use of English is more widespread because of the business – environment revolution. Nowadays English is used by all people worldwide because of ongoing advances in technology such as internet and other businesses. Pakir (1999) English is necessary for all professions. However, teaching English in the Arab World is challenging. Many students can understand the language, but most of them face the problems of communicating their ideas effectively. The problem is the lack of both the adequate stock vocabulary and creativity in writing.

It is evident that writing is the biggest challenge for many students. Therefore, many associations exert their effort to improve learning English. Mourtaga (2010) still, it is a very tough mission for teachers to teach English creatively so that students could become independent learners and benefit a lot from the innovative teaching-techniques adopted by the teacher. Rury (1996) students do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound. The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved. Encouraging student' participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills requires ascertain pragmatic approach.

The Writing Process:

All effective writing is well planned. A writer must determine what he wants to say and how he wants to say it. The writing has a responsibility to convey in the clearest way possible.

The steps include determining the topic, planning, drafting, editing, revising and proofreading. Without this process, valuable information could be lost to the reader. This chapter addresses the different stages of writing process and follows the progression from beginning to end.

Writing is a process with steps that must be followed:

The Subject:

This is the topic of the written work. There are an infinite number of subjects about which to write. Once the subject is determined, it should be honed and made specific. The subject should be as narrow as possible for each given assignment; clear writing is concise. Broad topics leave room for extraneous information. As a rule, the more specific the topic is the more precise the article or essay.

The Audience:

This is person or people who will read the piece. Considering the audience will help determine content, language and tone. Some audiences require more background information about the topic than others. Some audiences understand content-specific vocabulary. The level of vocabulary and tone can be different with varied groups of individuals. When speaking, we modify topics

and language according to how we are addressing. The same is done for writing consider three different audiences for an article.

The Purpose:

This is the goal of the writing word. There are many different purposes for writing. Perhaps article or essay denounces someone or something. The purpose may be to persuade others to the author's way of thinking. The article might simply tell a good story highlight on injustice and therefore be call to action for the audience. The purpose for writing must be clear starting.

Exploring a Topic:

It is necessary to explore a topic before writing. A writer must assess what is known and what needs to be discovered. Ideas must be generated before writing. Moureen (2006: 233) there are several common techniques include brainstorming, free writing and clustering:

Brainstorming:

This technique is used to generate ideas about a given topic. This strategy involves tossing out ideas as they occur. Two or more people can combine to generate ideas. This allows for others to hear, react and build upon ideas. This can be done through discussion or correspondence. It can happen all at once, or over a period of time. If no one else is available, it is possible to brainstorm alone. Follow these steps

- a. Set a time limit of five to ten minutes to write down in list from every word or phrase that comes to mind about the topic.
- b. Writer's block sometimes occurs even at the brainstorming stage.
- c. When the time is up, review the list. Look for clusters, patterns or groups of ideas that can be used in your article.

Free Writing:

This method uses a stream-of-consciousness technique to explore possible topics. It is helpful when you are unable to come up with an idea for an article or essay. For a limited period, write down everything known about a general subject without thinking.

When you write freely, you relax observations and memories flood your mind and you let them flow on to paper, don not worry about grammar, punctuation or spelling. You write all ideas that come to you without evaluating or even glancing back over your writing until the end of the writing session. Coronado (1985: 10)

Organization:

One you have gathered the necessary information for the paper, you must be sure to organize it so it is presented in a way that make sense to your reader. Information must be separated into groups and each group must have its own paragraph or section of the essay. Information should be ordered in a way that makes sense for your topic. Different method of organization include chronological, spatial order of importance and logical.

Chronological Organization

If the information you are presenting takes place over a period of time or involves a process that includes steps, the best order in which to present it will be chronological. The sequence should begin with the initial event and it should continue in orders of events until the conclusion. This allows the reader to easily follow the progression of article. Sometimes however, it can be also effective to present the events in reverse sequence. This may be helpful to explain why thing occurred. Careful use of time helps to prevent confusing sentences such as this before what happen.

