

An Investigation into Teachers' Related Challenges in Learning Writing Skills in EFL Classroom context at the Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School

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Abstract— The main aim of this study was an exploration into Students' Related Challenges in Learning Writing Skills in EFL Classroom context at the Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory school. Descriptive survey research design was employed using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The data were collected through semi-structured interview, questionnaires, and classroom observation. Six grade eleven EFL teachers of the School were selected as a participant of the study using convenience sampling technique. Among 709 students, 253 students were selected through simple random sampling technique using Slovine's sample size determination formula : (I.e. $n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$). The Interview data were tape recorded and transcribed into textual form and the questionnaire data were analyzed via frequency, percentage and mean value form. The study divulged that the teacher related challenges in teaching writing skills are: lack of preparation, lack of commitment, lack of self-efficacy, lack of continuous corrective feedback, lack of motivation to practice writing skills, teaching methodology, lack of authentic materials use, writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation, shortage of language use accuracy when teaching writing. Based on the findings, the recommendations were made: the concerned bodies should fulfill the school setting related challenges that can affect teaching and learning writing skills and the student and teacher related factors should mitigate through well-built mobilization.

Key Words: Writing Skills, Challenges, EFL Classroom and EFL Teachers

1 INTRODUCTION

WRITING Writing is a significant skill in language production. Its significance increases when it comes to writing in English language that is extensively used for global mediation of knowledge [1], [2]. According to [3] performance in language development is subjected to improvement in writing skills. A text of an effective ESL writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured, interesting and properly organized with a wide range of vocabulary and mastery of conventions in mechanics [4], [5]. However, writing is often considered merely a part of teaching and learning grammar and syntax, which resultantly underestimates the nature and importance of writing, and affects its growth.

Therefore, the development of this skill draws considerable attention for its learning and teaching from the very early phase of language education. Many writers argue that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity, which requires the learner to have control over various factors. These factors vary from academic background and personal interest of the writer to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena [6]. In Pakistan; the writing skills of the students are alarmingly weak and substandard. According to [6], students face variety of problems like sentence level writing and others when learning and teaching issues in English language, particularly in writing.

In teaching or learning writing skills generally, arise from incompetence in syntax, coherence, idea expansion, content selection, topic sentence, rhetorical conv

entions, mechanics, organization, lack of vocabulary, inappropriate use of vocabulary. However, further research is required to explore and examine the factors that adversely affect-writing skills of the students, because issues in writing can be more efficiently addressed if the factors that generate them are identified [3]. This study intends to investigate problem in teachers and students' writings when they will be teaching and learning writing skills.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students face various writing problems at different stages of their learning. Generally, these problems can be classified into linguistic, psychological, cognitive and pedagogical categories [7]. They struggle with the structural components of English; because an inappropriate structure complicates the content and comprehension of the text, which a reader deciphers through involvement of a mental process [8], [9]. Similarly, an incoherent text fails to communicate ideas which causes lack of confidence in learners even if they have mastered syntactic, lexical and grammatical command over text composition [10]. Students' lack of confidence is also caused by a teaching strategy which does not conform to students' learning styles and cultural backgrounds [11]. It is argued that poor writing skills originate from two factors: the teacher and the learner. Teachers lack appropriate pedagogic approach to teach writing, including providing prompt and effective feedback to students, and most crucially, teachers' lack of ability to motivate students. On the other hand, students face numerous challenges: effects of L1 transfer lack

of reading, motivation, and practice. In Pakistan, student writers encounter psychological, cognitive, social and linguistic problems while converting ideas into text [7], [12].

In the researcher, long years' experience in teaching English at the high school level, majority of students fail to write basic language. For example, most students at high school level fail to express themselves clearly in writing English skill. These factors initiated to conduct research on exploring teacher's related challenges in teaching and learning writing skill at Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The choice of research design depends on the objectives of research in order to be able to answer the research questions. Therefore, to conduct this study, the researcher employed descriptive survey research design.

3.2 Research Setting

The research was conducted at Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School. The school is located in South, Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State, Wolaita Zone, Hobicha Woreda Administration.

