Investigating the Relationship between Grammatical Competence and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Learners’ Writing Quality

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By: Ahmed Ishag Adam Shatta
(B.A. (Honours) English, University of Khartoum, 2003)
(M.A. In General Translation, University of Juba, 2008)

Supervisor: Dr. Abdelrahim. H. Mugaddam
Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts

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Dedication

This research is affectionately dedicated to my great parents, who have exerted every possible effort, from the very beginning, to see me go to school and who taught me patience, adventure and critical thinking to things. It is also dedicated warmly to the soul of my grandfather, Shatta, may mercy of Allah be upon his soul, and also, with special regards, to the symbol of brotherhood, humanity and gift, my respectful brother, Nourain Shatta, for his ceaseless material and moral support to make me follow this rocky street of mental adventure very steadily, may Allah illuminate for him a large way to paradise.

This research is also dedicated, with warm sentiments, to all those who love peace, amnesty and welfare to humanity, regardless of ethnicity, culture or region.
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Abstract

This research is, first and foremost, an evaluative study. It has been an attempt to investigate the correlation between grammatical competence of some Sudanese university students and their overall writing quality in English. Since grammar is assumed to be one of the most fundamental components of language, this study has endeavored to shed some light on the impact of grammatical adequacy on the writing standard of the university students in English.

The main objective of the study is introducing the major causes of learners' textual and grammatical weakness in the light of their integration with a purpose of proposing appropriate learning strategies based on learner-centered activities as well as establishing writing-oriented and grammar-directed courses in order to overcome students' disabilities.

The research data have been obtained from two sources of instruments: grammatical competence test and writing competence test both of which have been conducted among the fourth year students of English departments of three academic faculties of two national universities, including Faculty of Arts, University of Juba, Faculty of Education, University of Juba and Faculty of Education of Sudan University of Science and Technology. The research sample consisted of 134 English major students enrolled as full-time learners in the above university faculties. The data have been computed and statistically analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program, version 10.5.

The result have shown that although the overall performance of all the students on both tests was found to be poor, the most grammatically competent students have proved to be the best student-writers, in that, they have written better essays than their peers. The result have also shown that this poor register of students' performance in both tests can be largely attributed to their low awareness of the relevant EFL grammatical and composing rules and, that, students' writing proficiency would not be improved by learning only grammatical items, rather, other aspects of language have to be considered. The research
findings have also revealed that most of the students' deficiency in the grammatical test was associated with the grammatical areas of tensing affixation, passivisation, reported sentences and phrasal verbs whereas most of their problematic aspects of the written test have focused on the major composing conventions as regards punctuation, connectives, grammar knowledge, lexicon, spelling and handwriting, and that only the most competent students were able to deal appropriately with such grammatical and composing properties. Similarly, the findings did confirm the research hypotheses.

The study recommends that EFL instruction in Sudanese universities and higher institutes be based on well-organized grammar-directed and writing-centered courses independently of the students' basic grammar and writing courses, and that EFL departments be provided with technology-based materials such as computers and digital video conferences. It also recommends that learner-centers methods of instruction be adopted with a view to making students self-sufficient writers and grammarians. Further, it recommends the teachers to contribute actively to creating the valid psychological classroom environment of the so-called "Free Writing" in which students feel relax, enthusiastic and more motivated when handling the writing tasks.
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<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
<td>Cambridge University Press</td>
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<td>DCT</td>
<td>Data Collection Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>ENL</td>
<td>English as a Native Language</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>FL</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
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<td>GCT</td>
<td>Grammatical Competence Test</td>
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<td>GKT</td>
<td>Grammar Knowledge Test</td>
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<td>GST</td>
<td>Grammatical Size Test</td>
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<td>IRA</td>
<td>International Reading Association</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
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<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
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<td>MCGT</td>
<td>Multiple Choice Grammatical Test</td>
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<td>Native English Students</td>
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<td>Native Language</td>
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<td>Non-Native Students</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>Native Students</td>
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<td>OUP</td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
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<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Philosophy Doctorate</td>
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<td>SL</td>
<td>Source Language</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>TL</td>
<td>Target Language</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>WCT</td>
<td>Writing Competence Test</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

According to Harrower (1983), there are, practically, four major linguistic skills identified by any language user: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The language user may read books, write letters, speak on the telephone, listen to the radio, etc. Moreover, Harrower describes listening and reading as productive skills in that they involve some kind of production on the part of the language user, and that speaking and writing are receptive skills in that the language user is receiving written or spoken language. In fact, the language user is involved in using a combination of skills because of the interaction with the context, so that a participant in a conversation, for instance, is involved with both the speaking and the listening skills. Harrower argues that if we considered the skills of writing, we could identify a great number of sub-skills. The writing of an academic paper is very different from the writing of a travel brochure or the taking of notes.

