

Investigating Secondary Students Writing A Correct Academic Essay

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the measuring students' abilities in using grammatical rules and mechanics in writing essay . The research used the descriptive and analytical approach as study method and the questionnaire as data collection tool. The study showed that students made different types of grammatical errors that mostly were due to intra lingual ones Students' written essays of the present research showed neither planning nor unity. Students are unable to evaluate, revise and make correction to their written texts in order to produce coherent text. The study recommended that Mastering grammar helps greatly in producing comprehensible essays.

Key-word: Academic essay, grammatical rules

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى اكتشاف قدرات الطلاب علي قياس استخدام القواعد النحوية والإملائية في كتابة المقال . استخدم البحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي والاستبانة كأداة لجمع البيانات. أوضحت الدراسة أن الطلاب ارتكبوا أنواعا مختلفة من الأخطاء اللغوية بسبب تداخل اللغات وأيضاً أظهرت الدراسة أن طلاب مرحلة الثانوي لا يستطيعوا كتابة موضوع موحد ومتناسك . أوصت الدراسة بأن إتقان القواعد النحوية يساعد بشكل كبير في إنتاج مقالات مفهومة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مقال أكاديمي , القواعد النحوية

Introduction

1.1 Background

This study is conducted to assess the students' performance in written text, especially essay writing at secondary schools. Essay writing is a skill which can be consciously learnt, developed and taught to others. If students master how to use grammar, punctuation and capitalization correctly, their essay writing will get better. Texts are often seen as a series of grammatical structures, in which sentences with various meaning can be built⁽¹⁾. The objectives of the study are to find out to what extent students use grammatical rules and mechanics in writing essay, whether students can express their thoughts and ideas logically and systematically. Develop and maintain rich source of cognitive process and strategies for essay writing. The study tries to answer whether students can use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within and between sentences while writing, why students can't construct unified and meaningful sentences in order to write good essay, whether students can produce essays with correct grammar, meaningful punctuations and accurate spelling and to what extent they can write a unified, coherent and cohesive essay. Students' fear and loss of confidence are perennial topics in composition writing. This is because writing is connected with conceptions of self, pressure to modify the method the students construct challenges the self engendered by the discourse marked for correction⁽²⁾.

This presents the idea that specific language forms have certain communicative functions, which are the mean for fulfilling the goals of writing. Furthermore, they help learners develop effective paragraphs through the creation of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions, and develop different kinds of paragraphs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study intends to investigate why EFL students at secondary school are unable to write a good academic written essay, and identified many reasons why school students fail to write good cohesive and coherent essays.

Students had difficulty in using grammar(3). Students faced many difficulties in writing composition; they encountered difficulties with surface level errors such as spelling, punctuation and paragraphing.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

- a. The purpose of this study is to achieve the following objectives:
Investigating how far students maintain rich source of cognitive processes and strategies in essay writing.
- b. Investigating how can students express their thoughts and ideas logically and systematically or not.
- c. Measuring students' abilities in using grammatical rules and mechanics in writing essay.

1.4 Questions of the Research

- a. To what extent are students capable of using grammatical rules and mechanics in writing essays?
- b. How far can students express their thoughts and ideas logically and systematically?
- c. Why do students fail to maintain rich source of cognitive processes and strategies for constructing an essay?

1.5 The Research Hypotheses

The researcher hypothesizes that:

- a. EFL students are capable of using correct grammatical rules and mechanics in essay writing.
- b. EFL students can express their thoughts and ideas logically and systematically.
- c. EFL students are unable to maintain cognitive processes and strategies in essay writing.

1.6 The Significance of the Research

English secondary school students are supposed to be well-equipped with knowledge and writing skills. Mastering learning skills; especially writing acts as a cornerstone for their success in their school studies. Conversely, school students are incapable of producing any cognitive writing. Not only this, but also they cannot express their thoughts and feelings in comprehensive meaningful sentences. Students cannot convey their message via writing. For what has been mentioned above, this research is conducted to assess students' performance in written text, specifically, essay writing. Knowing the students' performance, will specify what type of methods and techniques of teaching will be appropriate for helping students write more creatively.(4) The clearest factor that distinguishes many L2 writers is the difficulty they face in adequately expressing themselves in English. In addition, supporting students in an ongoing development of the abilities needed to monitor and manage their own writing.