3.3 Participants of the Study

To achieve the objective of the study, data were collected from two sources, primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data were teachers and students of the school and the secondary sources of data has been written documents particularly textbooks and authentic materials if any.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researcher was used all six EFL teachers without any sampling technique. This is because of their limited number, which is manageable for this study. On the other hand, among 709 students, the researcher selected the sample using Slovene's sample size determination formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots 1$$

Where: n= is sample size

N= total population

(e) =0.05 or allowance of random error.

$$709 \times 0.0025 = 1.8 + 1 = 2.8 = 709 / 2.8 = 253$$

Therefore, 253 students were selected for filling in the questionnaire. For interview, the entire teachers who teach Eng-

lish were interviewed. Both total teachers and their students were observed during teaching and learning process of English writing classroom.

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

The data for this study was gathered through, questionnaire, classroom observation and semi-structured interview. Besides, the tools were pilot tested in order to check the clarity of questions. It is also intended to check the appropriateness and relevance of the instruments to achieve the purposes of this research. Based on the results of the pilot study, necessary changes and modifications were made on the tools of data collection and finally, the tools were used to collect data for the main study.

3.6 Pilot Study

Before gathering data for main study, the researcher employed pilot test in non-sampled Secondary and Preparatory School (Guligula Secondary and Preparatory School). The questionnaire was disseminated for student's grade eleven students who learn in Otona Secondary and Preparatory School. Then ten questions were modified based upon pilot study. Finally, the modified questions were used for data analysis.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

The data gathered through interview, questionnaire and classroom observation were analyzed differently using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. For example, data obtained from interview transcribed and transformed into textual data. The transcribed data read repeatedly to have a full understanding of the themes, which fit the objectives of the study. Then, the interview data were substantiated by questionnaire and classroom observation. Regarding the data was collected via questionnaire; first, the questionnaires were checked for consistency and complete. The complete and consistent questionnaires were coded and filled in to SPSS. Then, different statistical analysis such as frequency and percentage were applied into SPSS data. The result of statistical analysis presented in the table form. Finally, it was used to validate and substantiate the interview data.

4. Analysis, Interpretations and Discussions of Results

To achieve the objective of the study, data were gathered from teachers and students of Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory school via questionnaire, interview and

classroom observation. The data assembled through close-ended items of the questionnaire, interview and classroom observation was analyzed quantitatively. The data gathered through interview and open ended questionnaire was analyzed qualitatively or verbatim and data gathered via close ended interview and questionnaire were analyzed using quantitative method of data analysis.

4.1 Students Questionnaire Response on Teachers related challenges in teaching writing skills

Table 1. Teachers related challenges in teaching writing skills

Items	Responses					
	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Total
	F	F	F	F	F	F
I believe that teachers' preparation can affect teaching writing skills.		40	50	70	93	253
I believe that teacher commitments to teach writing skills can affect writing lessons.		20	30	33	170	253
Lack of self-efficacy of EFL teachers can affect writing skills.		55	-	105	90	253
Continuous corrective feedback can affect writing skills.		55	58	25	115	253
Motivation can affect practice of writing activities when learning writing lessons.		50	-	70	133	253
Teaching methodology can affect writing skills.	35	58	-	64	96	253
Teacher uses authentic materials when teaching writing skills.	148	72	-	50		253

As depicted in table 1 item 1, 25% of EFL students of the Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School agreed that teachers' preparation can affect teaching writing skills. Besides, 36.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers' preparation can affect teaching writing skills. This implies that teachers' good preparation has positive impact in implementing writing skills effectively while as lack of good preparation has negative impact in implementing writing skills into classroom context. Therefore, one can deduce that teachers' preparation can affect teaching writing skills.

As shown table 1 item2, 67.2 % of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers commitments to teach writing skills can affect writing lessons while they were learning writing skills. This indicates that teachers commitment to implement writing skills effectively depends upon teachers commitment. Therefore, one can presume that teachers commitment to teach writing skills can affect teaching writing skills.

As depicted table 1 item 3, 41.5% of the Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School students agreed that lack of

self-efficacy of EFL teachers can affect writing skills when EFL students learning writing skills. Besides, 35.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of self-efficacy of EFL teachers can affect writing skills while learning writing skills classroom context. This indicates that EFL teacher's self-efficacy can affect teaching writing skills. Consequently, teacher's self-efficacy can have either positive or negative impact in teaching writing skills.

As shown table 1 item 4, 45.4 % of the EFL students of the school strongly agreed that continuous corrective feedback can affect writing skills. Besides, 10% of the respondents agreed that continuous corrective feedback can affects writing skills. This implies that lack of continuous corrective feedback can affect teaching writing skills. Therefore, one can deduce that continuous corrective feedback has positive impact if it is implemented effectively when teaching writing skills classroom context.