According to Harrower (ibid), it is the teacher's responsibility to see that all the four main language skills are practiced even though we have made a distinction between productive and receptive skills. This suggests that in some ways the skills are separate and should be treated as such, on one day students will concentrate only on reading, on the next, on speaking only, etc. This position, in fact, is clearly ridiculous for two reasons: firstly, it is very often true that one skill can not be performed without another. It is impossible, for example, to speak in a conversation if the participants only read what they have just written. Likewise, although people use different skills when dealing with the same subject for all sorts of reason, someone who listens to a lecture may take notes and, then, write a report on the lecture, he might also describe the lecture to his friends and colleagues and follow it up by reading an article that the lecture suggested. Secondly, Harmer (ibid, p.17) maintains that the same experience of topic also leads to the use of many different skills, and that in our teaching we will use the reading as the basis for practicing other skills. From the previous examples, it is clear that the focus on one skill leads to practice in another, and although there are cases where individual skills may be treated
individually, the principle of integration of the four language skills is thought to be important.

From the skills-based perspective, grammar is viewed as a set of micro-skills, including, syntax, morphology, rhetorical organization, etc. Conversely, the whole-language approach views grammar as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created. The underlying rationale for the teaching of grammar in EFL classrooms is multifaceted. Grammar is taught to EFL students because it is the tool by which messages are produced. Without it, learners cannot speak or write effectively (Schleppegrell, 1998). It also helps make language input more comprehensible (Eskey and Grabe, 1989; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). With respect to reading comprehension, for example, Eskey and Grabe (1989) point out that reading requires a relatively high degree of grammatical control over structures that appear in whatever readings are given to students. Finally, Alexander (1990) proposes that we teach grammar because the constraints of the FL classroom make its natural acquisition almost impossible. There is also evidence that grammar instruction improves students’ written and/or oral language proficiency (e.g., Dans, 1996, Fotos, 1992; Govidasamy, 1995; Melendez, 1993; Yeung, 1993).

The skill-building teachers teach the rules of grammar explicitly and then have students practice these rules through mechanical exercises. Such exercises consist of isolated and unrelated sentences among which are: (1) Substitution exercises in which students get accurate sentences by picking words, phrases from columns, one from each. (2) Transformation exercises in which students change sentences in certain ways in response to call-words. Opponents of the skills-based approach to teaching grammar claim that an overemphasis on explicit grammar can produce a situation in which students see grammar as more important than the meaning they are trying to understand or convey. They also claim that the teaching of grammar is time consuming and that the more time spent on teaching grammar, the less time spent on using the language.

Krashen and Terrell (1983) add that any grammar-based method which purports to develop communication skills will fail with the majority of students. In whole language classrooms, on the other hand, grammar is learned incidentally and implicitly through oral and written communication. In spite of the fact that such an approach focuses on meaning, it can lead to the development of ungrammatical;
pidginized form of the foreign language beyond which students can not progress (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Gary and Gary, 1981). Thus, the major problem with the whole-language approach in dealing with grammar is that it sacrifices accuracy for the sake of fluency, as Hammerly (1991) put it.

"When communication is emphasized early in the language program, linguistic accuracy suffers and linguistic competence does not develop much beyond the point needed for the bare transmission of messages. In the classroom, fluency does not lead to accuracy and most errors do not disappear through communicative interaction. In the classroom a language can not be acquired unconsciously with good results but through largely conscious procedures, a language can be successfully learned. This can be done quite well through systematic instruction which should precede and build up to the part of the curriculum being taught in SL" (p. 10).

From the foregoing, it seems that both the skills-based and the whole-language approaches to teaching and learning grammar are complementary processes. Therefore, it has been acknowledged by many linguists that comparing them in a comprehensive approach can be more effective and practical than relying on one of them alone. In support of this new approach, Hammerly (1991) notes that an early emphasis on free communication seems to guarantee linguistic incompetence at the end of the programme, just as surely as an exclusive emphasis on linguistic structures guarantees communicative incompetence.