1.7 Research Scope

In the current research ,limited to the Dongola secondary school students' third year. 2019

1.8 Research Methodology

The research used the descriptive and analytical methods. A questionnaire is designed for English language teachers of some Sudanese secondary schools.

Review of the Related Literature

2.0 This part reviews relevant literature of the concepts of the study problem. Moreover it reviews some related previous studies.

2.1 Cohesion Devices

A text is a semantic unit that has various parts which are joined together by direct cohesive ties. The main concept of cohesion is the presence of the semantic tie between an item at

one point in a text and an item in another point. This semantic tie makes one of the items depends on the other for its interpretation. The absence of semantic ties between elements in a text makes the whole text look irrelevant and hard to be understood.

Cohesion tie is defined as a semantic relationship between an element in a text and some other element that is important to interpretation of it. Cohesion in this way recognizes a text as a text. A cohesive tie is a semantic link between elements in a text at some other one that is important to the interpretation of it. It relies upon lexical and grammatical relationships that make sentence sequences to be grasped as concerned discourse rather than as isolated sentences.⁽⁵⁾ As explained, cohesion is expressed through grammatical system and through the lexical one⁽⁶⁾. These are reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction types. The lexical system includes repetition, synonymy, collocation and other semantic relationships.⁽⁷⁾ mentioned that students have to organize their paragraphs in accurate patterns that agree with the purpose of the writing as well as the style of the essay. Learners can follow different modes of writing, such as cause and effect, problem-solution, comparison, fact and reasons, contrast a general statement supported by specific reasons or details. There are five main classes of cohesive ties in English: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical reiteration and collocation. Substitution and ellipsis are mostly used in conversation. The other three are more frequent cohesive ties in written English. The categories of references and conjunctions have ties that are both grammatical and lexical. Lexical reiteration and collocation is restricted to ties which presumably lexical. The effect of both substitution and ellipsis is to extend the textual or semantic domain of one sentence to the subsequent one. The word "one" and "do" illustrate substitution and ellipsis respectively. Discourse is more than a random set of utterances: it intro-

duces connectedness. The core purpose of the linguist is to describe this connectedness.⁽⁸⁾ Text connectedness is described in terms of reference, substitution, ellipses, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. These hints make a text a text. Cohesion happens when the explication of some elements in the written text is dependent on that of other.

2.3 The Paragraph

A paragraph is a group of connected sentences that tackle one main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly⁽⁹⁾. argued that paragraphs constitute the building blocks for an essay. Paragraphs should introduce one main idea and provide supporting sentences that describe the main idea⁽¹⁰⁾. Any paragraph should have a beginning, middle, and if is a long paragraph, a summary sentence at the end. Argued that in longer pieces of writing, the main paragraph is the most important one in the whole written text because it carries the specific subject sentence. This is usually described by one or more supporting or explanatory sentences that explain terms or ideas in the subject sentence, and that are essential to the discussion⁽¹¹⁾. They also help the writer tune in which the thoughts are being expressed so that hidden assumptions and meaning, if any are made clear. A long with subject sentence and explanatory sentences, the main paragraph sometimes bears its own opener. This is especially true in a short composition of one or two pages, in which a single first paragraph performs the whole job.⁽¹²⁾ defined paragraphs as the main body of texts. Well-arranged paragraphs not only assist readers to comprehend the topic, but they also help them structure their thoughts effectively. One of the best ways to write good paragraphs is that a paragraph should have unity; it concentrates on single idea or theme. Secondly, a good paragraph has coherence; one sentence leads to the next in

the some kind of logical sequence. Lastly, a good paragraph has suitable content: It has adequate selection and number of details to reinforce the main idea of the paragraph⁽¹²⁾. Readers expect to find these features in paragraphs. There are two main tools which are used to give the paragraphs the properties just described, a good topic statement and an appropriate pattern of organization⁽¹³⁾.