Spatial Organization:

If the information you have gathered is descriptive, it makes sense to organize the details using space. You should describe a person, a thing or a place by following a direction such as top to bottom, left to right or background to foreground. This direction can differ according to need or focus, but it must make sense.

Order-of-information:

If the information you get are presenting will be used to persuade your reader with a series of examples, it is sometimes necessary to classify data into order of importance. It can be effective to begin with the most significant idea or event and continue to the least significant.

Logical Organization:

Some writing requires establishing logical relationships in your information. These relationships can be based on similarities, differences or causes and effect.

The Paragraph:

A paragraph is a group of sentences that expounds one main idea. Usually, five to twelve sentences in length, a paragraph occurs mostly with other paragraph in a longer piece of writing, such as an essay, an article or a letter. The paragraph is an important component in writing.

Elementary Writing Hurdles:

In elementary school, children are encountering the elements of writing for the first time, from the formation of the letters, to organizing their ideas to using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Elementary school

students are expected to advance from learning the rules of writing to automatically applying those rules beginning in grade four. By the end of elementary school, your child should be writing independently and producing multiple paragraphs, essays that contain form of introduction supporting evidence and conclusion.

Common Writing Problems:

As a part of an elementary school student, you should not be overly concerned if your child's writing is not perfect. Writing ability improves in stages, as children build upon the skill learned in prior grades. However, you should keep an eye out for repetitious errors and habits, such as incorrect grammar and spelling, poorly structured essays and unsupported ideas.

Writing is hard work and can be a chore, but excessive complaining and procrastination may indicate a bigger problem with writing. If not addressed, eventually writing problems can lead to problems in other subjects and effect overall academic success.

Children's Writing:

Usually, children exhibit a stronger command of language in conversation than on paper and do not begin to write at a level equivalent to their own speech until grades four and seven. Here are some common errors in grammar:

- a. Problem: proper nouns not capitalized
Example: I saw *dr. smith* innewyork
- b. Problem: Sentence fragments
Example: going to the grocery store for milk.
- c. Problem: Run-on sentences
Example: I like riding my bike after dinner first I must help with the dishes.
- d. Problem: lack of subject-verb agreement.
Example: he run every day.
- e. Problem: incorrect noun plural.
Example: The berrys are ripe.
- f. Problem: Wrong English punctuation
Example: What are you doing
- g. Problem: Lack of commas in a series
Example: Our flag's colors are red, white and blue

Some of the Difficulties:

There are some difficulties that face students, such as:

Spelling:

Spelling is not easy due to some reasons:

1. Pupils cannot read some words especially in sixth elementary grade, first and second year in intermediate.
2. They do not know the correct pronunciation of some English sounds.
3. Spelling and pronunciation are not well-matched in English.
4. There are twenty-six letters in English that have forty-four sounds.

There are some solutions that can help teachers enable their pupils to master words and their spelling for spelling:

1. Teachers should explain the correct rules of spelling.
2. They should help pupils to read the word correctly.
3. Weekly dictation is beneficial in gaining ability of the correct spelling.

Terrible Handwriting:

One of the most annoying problems for teachers is terrible handwriting for students. As a caring what do you think the best way to make your students' handwriting legible readable.

The teacher is a model fully imitated by the learners. Some teachers have unsuitable handwriting.

The teacher should remind his pupils with this way:

1. Begin sentence with capital
2. End it with full stop.
3. Leaving two-letters space between sentences.

Some students are unable to form the correct shape of some letters and they find it difficult to distinguish in handwriting between some letters such as:

[w, m], [n, u] and so on.

Intensive work should be done on teaching the correct form of each letter. The teacher should display the best handwriting in front of the students. It will be very useful if teachers make competitions in handwriting in order to encourage those pupils who write beautifully.

Using the Pencil:

Some students do not know how to use the pencil (pen) correctly. Students should be trained on the correct move of the hand. There are some guides to solve this problem:

1. Students should write on four-line notebook.
2. An ink pen shouldn't be used in the beginning levels.

3. Intensive work should be done on teaching the correct form of each letter.
4. The teacher should display the best handwriting in front of students.

It will be very useful if teachers make competitions in handwriting in order to encourage those pupils who write beautifully.