As depicted table 1 item5, 28% of the Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory school students agreed that motivation can affect practice of writing activities when learning writing lessons. Besides, 52.7% of the EFL students of the school strongly agreed that motivation can affect practice of writing activities when learning writing lessons. This indicates that teacher's motivation can affect teaching writing skills into classroom context. Hence, one can infer that lack of motivation can affect teaching writing skills.

As depicted table 1 item6, 25.3% of the EFL students of the school agreed that teaching methodology can affect writing skills. Besides, 37.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that teaching methodology can affect teaching writing skills. This implies that teaching methodology can have both positive and negative impact when teaching writing lessons. Therefore, teaching methodology can affect teaching writing skills.

As shown table 1 item 7, 58.5 % of Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School disagreed that teachers uses authentic materials when teaching writing skills. Besides, 27% of the respondents strongly disagreed that EFL teachers of the school use authentic materials while teaching writing skills. This implies that most of the EFL teachers of the school didn't use authentic materials when teaching writing skills. Therefore, one can presume that authentic materials can affect teaching writing skills.

In item 8, EFL students of the school asked to answer justify any teachers' related challenges in writing classroom in their own school setting. In reply to this 78% of the EFL

students of the school replied that majority of EFL teachers of the school did not give due attention for writing lessons, they were rushing to cover annual portion rather, lack of practice, lack of continuous corrective feedback and lack of using authentic materials. Therefore, one can deduce that lack of due attention, shortage of time, lack of practice, lack of continuous corrective feedback and lack of using authentic materials are forwarded teachers related challenges that affect teaching writing school in their school setting.

4.2 Teachers Interview Response on Teachers related challenges in teaching writing skills

EFL teachers of Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School asked to answer whether or not they believe that the teachers' preparation can affect students writing skills. In reply to this, T1 and T6 replied that teacher's preparation can affect not only a single one skill but it can affect completely teaching-learning process. Besides, T2 and T5 reported that teacher's preparation has positive impact if teachers are prepared well in their writing lessons unless it has negative impact if teachers are not prepared well. Moreover, T3 and T4 replied that teaching writing skills needs preparation of teachers before teaching students writing. Henceforth, one can deduce that teacher's preparation can affect teaching writing skills.

EFL teachers of school interviewed to answer does self-efficacy of teachers can affect writing skills. In response to this, almost all interviewed teachers replied that self-efficacy of EFL teachers can affect teaching writing skills. This implies that self-efficacy is a tool to teach writing skills effectively. Therefore, lack of self-efficacy can affect teaching writing skills.

Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School asked to answer whether or not do they provide feedback after they have finished writing different types of paragraphs through process approach. In reply to this, T1, T2 and T5 replied that sometimes they provide feedback but shortage of time is challenging problem. Besides, T3, T4 and T6 reported that they provide feedback after they have finished writing different types of paragraph through process approach. Therefore, one can deduce that EFL teachers of school sometimes provide feedback after they have finished writing different types of paragraph through process approach. Thus, feedback can affect teaching writing skills either positively or negatively.

EFL teachers of Hobicha Bada Secondary and Preparatory School asked to answer do you motivate your students

while practicing writing activities. In response to this, almost all interviewed teachers reported that they were motivating their students when teaching writing activities. Therefore, motivation can affects teaching writing skills.

EFL teachers of school asked to answer justify, any teacher's related challenges in teaching writing skills while teaching writing lessons in your school. In response to this, all EFL teachers of school forwarded the following points which are challenges related with teachers in teaching writing skills: lack of attention, shortage of time, lack of preparation, lack of using authentic materials and lack of commitment. Therefore, attention or focusing on writing skills, time, preparation, authentic materials and commitment can affects teaching writing skills.

4.3 The Classroom Observation Results on Teacher related challenges in teaching writing skills

Twelve EFL writing classroom was observed to see whether EFL teachers use content extent when teaching writing skills including relevance and subject knowledge. In reply to this, four EFL writing lessons were observed that the EFL teachers of the school use content extent when teaching writing skills including relevance and subject knowledge. On the other hand, eight EFL writing lessons were not observed that the EFL teachers use content extent when teaching writing skills including relevance and subject knowledge. This implies that most of EFL teachers of school rushing to cover content and they did not gave due attention for content extent when teaching writing skills. Therefore, majority of EFL teachers of the school did not use content extent when teaching writing skills (relevance and subject matter knowledge).