2.4 Transitional Words and Sentences

Transitions are instinctively used in writing. Words and phrases help readers follow the train of thought. Some writers in a rush to get through what they have to say omit essential links between thoughts. Often just a word, phrase, or sentence of transition put in the right place will make a seemingly untied passage into a coherent one⁽¹⁴⁾. Time makers are transitions that make clear when one thing happens in relation to another. The English language has various words and phrases that make clear connections between or within sentences.

2.5 Unity

Maintaining unity in a paragraph necessitates that every sentence should be closely related to the topic. A strong paragraph will exclude sentences that do not relate or help develop the paragraph's main idea⁽¹⁵⁾. Thus, an essay will only have paragraphs that are crucial to developing the thesis with supporting sentences. Unity is an essential element of a good paragraph. It shows that a paragraph discusses one and only one main idea from beginning to end. It also links each supporting sentence directly with the main idea (16). Keeping unity in a paragraph makes every sentence in a paragraph or every paragraph in a written essay closely related to the topic. A well-tied paragraph leaves out sentences that are irrelevant to the paragraph's main idea. So, a unified written essay will only contain paragraphs that are important to the developing the thesis (17).

2.6 Modes of Writing

Most written texts emerge under one of four categories: description, narration, persuasion and exposition. A description is used when the writer wants to tell how things look like. A narration tells us what happened in an accident for instance, whereas in persuasion, the writer tries to convince or persuade a reader to think or act in a specific manner (18). In expository writing, the writer explains and clarifies factual information clearly .

2.9 Previous Studies

1. Hourai, 2008, UAE, (An analysis of the Common Grammatical Errors in the English Writing made by 3rd secondary male students in the Eastern coast of the UAE). The study aimed at exploring the common types of grammatical errors. (105) students and (20) teachers were chosen as the subject of the study. Two separate questionnaires and interview with 50 supervisors were conducted for data collection. The data revealed that students made different types of grammatical errors that mostly were due to interlingual ones.
2. Abdulkareem, 2013, Malaysia, (An Investigation Study of Academic Writing Problems faced by Arab Postgraduate Students at University of Technology). The purpose of the study was to enquire the academic writing problems faced by Arab speaking postgraduate students. A questionnaire was distributed to (80) students to state their opinions on the academic writing problems, and (5) students were given a written ask. The findings of the study showed that students were incapable of using their own word to construct correct sentences, unable to organize the functions of writing. Many students committed many mistakes related to sentence structure. The study conducted by Hamza, 2009, (Comparing the Achievement of Iraqi EFL Undergraduates in Writing Guided and Free Compositions).

The study tried to compare the achievement of Iraqi undergraduate students in writing both guided and free compositions. The study was limited to 80 male and female Iraqi 4th class students in English Department. For data collection, guided and free written test compositions were chosen as the tools of the study. The results indicated that students could not produce unified and coherent writings by their own. In addition, students failed to express their own ideas correctly in a free composition test. 3-Alkhairy, 2013 (Saudi English-Major Undergraduates' Academic Writing Problems). The study attempted to investigate Saudi English major undergraduates' types of academic writing problems. For data collection, senior faculty members were interviewed and a questionnaire was administered to (75) English-major students. The study concluded that Saudi English-major undergraduates were poor in writing skills and made lots of errors in their written task. The study of Rahimi, 2011 (Discourse Markers in Argumentative and Expository Writing of Iranian EFL Learners). The study aimed at investigating the frequency and types of discourse markers used in argumentative and expository writings of Iranian EFL Learners and their influence on the participants' writing quality. For data collection, a written text was conducted as a tool of the study. The sample was (56) Iranian English-major students. The result showed that neither discourse markers were used appropriately nor properly in order to create a coherent text. The study also revealed that Iranian students did not use a wide range of discourse markers, they only used particular markers, as "and", "or", "but", and "also". 4-The study carried out by Hassan and Akhand, 2010 entitled (Approaches to Writing in EFL Context. Balancing Product and Process in Writing Class at tertiary Level). The study aimed at examining the effects of product and process approach