Omaggio (1986) also suggests that there should be emphasis on both grammatical accuracy and meaningful communication and that early meaningful verbal communication is not possible without some grammatical knowledge. The same point is also supported by Puchler and Bond (1999) that foreign language teacher must not only focus on developing the learner's explicit knowledge of grammar, but also on facilitating the development of his/her implicit knowledge by creating an acquisition-rich classroom environment. What is needed, then, is a combination of grammar and the whole language. In this new approach, grammar should be taught for the sake of communication not for its own sake. Such an approach should shift from explicit teaching of grammatical rules to using these rules for understanding and then expressing meaning in communicative contexts.

Similarly, the skills-based approach views writing as a collection of separate skills, including letter formation, spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization and the like. This approach also purports writing as a product-oriented task. In this respect,
McLaughlin et al, (1983) stated that writing like any other complex task, requires that learners organize a set of related subtasks and their components. In contrast, the whole-language approach views writing as a meaning-making process which is governed by purpose and audience rather than by compositional rules. From some linguists' point of view, a thorough definition of writing should involve both skills and meaning. This is precisely the perspective taken by Krashen (1984) who states:

"Writing competence is necessary but is not sufficient. Writers who are competent, who have acquired the code, may still be unable to display their competence because of insufficient composing processes. Efficient composing processes in writing performance can be developed via sheer practice as well as instruction" (p. 27).

In the area of EFL, writing has many uses and functions. To begin with the ability to write acceptable scientific English is essential for post-graduate students who must write their dissertations in English. Moreover, writing EFL allows for communication to large numbers of people all over the world. It provides students with physical evidence of their achievement. Thus, in turn, helps them determine what they know and what they don't know. As Irmscher (1979) notes in our minds, we can fool ourselves not on paper and if no thought is in our minds, nothing comes out and that mental fuzziness translates into words only as fuzziness or meaninglessness. Additionally, writing can enhance students' thinking skills. As Irmscher (1979), notes, writing stimulates thinking chiefly because it forces us to concentrate and organize. Talking does, too, but writing allows more time for grammar introspection and deliberation. Finally, writing can enhance students' vocabulary, spelling and grammar.

The skills-oriented teachers teach writing as explicitly in fragmented pieces by using certain techniques with the assumption that students can not compose until they master the sub-skills that stem from writing such as, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, handwriting and punctuation. The whole language teachers, on the contrary, teach writing by immersing students in the process of writing through which students write whole compositions and share them with the teacher or other people from the start (Rentzel and Hollingsworth, 1988). Among the most notable writing techniques consistent with the whole language perspective are the dialogue journal writing, dialogue letter writing and process writing.

Opponents of the skills-based approach claim that the teaching of writing subskills is often uninteresting. As Rose (1982) points out; teachers themselves may
have distaste for the elements of grammar and punctuation. These opponents add that an overemphasis on writing conventions may get in the way of communicating meaning as Newman (1985) puts it an overemphasis on accurate spelling, punctuation, and neat handwriting can actually produce a situation in which children come to see the conventions of writing as more important than meaning they are trying to convey.

On the other hand, opponents of the whole-language approach claim that students can not convey meaning without writing conventions. From the foregoing, it is clear that just like the skills-based approach, the whole-language approach is necessary but not sufficient for writing acquisition. Therefore, the comprehensive approach suggests that it is of almost importance that the teaching and learning of writing should be dealt with by combining direct instruction with incidental learning.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Langacker (1973), writing is, chronologically, considered the most problematic linguistic activity and the latest experienced skill by the language user among all other major skills of listening, speaking and reading, in that, most languages have existed as purely oral forms of communication without being written. People had been talking successfully for thousands of years before writing was invented, and millions of people today get along fine with their language even though it has no written form.

He also maintains that whereas oral speech is a quite temporary entity, written message, in contrast, is relatively permanent and it can be kept and consulted at any future time, and also the facts and ideas committed to writing can be preserved without being a burden on memory. Moreover, written messages can be read by any number of people at different times and places or, more obviously, it is very easier to distribute pieces of paper than to train messengers to memorize long messages and to travel about presenting them orally. According to Heffernan and Lincoln's report (1982), what makes writing hard is that written words have to express the writer's meaning in his/her absence, they have to 'speak' all by themselves.