The Research Method:

The research conductor follows to achieve the work of the study is descriptive and analytical method.

Sample of the Research:

The sample of the research is (20) teachers of English Language in (Basic) schools in EL- Obied, the capital city of North Kordofan State, during the school year 2016 – 2017 responded to the questionnaire’s questions.

Data Collection Instrument:

The research conductor designs questionnaire to collect the data to achieve the work of the research, the questionnaire consists of (10) items which can be described as the following:

Item (1) it is about drawing shapes look like an English letter it is useful practice way for the beginners.

Item (2) it is about the prewriting activities which it can develop pupils' handwriting.

Item (3) is about joining letters at very early stage in teaching letters.

Item (4) is about using the four lines handwriting book and how is useful in practicing writing English letters correctly.

Item (5) is about the model of handwriting of the teacher will be good for pupils.

Item (6) is about preparing the tools that are used in writing like pencils and rubbers.

Item (7) is about moving of the hands in air is way of teaching English alphabets.

Item (8) is about grouping letters which can form words should be taught at first.

Item (9) is about copying from the board and copying from the books.

Item (10) is about starting with short sentences with focusing on punctuation.

Reliability:

When the final copy of the questionnaire has been reached, fifty copies were distributed to the teachers of El Obied town, but just twenty copies were received. From twenty

copies from which five copies represent group X and the other five represent group Y; those have been used for testing reliability. They have been analysed statistically using the computer programme SPSS. A correlation between the two groups (X&Y) of the analysed questionnaire is made. Pearson’s correlation r between the groups of ten copies is used to measure. Koul (1993: 239)

Results are shown in the following table (3.2).

Pearson r devised a very common way of measuring correlation. It is used when both variables are at least at interval level and data is parametric.

$$r = \frac{\sum((X_i - \bar{X})(Y - \bar{Y}))}{((n - 1) * s_x * s_y)}$$

Where x and y are the variables, x_i is a single value of x, xbar is the mean of all x's, n is the number of variables, and s_x is the standard deviation of all x's.

Table 3.1 Reliability

	X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
1	08	08	64	64	64
2	08	09	72	64	81
3	06	01	06	36	01
4	07	03	21	49	09
5	01	05	05	01	25
Total	30	26	168	214	180

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

$$R = \frac{5 \times 168 - 168}{\sqrt{(5 \times 214 - 214)(5 \times 180 - 180)}}$$

$$840 - 168 = 672$$

$$(1070 - 214)(900 - 180)$$

$$(856)(720)$$

$$(29.25)(26.8)$$

$$783.9$$

$$\frac{672}{783.9} = .85$$

$$\frac{672}{783.9} = .85$$

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data analysis is a major part of the study under investigation. The analysis of the statistical results derived from the questionnaire analysis depends upon the percentages of the respondents’ views about the items included in the questionnaire. Each statement has three options; agree, not sure, disagree and disagree. Each statement contains certain concepts shown in a table.

The analysis of each statement is considered according to the frequency and the percentage.

The following tables stand for the questionnaire items:

Data Analysis

Table (4.1) Drawing shapes similar to English alphabet be useful and practical way for beginners

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	15	75.00%
Not sure	04	20.00%
Disagree	01	05.20%
Total	20	100.00%

Table (4.1) it is show that fast majority are agree about the notion "drawing shapes similar to English alphabet be useful and practical way for beginners" those who not sure responds minority and those who are disagree are at the level of least minority.

So that "it is necessary to draw shapes are similar to English alphabet"

Table (4.2) Prewriting activities can be developed pupils handwriting

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	15	75.00%
Not sure	04	20.00%
Disagree	01	05.20%
Total	20	100.00%

Table (4.2) it is show that fast majority are agree about the item "Prewriting activities can be developed pupils handwriting"those who not sure responds minority and those who are disagree are at the level of least minority.

So that "it is necessary prewriting activities develop handwriting of beginners"

Table (4.3) Joining letters should be done at the very stages of writing English letters

Responses Scale	Frequency	Respondents Percentage
Agree	15	75.00%
Not sure	03	15.00%
Disagree	02	10.20%
Total	20	100.00%

Table (4.3) it is show that fast majority are agree about the notion "Joining letters should be done at the very stages of

writing English letters"those who not sure responds least minority and disagree.