to writing on learners' performance. Data were collected from learners' products of a written text. (60) Students were selected to undertake a writing task. The findings indicated that students were unable to produce a good composition and they also failed to write effectively the structure of the composition in their scripts. The result also showed that the students faced problems in brainstorming and organizing their ideas cohesively, and providing the structure of a paragraph, especially topic sentences and supporting details. 5-The study conducted by Sawalmeh, 2013 (Error Analysis of Written English Essays: The case of students of the Preparatory Year Program in Saudi Arabia). The study intended to investigate the errors in a corpus of 32 essays written by Arabic-speaking Saudi learners of English. The instrument used for this study was participants' written essays in English language. The results indicated that students made errors in verb tense, word order and mechanics particularly, spelling and capitalization. The study done by Ahmed, 2010 (Students' Problems with Cohesion and Coherence in EFL Essay Writing in Egypt: Different Prospective). The study aimed at focusing on the organizational problems namely, cohesion and coherence those Egyptian student teachers of English language encounter in writing an English essay. The sample of the study composed of (165) student teachers of English language and (7) lecturers. The tools used for data collection were a questionnaire and an interview. The findings of the current study revealed that students faced difficulty in writing the introduction, the thesis statement, the topic sentence, transition ideas and sequence ideas.

The Methodology of the Research

This part introduces the research methodology followed in the study, the population and the sample of the research. Furthermore, it presents the research instruments and the reason for choosing them. It

also provides data collection, method of scoring, statistical means and data analysis.

3.0 Methodology

As it was previously stated, the objective of the present research is to investigate why English-major students at Dongola secondary school cannot construct well tied written essays. The research aims at knowing to what extent students are capable in using mechanics and grammatical rules in writing an essay. Furthermore, the research tries to answer why students can't express their thoughts and opinions systematically and logically, and how far they can maintain rich source of cognitive processes and strategies in essay writing. This chapter includes methodology, the population of the research, sampling, the research instrument, students' test and lecturers' questionnaire, method of scoring and statistical means. The following is description of the methodology used in conducting this research.

3.1 The Population of the Research

It consists of English third-year students at secondary students, during the academic year (2018-2019). It comprises the determination of the class is justified as the third-year students, because they are supposed to have the accumulative knowledge and skills in writing essays.

3.2 The Sample of the Research

The sample chosen for the research is (89) third-year. They constitute the total number of the These students have spent seven years studying English as a foreign language. Therefore, they are more appropriate for the present research.

3.3 The Research Instrument

The purpose of this research is to assess students' performance in essay writing. Students have to use their own language and thoughts freely. A quantitative method is designed, which is a procedure for collecting and analyzing data at some level of the research process within a single study.

Consequently, to achieve this goal, the researcher uses two tools to get the required data, writing proficiency test and a questionnaire. They are used for their suitability of gathering the required data for the research. Besides, they are the most appropriate tools for measuring the students' written performance.

3.3.1 Constructing the Students' Test

The main objective of the test is to measure the students' performance in a written discourse, namely an essay of about (250-300) words. The testees are given four topics from which they have to choose one topic in order to write on it. These eight topics are feasible and familiar to the students and are selected carefully so as to enable the students to write more easily and comfortably. Hence, the students would face no difficulty in understanding them, they are engaged under the limits of two hours so as to think, write, revise, and then rewrite an essay in its final production. The test is done during the 5th semester, when the students have to write an essay by using their own thoughts and vocabularies on one of the following topics:

- a. "Don't put off till tomorrow what can be done today".
- b. "Living in a village is better than living in a town".
- c. "Smart mobile phones among the youth have advantages and disadvantages".
- d. "Your childhood". The varieties of topics aimed at offering students chance to select the most appropriate one that suits their interest and ability.

3.3.2 Method of Scoring

In the present research, the total mark of the test is (60). Five marks for each item are developed to evaluate each area. The breakdown of the areas corrected is as follows:

- a. a- Using correct capitalization and punctuations.
- b. b- Misspelling.