Frankly speaking, the introduction of text linguistics has had far-reaching consequences for writing pedagogy. Oxford (1991) points out that text linguistics moves the focus of inquiry from the sentence to the text and examines texts as acts of
communication rather than individual static sentences. Despite the fact that text linguistics investigates textuality rather than grammaticality or, more obviously, the relationships between sentences and between the text and context that make text coherent rather than the relationships within the sentences that make it grammatical, it is widely acknowledged that text coherence is largely dependent on the grammaticality of the sentences composing it.

It is noteworthy that among the major mechanical problems of learning such as, pronunciation, grammar, spelling, handwriting and vocabulary, grammar is generally accustomed to occupy the top of this list being the linguistic technique the most spectacular and most provoking to learners', teachers' and researchers' concern collectively in relation to EFL students' written production. In this respect, it has been argued that while in oral communication, grammatical mistakes can be expected and tolerated because speech is usually a spontaneous process and, thus, a very little attention can be paid to its mistakes of sentence structure or connecting them, in writing, on the other hand, writers have to be aware of the importance of avoiding such grammatical mistakes so as to compensate for the absence of elements related to spoken language. As a matter of fact, it is the learner's lexical adequacy which normally represents the first starting point towards achieving the required amount of his/her grammatical competence because of the everlasting existence of the inseparable correlation between these two linguistic skills. Generally speaking, sentence structure from both syntactic and morphological points of view, is based on the process of arranging and synthesizing the lexemes (words) into phrases, clauses sentences and then texts by the means of exploiting certain grammatical rules. This joining process actually confirms the fact that both lexical and grammatical competences do influence each other in a complementary manner, and there is no any way of attempting to function them one a loaf from the other. More obviously, it is the grammatical rules which always control the function of the lexical items by building them up, arranging and, hence, transforming them into phrases, clauses, sentences and eventually discourses.

Likewise, it is the lexemes which emerge, definitely, to impose the existence and function of grammatical rules, since without existent words within a language, its grammar, in turn, will never exist for any time and it will be judged, at this point, as being functionless. Notwithstanding the writing competence, it, therefore, becomes clear evidence that writing development is qualitatively dependent upon maintaining
grammatical competence, but quantitatively upon attaining lexical competence. Thus, it is notable that the co-existence and coincidence of both grammaticality and lexicality within a certain language will, jointly, formulate its textuality by constituting the basic tools of sorting out a good scene to its written production and that, in so doing, student-writers have to, first, strive to enrich their mental lexicon as well as to enhance and promote their grammatical capabilities, taking into account that realizing writing competence necessitates obtaining great deal of grammatical accuracy which, itself, necessitates reaching higher standards of lexical acquisition.

Despite the fact that all the previously-mentioned linguistic properties seem to act complementarily as contributing factors to assessing EFL students' writing quality and giving its exact picture, grammaticality, to a distant extent, bears the biggest amount of this linguistic burden and responsibility. Certainly, grammatical accuracy takes the lion's share in the task of shaping EFL learners' written discourse and determining its valuable balance and well-formedness. Since composing, as viewed above by Raimes and others, means expressing ideas and conveying meaning, this serious communicative task will never be fulfilled in a bit isolation from grammatical adequacy, in that, an ungrammatically composed piece of writing is extremely characterized by its lack of the elements of directiveness, denotativeness and expressiveness and it may, eventually, be accounted for as an ambiguous entity. Grammaticality should, hence, be dealt with as the major criterial factor of composing ideas and transforming meaningful written or/and oral messages, and being ungrammatical will, accordingly, mean being unexpressive, nonsensical or even misleading.

The closing decade of the twentieth century witnessed considerable body of research on the written production of the Sudanese EFL learners. However, no clear research projects on writing from grammatical perspective were carried out. The central problem is that much research conducted on writing field did not go beyond the sentence level to shape the inevitable correlation between the sentences and the texts containing them or, more precisely, between grammaticality and textuality, but emphasis was mainly made on the structure of individual sentences (i.e. the correlation between the sentences and the linguistic components constructing them).

On the basis of the preceding discussion, this research is particularly intended to investigate the composing ability of the Sudanese EFL learners at the grammatical level Having believed that the target students have been exposed to a variety of
courses on writing skills, especially in their second year's final semester, in addition to a number of English courses pertaining to English grammar, lexical studies, stylistics, etc, which can collectively contribute to enhancing their writing performance, the research emerged to be both evaluative and exploratory in nature. It first, seeks to assess EFL students' benefit from the previous training they have so far received at both grammatical and writing levels in improving their composing abilities. It secondly and most significantly, seeks to reveal the influence of grammatical competence on EFL students' composing quality, taking into consideration that it is almost the best strategy that teachers usually adopt in assessing students' performance and feedback at both grammatical and writing levels.