*Joining letters should be done at the first stage of writing English.

Table (4.4) A four lines handwriting book is necessary for how pupils writing English alphabetical letters correctly

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	17	85.00%
Disagree	03	15.00%
Total	20	100.00%

From table above (4.4) it is show that the fast majority agree with the item"A four lines handwriting book is necessary for how pupils writing English alphabetical letters correctly". Least minority disagree with the notion above.

*It is necessary to use four- lines when writing English alphabets.

Chart (4.4) below will illustrate this notion.

Table (4.5) A good handwriting model should be done practically on a board by teacher

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	13	65.00%
Not sure	06	30.00%
Disagree	01	05.00%
Total	20	100.00%

From table above (4.5) it is show that the majority "agree" with the item "A good handwriting model should be done practically on a board by teacher"while minority of the respondents are disagreed with the notion.

*Good handwriting model must be on the board.

Table (4.6) A sharpened pencil and rubber are useful tools for writing English alphabet

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	09	45.00%
Not sure	07	35.00%
Disagree	04	20.00%
Total	20	100.00%

From the table above (4.6) shows that about half agree with the notion "A sharpened pencil and rubber are useful tools for writing English alphabet" while minority of the respondents not sure with the item. Least minority of them are "disagree" with it.

*Using sharp pencil is useful tool for writing English.

Table (4.7) Hand movement in the air is a good way for practice moving the hands and fingers

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	12	60.00%
Not sure	03	15.00%
Disagree	05	25.00%
Total	20	100.00%

Table (4.7) shows that majority of the respondents agree with the notion "Hand movement in the air is a good way for practice moving the hands and fingers" while minority of them disagree with it. Least minority not sure about the using hand movement in the air is a good practice in writing.

*Hand movement in the air is a good way for practice in writing.

Table (4.8) Group of letters that can form word familiar to the pupils should be taught to be written immediately

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	08	40.00%
Not sure	08	40.00%
Disagree	04	20.00%
Total	20	100.00%

The table above (4.8) illustrates the notion "Group of letters that can form word familiar to the pupils should be taught to be written immediately" minority of respondents share; agree, not sure and disagree with the item.

*Group of letters are not taught at the beginning of writing skill.

Table (4.9) Copy from the board in practice stage is better than copying from the book

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	15	75.00%
Not sure	02	10.00%
Disagree	03	15.00%
Total	20	100.00%

From the table (4.9) above shows that the item of "Copy from the board in practice stage is better than copying from the book" fast majority of the respondents are agree with the notion, while least minority of them are both not sure and disagree with the notion.

*Copying from the board is better than copying from the book.

Table (4.10) In the production stage short sentence and using punctuation marks is helpful way of developing writing

Responses		Respondents
Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	13	65.00%
Not sure	05	25.00%
Disagree	02	10.00%
Total	20	100.00%

The table (4.10) shows that the notion "In the production stage short sentence and using punctuation marks is helpful way of developing writing". Majority of the respondents are "agreed" with the notion, while minority of them are not sure with item. Least minority of them are "disagree" about notion.

*Using short sentences and using punctuation marks in the production stage is helpful way of developing writing.

Results:

After the data has been collected and by using SPSS, and interpretation them the researcher reached to the following results:

1. Copying from the board is better than copying from the book. (75.00%)
2. It is necessary to draw shapes are like English alphabet (75.00%)

3. It is necessary prewriting activities develop handwriting of beginners(75.00%).
4. Good handwriting model does be on the board (65.00%)
5. Using sharp pencil is useful tool for writing English (45.00%)
6. Group of letters are not taught at the beginning of writing skill (40.00%)
7. Good handwriting model must be on the board (65.00%)
8. It is necessary to use four- lines when writing English alphabets.

Recommendations:

The researcher recommends that:

1. Further studies should be on suitable ways of improving good handwriting.
2. Teachers must focus on good writing because the pupils will imitate their teachers.
3. Schools should prepare the suitable tools; boards and writing materials

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