- c. c- Appropriate use of grammatical rules.
- d. d. Maintenance of cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraph.
- e. e. Capability of stating only one idea in a paragraph.
- f. f. Organizing and developing information into progressive logical patterns of arrangements.
- g. Ability of stating thoughts into appropriate forms of expressions. Keeping logical relationships among sentences.
- h. Good textual planning of a written discourse.
- i. Evaluating linguistic efficacy and comprehensibility before final production.
- j. Ability to revise the correctness and precision of linguistic structures.
- k. 1. transcribing ideas into correctly tied forms of sentences.

3.3.3 The Questionnaire

The key purpose of the questionnaire is to gauge lecturers' responses to find answers to the main research questions. Each question comprises four items. Therefore, the questionnaire consists of 12 items, with five options from which respondents have to make a tick before each item. Items from 1-4 assess whether students are capable of using appropriate mechanics and correct grammatical rules in order to produce well written essays or not. Items from 5-8 measure students' competence in expressing their thoughts and ideas systematically and logically, and the last four ones from (9-12) enquire whether students are capable of maintaining rich source of cognitive processes and strategies in constituting good essays or not. (See appendix (B)).

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools

Five experts in ELT were asked to assess the accuracy of the questionnaire items and the test in order to validate their investigation.

Moreover to see whether the means of measurements are actually measuring what they are intended to measure or not. The consistency and the similarity of the results emerged from the individuals' scores remain stable. This ensures the reliability of the test.

3.5 Statistical Means

The research conductor uses SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for data analysis. Frequency counts and percentages are adopted to obtain results for the study. The research also uses Excel programme to convert the tables into graphs.

Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the present research is to assess the performance of third year English-major students Dongola secondary school. This research attempts to find out why secondary school are unable to produce good essays.

4.2 Teacher's Questionnaire

4.2.1 Students' Ability in Using Mechanics and Grammatical Rules.

The table below shows teachers' opinions on students' performance of the written essay.

| mean | Strongly disagree | disagree | undecided | agree | Strongly agree | item | —N0 |
|------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|---|-----|
| 4.27 | 40% | 46.7% | 13.3% | - | - | Students use correct capitalization and punctuations. | 1 |
| 6 | 7 | 2 | - | - | | | |
| 1.80 | - | 6.7% | - | 60% | 33.3% | Students frequently misspell words while writing. | 2 |

| mean | Strongly disagree | disagree | undecided | agree | Strongly agree | item | —N0 |
|------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|--|-----|
| - | 1 | - | 9 | 5 | | | |
| 3.87 | 13.3% | 66.7% | 13.3% | 6.7% | - | Students apply appropriate grammatical rules while writing their essays. | 3 |
| 2 | 10 | 2 | 1 | - | | | |
| 4.20 | 33.3% | 53.3% | 13.3% | - | - | Students maintain good cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraphs | 4 |
| 5 | 8 | 2 | - | - | | | |

Table (4.1) shows teachers' responses to students' ability in using mechanics and grammatical rules. Responding to the first item whether students can use correct capitalization and punctuations in their written essay, table (4.1) above shows that (13.3%) of the teachers did not decide on the matter, (46.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the idea that students can use correct capitalization and punctuations and (40%) of the teachers strongly disagreed with the claim that students can capitalize and punctuate their written text accurately.

4.2.2 Students' Abilities in Expressing Thoughts Systematically and Logically.

| mean | Strongly disagree | disagree | unde- ecided | agree | Strongly agree | item | N0 |
|------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|--|----|
| 3.27 | 20% | 6.7% | 33.3% | 33.3 % | 6.7% | Students are capable of stating only one idea clearly in each paragraph. | 5 |
| 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| 3.93 | 26.7% | 46.7% | 20% | 6.7% | - | organize and develop their information into progressive logical patterns of arrangements | 6 |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | - | | | |
| 4.13 | 20% | 73.3 | 6.7% | - | - | Students are able to state their thinking into pertinent forms and expressions. | 7 |
| 3 | 11 | 1 | - | - | | | |
| 3.60 | 20% | - | 13.3% | 13.3 % | 6.7% | Students can maintain logical relationships among ideas clearly. | 8 |
| 3 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | |

Table (4. 2) shows teachers' responses to students' abilities in expressing thoughts systematically and logically.