With regard to the status of the student-writers meant by this study, it seems notable that their written production will be extremely poor in nature due to their great lack of essential grammatical skills as a natural result of their miscomprehension and miss-handling of certain grammatical and composing rules. More obviously, the concerned students' written discourse will be highly characterized by being quantitatively poor and ill-structured and, hence, it will be qualitatively less expressive and powerless. As such, it sets a linguistic phenomenon that needs deeper explanation based on scientific methodology. Starting from discourse analysis methodological approaches, this study is mainly intended to explore both the nature and causes (sources) of such grammatical and composing deviations associated with the target learners' written production and their immediate impact on their overall writing value.

The objective question posed here is, then, centered around: how and why are these grammatical and composing breaks made? can they be attributed to internal behavioral reasons within the learners themselves, or to some external surrounding factors such as communication strategies, performance factors, effects of teaching, syllabus, etc, or due to other more hidden and superficial influences.

Like any scientific research, this study tries to provide some objective and reasonable explanations to Sudanese EFL students' writing incompetence by referring that to their low awareness of the attributes judging the grammatical and composing rules. The theme of the research, particularly, combines grammaticality with writing, where oral discourse is not clear-cut separable, since these three linguistic organs often meet together in an inter-disciplinary approach where rule-awareness intersects with well-formedness, as does the later with expressiveness.
1.3 Research Questions

In investigating the research problem, the following questions have been posed:
1. Is there any significant correlation between EFL students' grammatical competence and their overall writing quality?
2. Is grammatical competence a differentiating factor between a good and poor student-writer?
3. To what extent can grammatical adequacy be the basic index of writing quality?
4. Can the target students' both grammatical and written production be viewed as being poor quality entities?
5. What are the major probable reasons behind the target students' both grammatical and writing deficiency?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

In answering the research questions, the following hypotheses have been made:
1. There is an extremely significant correlation between EFL students' grammatical competence and their overall writing quality.
2. Grammatical competence is a major differentiating factor between a good and poor student-writer.
3. The writing which is based on grammatical competence is better evaluated than the writing which is not.
4. The target students' both grammatical and written production can be largely viewed as being poor quality entities.
5. It is recognizable that the target learners' both grammatical and writing deficiency can be largely attributed to their low awareness of the relevant EFL grammatical and composing rules.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The importance of choosing this topic as a researching issue lies in the fact that it is considered a distinguished attempt among M.A. in English, Batch (4) research to investigate the influence of grammar on EFL students' written production. It differs from other research conducted in the field of writing in that it specifically gives emphasis into the nature of grammar and how it affects the composing process. Moreover, this study is significant because it is considered one of the serious endeavors of M.A. research to give logical reasons and diagnosis for both
grammatical and composing disabilities of Sudanese EFL university students by paying very special attention to the correlation between the target learners' grammaticality and their textuality each influences the other. Furthermore, the significance of this study arises from the fact that ruling out such writing problems and giving feasible explanations to their nature and reasons of occurrence, would provide an insight and feedback to learners which, in turn, would draw teachers' attention towards the influence of their teaching methods and it might, eventually, tell them about the most problematic areas of EFL. This research also derives its importance from being the first of its kind in terms of the topic combining grammar with writing each influences the other in that good writing necessitates proper use of grammar, and enhanced writing, in turn, improves learners' grammatical competence, therefore, this study can be described as an applied research in the field of EFL learning and teaching. Another important aspect of this research is drawn from its special concern with evaluating the image created by grammar in illustrating and shaping the picture of writing. Since writing assessment procedures are fully dependent upon applying the techniques and skills of choosing proper lexical items and then employing them precisely to build up phrases, sentences, texts, etc, this combination task will never be achieved a loaf from understanding and functioning certain grammatical rules. In addition, as generally acknowledged that the influence of grammar on oral speech is usually determined by the degree it influences its equivalent written properties it, thus, becomes reality that in order to transform formal written items into acoustic verbal categories, it is significant to, first, assimilate the specific rules controlling its grammatical climate, otherwise, it would be impossible to come up with a logical and comprehensible oral message of speech. Besides, in attempting to display the negative linguistic consequences of poor writing, the researcher argues how does grammatical competence contribute to making radical changes in the student-writers' feedback, even though it is not the sole linguistic agent behind these changes, but it is just the most influential element in a highly complex linguistic system among other several moderated factors whose impact sounds to be relatively less serious. This confirmation alone provokes the researcher's idea to judge that it is significant to examine the hidden philosophy behind learners' hopelessness towards mastering EFL grammar to an extent that they would be termed as good student-writers. Finally, the significance of this study is further based on the fact that considering writing and giving it substantial contribution among all other language
skills would, logically, justify that writing development constitutes a real starting point towards enhancing and developing the rest of the four major linguistic skills, in that, if a little glance has been made at the nature of writing in relation to these skills, it will be recognized that improving writing, naturally, means reinforcing reading, speaking and listening, collectively, because a well-formed written utterance, as reviewed previously, could very easily by well-read, outspoken and clearly heard. However, for specificity and empirical significance, writing has been singled out to be the focus of the theme.