Twelve EFL writing lessons were observed to see whether or not teachers focus on coherence, fluency, clarity and logical sequences while teaching writing skills. In reply to this, among twelve EFL writing lessons six EFL writing lessons were observed that focusing on coherence, fluency, clarity and logical sequences in paragraph writing. Besides, six EFL writing lessons were observed that the EFL teachers focus on coherence, clarity and logical sequences in sentence level writing skills. Therefore, one can deduce that most EFL teachers of the school focus on coherence, clarity and logical sequences while teaching writing skills.

EFL writing lessons were observed to see whether or not does the teacher use vocabulary richness, appropriate register and word form mastery. In response to this, EFL writing lessons were observed that EFL teachers of the school

use vocabulary richness, appropriate register and word form mastery when teaching writing skills. Therefore, one can deduce that EFL teachers of the school use vocabulary richness, appropriate register and word form mastery.

Twelve EFL writing lessons were observed to see whether or not does the teacher provide language use accuracy when teaching writing (a use of articles, word order, countable versus uncountable nouns, Prepositions, sentence constructions). In reply to this, almost all EFL teachers of the school provide language use accuracy when teaching writing (a use of articles, word order, countable versus uncountable nouns, prepositions and sentence constructions). This implies that majority of EFL teachers of the school provide language use accuracy when teaching writing skills.

Twelve EFL writing lessons were observed to see whether or not does the teacher teach writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization, punctuation. In reply to this, four EFL teachers of the school observed for three times and all twelve writing classes were observed that the EFL teachers teach writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation in writing lessons. However, most students of the school unable to write error free paragraphs when EFL teachers teaching writing skills. Therefore, writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation can affect teaching writing skills.

Twelve EFL writing lessons were observed to see whether does the teacher provide corrective feedback after teaching writing skills. In reply to this, most EFL writing lessons were not observed that EFL teachers provide corrective feedback after writing lessons this is because of shortage of time and large class size. Therefore, one can deduce that shortage of time and large class size can affect corrective feedback when teaching writing skills.

Finally, data were analyzed via questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation results: showed that the teacher related challenges in teaching writing skills are stated as follows: lack of teachers preparation in writing lessons, lack of teachers commitment to teach writing skills, lack of self-efficacy, lack of continuous corrective feedback, lack of motivation to practice writing skills, teaching methodology, lack of authentic materials use, writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation, shortage of language use accuracy when teaching writing (a use of articles, word order, countable versus uncountable

nouns, Prepositions, sentence constructions) and lack of acculturating writing habits.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data gathered through the above instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The interview data was analyzed using qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data. The questionnaire data were analyzed using frequencies, percentage and qualitative description of the responses.

Based on the analyses of the collected data, the following summary, conclusions, and recommendations were made. Hence, this chapter intended to enlist the summary of the major findings, conclusion and recommendation.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study divulged that the teacher related challenges in teaching writing skills are: lack of preparation, lack of commitment, lack of self-efficacy, lack of continuous corrective feedback, lack of motivation to practice writing skills, teaching methodology, lack of authentic materials use, writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation, shortage of language use accuracy when teaching writing.

5.2 Conclusions

First, the student's questionnaire and teacher's interviews results showed that the student related factors that affect learning writing skills are stated as follows:

Data were analyzed via questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation results showed that the teacher related challenges in teaching writing skills are: lack of preparation, lack of commitment, lack of self-efficacy, lack of continuous corrective feedback, lack of motivation, teaching methodology, lack of authentic materials use, writing mechanics paragraphing, spelling, capitalization and punctuation, shortage of language use accuracy and lack of acculturating writing habits.

5.3 Recommendations

The success or failure of teaching writing skills based upon the result of poor or good language learning strategies so the concerned bodies including Hobicha Bada Woreda education office, the school, the Zone education department, students, teachers, school principals, NGOs and other stakeholders should give due attention for EFL learning

strategies of writing skills to promote writing abilities of the EFL students.

As revealed in the findings, the respondents listed different teacher, student and school facility related challenges in teaching writing skills. Hence, the concerned bodies should fulfill the facility related challenges that can affect language learning strategies and academic achievements, and the student and teacher related factors should mitigate through well-built mobilization.

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