Responding to the fifth item, table (4.2) indicates that (6.7%) of the teachers strongly agreed that students can state only one main idea in each paragraph, (33.3%) of the respondents agreed with the claim, (33.3%) could not decide, (6.7%) of

the respondents disagreed with the assumption that students are able to state only one idea in a paragraph,. In response to the sixth item, the table also displays teachers' opinions on whether students can organize and develop their information into progressive logical patterns of arrangements or not. The table shows that(6.7%) of the respondents agreed with claim, (20%) of the lecturers did no decide on the matter, (46.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the claim, besides (26.7%) who strongly disagreed that students can organize and develop their information logically.

4.2.3 Students' Abilities in Keeping Rich Source of Cognitive Processes and Strategies that Constitute a Good Written Text.

| mean | Strongly disagree | dis-agree | unde-cided | agree | Strong-ly agree | item | N0 |
|------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--|----|
| 3.87 | 26.7% | 53.3% | - | 20% | - | Students make good textual planning of their written text. | 9 |
| 4 | 8 | - | 3 | - | | | |
| 4 | 26.7% | 53.3% | 13.3% | 6.7% | - | Students are capable of evaluating their linguistic efficacy and comprehensibility before making final production. | 10 |
| 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 | - | | | |
| 3.93 | 20% | 60% | 13.3% | 6.7% | - | ability to revise the Students have correctness and precision of linguistic structure of their literacy writing. | 11 |

| mean | Strongly disagree | dis-agree | unde-cided | agree | Strong-ly agree | item | N0 |
|------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--|----|
| 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 | - | | | |
| 3.60 | 20% | 53.3% | - | 20% | 6.7% | Students can transcribe their ideas into correctly ties forms of sentences to produce final written text | 12 |
| 3 | 8 | - | 3 | [1 | | | |

Table (4.3) shows teachers' responses to students' abilities in keeping rich source of cognitive processes and strategies that constitute a good written text. Responding to the ninth item, table (4.3) above shows that (20%) of participants agreed that students can make good textual planning for their written text, (53.3%) of the participants did not agree with the claim, in addition to, (26.7%) of respondents who strongly disagreed, with the mean of 3.87. agree disagree strongly disagree ,

4.3 The Students' Test

4.3.1 Correct Use of Capitalization and Punctuations

| mean | Percentages of scores | Frequency of scores | Scores |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 1.40 | Total marks (5) | | |
| 16.9% | 15 | 0 | |
| 42.7% | 38 | 1 | |
| 24.7% | 22 | 2 | |
| 14.6% | 13 | 3 | |
| 1.1% | 1 | 4 | |
| 100% | 89 | Total | |

Table (4.4) correct use of capitalization and punctuations Table (4.4) illustrates students' scores, frequencies and percentages in using correct capitalization and punctuations. The table above shows that (15) students got zero (16.9%), (38) participants scored only one mark (42.7%), (22) students attained two marks (24.7%), (13) students have scored three marks (14.6%), (1) participant has got four out of five (1.1%). From the table above only (14) Students (15.7%) were able to use capitalization and punctuation marks correctly, whereas (84) students (84.3%) fail to write with correct use of capitalization and punctuations. From the table above, it is clear that students' abilities in writing essays lack the techniques of using appropriate systems of punctuation marks and how to use capitalization.

4.3.2 Misspelling

| mean | Percentages of scores | Frequency of scores | Scores |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 1.67 | Total marks (5) | | |
| 5.6% | 5 | 0 | |
| 40.4% | 36 | 1 | |
| 34.8% | 31 | 2 | |
| 19.1% | 17 | 3 | |
| 100% | 89 | Total | |

Table (4.5) Misspelling

Table (4.5) shows the total scores of the subjects, frequencies and percentage of the scores in misspelling word during writing. The above table indicates that (5) students have attained nothing (5.6%), (36) participants got (1) mark (40.4%), (31) students scored two marks (34.8%) and only (17) participants (19.1%) have got three marks out of five. On the other hand, (72) subjects were unable to write down correct spelling. Thus, this emphasizes that students' are poor in using mechanics of writing.