1.6 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are educational in nature, therefore, it aims at:

1. Investigating EFL learners' writing problems at grammatical level and, hence, increasing motivations for good English writing.
2. Discovering to what extent may mistreating EFL grammatical rules affect negatively both the formal pattern and deductive value of students' written product.
3. Finding out whether grammatical competence is a distinguishing factor between a good and poor student-writer.
4. Understanding why writing has particularly been singled out among the rest of the main language skills (i.e. reading, speaking and listening) as the focus of the theme.
5. Suggesting some alternative learning policies and strategies to be implemented within EFL curriculum at both pre-university and university levels.
6. Drawing some teachers' attention and removing their false impression that output should always be an authentic representation of input for the reason that this impression, principally, ignores the function of intake (i.e. the knowledge of language the learner internalizes), which may be independent of teachers' and syllabus' effect alike.
7. Directing an urgent appeal to intellectualists, educationalists and all those concerned with learning issues to account seriously for the real identification of EFL learners' acquired, habitual and behavioral causes of grammatical errors and composing disabilities, with a purpose to find radical remediation for them.

1.7 The Scope of the Research

In introducing and conducting this research, certain study limitations have been drawn:
1. As a case study limitation, this research is confined to Sudanese English-specialized university students with a pretext that specialized EFL learners are considered the first social categories seem to be responsible for developing English education and research, therefore, they are particularly viewed by the researcher among the rest of EFL learners whose grammatical and writing performance should be highly improved.

2. As a timing limitation, the present study has mainly targeted the fourth year students as a sample among all Sudanese EFL university learners for the reason that, fourth year is supposed to be the criterial learning stage at which the target students have been exposed to a variety of EFL grammatical and composing practice courses, and that they have fully covered the whole academic curriculum planned for them. Thus, having finished all the prescribed B.A. degree courses, fourth year students are generally viewed by researchers and other academic instructors that they have reached a reasonable learning point and become mature enough that their both grammatical and written discourse tasks deserve being investigated.

3. As a topical limitation, the current research has focused mainly on correlating between the target students' grammatical and composing competence with ignorance to investigating the impact of other types of linguistic competence on EFL learners' writing quality because of the EFL students' excessive liability to grammatical deviations, as viewed by the researcher and that this excessive occurrence of the learners' grammatical errors within their developmental learning stages will inevitably, result in deteriorating their overall written discourse quality, in that, grammar as hypothesized earlier, works in practice with the ultimate goal of improving the qualitative status of EFL students' writing competence.

1,8 Materials and Methods
This section sheds some light on the subjects of the current study population. It describes the materials, instruments and the procedures followed in gathering and analyzing the research data.

The subjects of this study consisted of 134 fourth year English major students enrolled as full-time learners in three academic faculties of two national universities, comprising, the faculties of Arts and Education, University of Juba and the Faculty of Education of the Sudan University of Sciences and Technology.