4.3.3 Appropriate Use of Grammatical Rules

| mean | Percentages of scores | Frequency of scores | Scores |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 1.11 | Total marks (5) | | |
| 37.1% | 33 | 0 | |
| 30.3% | 27 | 1 | |
| 16.9% | 15 | 2 | |
| 15.7% | 14 | 3 | |
| 100% | 89 | Total | |

Table (4.6) Appropriate use of grammatical rules Table (4.6) presents students' total marks, frequencies and percentages in using correct grammatical rules in constructing essays. The table shows (33) students have no mark (37.1%), (27) students got (1) mark (30.3%), (15) participants scored two marks (16.9%) and (14) subjects (15.7%) could afford to use correct grammatical rules in their essay writing. The table on the other hand, indicates that the majority of the subjects (84.3%) are unsuccessful in writing with correct grammatical rules.

From the figures above, it is obvious that students' competence in grammar is weak and therefore they cannot generate good written discourse.

4.3.4 Maintenance of Cohesion, Coherence and a Mode of Developing Paragraph.

| mean | Percentages | Frequency | Scores |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| of scores | of scores | .70 | Total marks (5) |
| 61.8% | 55 | 0 | |
| 15.7% | 14 | 1 | |
| 13.5% | 12 | 2 | |
| 9% | 8 | 3 | |
| 100% | 89 | Total | |

Table (4.7) Maintenance of cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraph.

Table (4.7) illustrates students' scores in keeping cohesion, coherence and a mode of developing paragraph. The above table shows (55) subjects attained no mark (61.8%), (14) students got one mark (15.7%), (12) participants have score two marks (13.5%) and only and only (8) participants (9%) were able to maintain cohesion and coherence and are also capable of using a mode of developing paragraph in order to produce written texts. The ta-

ble also justifies that (91%) of students write incohesively, incoherently and shows no mode of developing paragraph.

4.3.5 Capability of Stating Only One Idea in a Paragraph

| mean | Percentages of scores | Frequency of scores | Scores |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| .47 | Total marks (5) | | |
| 73% | 65 | 0 | |
| 14.6% | 13 | 1 | |
| 4.5% | 4 | 2 | |
| 7.9% | 7 | 3 | |
| 100% | 89 | Total | |

Table (4.8) Capability of stating only one idea in a paragraph Table (4.8) above shows students' scores, frequencies and percentages in being able to state only one main idea in each paragraph. The table above indicates that (65) students scored zero (73%), (13) subjects got one mark (14.6%), (4) students have scored two marks (4.5%) and only (7) students (7.9%) could state only one main idea in each paragraph, whereas (82) students (92.1%) could not afford to write a clear main idea in each paragraph.

4.5 Discussion

Most students' writings lack appropriate use of mechanics. The whole essay runs together without means of punctuations or capitalization. There are a lot of run on sentences and periods and commas are inserted where they are unnecessary. So, most of the written texts in the current research are just a group of words or a series of uncommunicative and functionless utterances. No doubt that having knowledge of grammatical rules is significant for the mastery of language. One cannot use words if s/he does not have knowledge of how they can be put together to convey certain meaning. Not only this but also how and when each tense is used. Based

on these facts, students of the present research cannot communicate effectively in using correct grammatical rules in their essay writing. They completely lack mastery of the English language as whole not only grammatical rules. Students cannot construct one correct simple sentence in order to make themselves clear. Therefore, what they write as final production is merely unstructured and meaningless groups of irrelevant utterances. Most effective written texts also make one main point; and all thoughts and ideas are built and unified a round that point which is often explicitly and plainly stated. This technique of writing helps writer clarify and reinforce the main idea. It keeps the writers in the right track as they write, too. It tells the reader how the topic will be developed, as well. According to what has been mentioned above, the participants of the current research are unable to state their main ideas clearly in their written texts. They cannot organize the generating ideas so as to show how these ideas are related. Effective writing is also the one that is well organized and developed in some sensible order. The sentences follow and cohere naturally each other. Coherent writing requires a variety of devices that link together words in a sentence, sentences in a paragraph and paragraphs in an essay. Moreover, each written text should help the readers follow the train of thoughts which transfer information which creates cohesion in a text. That is to say, a text is cohesive when sentences stick together and come from one to another. In English language, it is important to establish cohesion in order to show relationships between the sentences. The above mentioned elements are not found in the students' writing which indicates that students are unskillful in providing coherence and cohesion in their written essays. Most students' writings also lack the appropriate use of mechanics. The whole text runs together without any means of punctuations or capitalization. There are a lot of run-on sentences and some periods and commas are in-

serted where they are unnecessary. So, most of the written essays of students if not all are just groups of words or a series of uncommunicative and functionless structures. Having the ability of spotting the mistakes and correcting them in a text helps students reformulate their written texts. Analyzing the subjects' work, it is found out that students fail to make revision to their written essays. This failure is due to students' inability of identifying the mistakes that require correction, especially surface level mistakes. Lastly, students cannot make a last impression to give a sense of completeness. They are unable to express their final thoughts successfully. The findings of the present research correspond with some of the findings of the previous studies investigated in this research. The findings of the current research coincide with the study of whose findings stated that students' writing did not contain introduction, no topic sentence, no transitional words (19). Furthermore, their paragraphs were incoherent and lacked organization. Students also had difficulty in using correct English grammar. The present findings are also in line with the study of (Hamza, 2009) which reached the findings that the students were unable to produce unified and coherent writings by their own. In addition, students could not express their own ideas in a free composition. The findings also in correspond with the findings of which came to the fact that students made errors by lack of memorization of spelling and misuse of punctuation rules. The present findings also agree with the findings of (2013) whose findings stated that students were unable of using their own words to construct correct sentences. Besides, they were unable to organize the function of writing. Many students committed many mistakes related to sentence structure. The same findings have been reinforced by the findings of (which revealed that native and non-native English speaking students were sometimes indistinctive in their quality of writing, and both of them suffered from a loss of coherence in writing. Another findings that agreed with the present findings, were

reached by) in which the students were poor in using mechanics, run on sentences which caused unclear meaning of some sentences (20). Students also showed difficulty in concentrating on a topic and making a main point. The findings also came in line with the present findings. They stated that students made different types of grammatical errors that mostly were due to intralingua ones. The present findings are also in keep with the findings of, whose findings showed that students made grammatical errors, lack of variety in grammatical structure, use of inappropriate vocabulary and poor punctuation. The findings of also correspond with the present findings. They reinforced that students were unable to use different modes of writing, failed to use writing strategies, and they produced not cohesive and incoherent paragraphs. findings it also came in line with the present findings because they revealed that students were unable to produce good compositions and they also failed to write effective structure of the composition. The findings also indicated that students faced problems in brainstorming and organizing their ideas cohesively. They were also unable to provide the structure of paragraphs, especially topic sentence and supporting details. The findings of the research in question also summed up with the findings of whose findings summarized that students were unable to use proper punctuation, lexical or phrase choice. They also misspell and misused subject/ verb agreement 21.

5.1 Conclusions

From the findings above, the research has concluded the following conclusions:

1. Third year English Dongola secondary school students are unable to use correct capitalization and punctuations. Moreover, they commit a lot of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Their writings lack cohesion and coherence. Besides, students cannot use any mode of developing paragraphs in their essay writing.

2. Students of the current research are unsuccessful in expressing their thoughts logically and systematically. No clear ideas are stated in each paragraph. Thus, their written essays are unorganized and lack development of information.
3. Students' written essays of the present research showed neither planning nor unity. Students are unable to evaluate, revise and make correction to their written texts in order to produce coherent text .

5.2 Recommendations

The research recommends the following: 1- Mastering grammar helps students greatly in producing comprehensible essays. So, participants have to be train to develop their thoughts in correct grammar to enable them write more communicatively and meaningfully. 2- Since there are no clear designed courses for reinforcing writing skills at secondary school and train EFL students to write both free and controlled writings. 3- Providing students with sufficient of time and techniques of writing processes in order to develop their writing skill.

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