The main instruments used in collecting the data of this research were two types of experimental tests conducted among the previously-mentioned EFL students including, grammatical competence test and writing competence test.
As a procedural strategy, the so-called stratified random sampling method was used in collecting the needed data of the current study. In so achieving, all the subjects in the population were given equal chance to perform the experimental tests without giving bias to certain groups. The students were tested in their daily lecture rooms and supervised by their own lecturers beside the researcher and other assistant figures. The data have been computed and statistically analyzed by using the program of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

1.9 Research Outline

This research comprises six chapters organized as followed: Chapter One acts as an introductory chapter. It deals with the objectives of the study and its general nature. It puts forward the research questions and hypotheses, defines the research problem, indicates its scope of study and explains why it focuses on investigating the importance of the grammaticality of EFL learners' performance for their overall writing quality. Chapter Two is a theoretical survey. It explains the linguistic theory on which the current research is based (i.e., discourse analysis/discourse linguistics or text linguistics), therefore, it covers some major discourse analysis studies strongly associated with both writing and grammar. In doing so, it begins with defining the writing and its major processes, as well as illustrating the interrelationship between grammar and writing in the way each influences the other. Chapter Three is partly descriptive. It reviews the literature related to the setting of the current research topic by depending upon a variety of relevant materials taken from different sources comprising books, theses, journals, magazines, academic and conferences papers, websites, etc. Chapter Four is a methodological approach. It describes the research materials, instruments, subjects and the techniques of data collection and analysis. Chapter Five is analytical in nature. It is mainly confined to displaying the research's data analysis, results and their interpretation. Chapter Six is an evaluative chapter. It brings the research into conclusion. It summarizes the results, makes final assessment for the study and presents some recommendations, pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

1.10 Summary

This chapter is an introductory one in nature. It has, particularly, dealt with the objectives of the study and its general design. It has put forward the research questions and assumptions, investigated its actual problem, determined its scope and limitation, and it has, further, justified the reasons behind focusing the emphasis on combining the grammaticality of EFL learners' performance with the overall quality of their textual abilities.

The following chapter will be a theoretical survey. It will explain the linguistic theory on which the current research is based (i.e., discourse analysis/discourse linguistics or text linguistics), therefore, it will significantly cover some major discourse analysis studies closely related to both writing and grammar. It will end up
with embodying the strong interrelationship between grammar and vocabulary, each influences the other as well as introducing their shared impact on EFL learners' written discourse tasks.
Chapter Two
Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a theoretical survey. It is going to explain the linguistic theory on which the research is based (i.e., discourse analysis, discourse linguistics, or text linguistics), therefore, it further covers some major discourse analysis studies strongly associated with writing and grammar. In so doing, it focuses on defining the writing and presenting its major processes as well as shedding some light on the teaching of writing and its relationship to other skills of language, definitely, reading and speaking. Moreover, this chapter defines English grammar and investigates its correlation with vocabulary.

2.2 Definition of Writing

From the skills-based perspective, writing is viewed as a collection of separate skills, including letter formation, spelling, pronunciation, grammar, organization, and the like. This approach also purports writing as a product-oriented task. In this respect, Mclaughlin et al (1983) state that writing, like any other complex tasks, requires that learners organize a set of related subskills and their components (p.42). In contrast, the whole-language approach views writing as a meaning-making process which is governed by purpose and audience rather than by compositional rules. According to Krashen (1984), a thorough definition of writing should involve both skills and meaning. He states that writing competence is necessary, but it is not sufficient, writers who are competent, who have acquired the code, may still be unable to display their competence because of insufficient composing processes and that efficient composing processes and writing predominance can be developed via sheer practice as well as instruction. Thus, writing has been defined both formally and functionally. It is defined formally to show its physical representation as the recording of human communication using signs or symbols to the spoken words (Mac Millan Encyclopedia, 1986). This represent definition represents writing as the only visible representation of human language. The functional definition set up writing as a communicative event. Peters (1985), for example, views writing as a curiously solitary form of communication, addressed to an absent and often unknown reader. Similarly, Connor (1996), maintains that writing is an opportunity to explore one’s
inner feeding. Of course, spoken language can also be described, but it is writing that can be used for communication across time and space. The relevant literature does not seem to give equal weights to speaking and writing with secondary status compared to that of speech. For example, the formal definitions of writing given above emphasize the idea that writing is but a record of speech. In a similar vein, Rivers, (1981) views writing as the home maid of the other language skills, and it should not, therefore, be approached as a major skill to be developed. Moreover, a historical preference has been given in favor of speech viz-a-viz writing. In this connection, it is argued that, not only did the spoken language precede the written language historically, but every one of us learnt to speak long before we learnt to write (palmer, 1971). However, it is possible to show that writing is not necessarily bound up with other language skills. To begin with, people do not always use writing to reinforce a certain skill that they have learnt. In fact, there are more writing functions than can be associated with educational settings. Thus, writing can be the only appropriate medium for letters, books, newspapers magazines, etc, where it can not be conceived of as a reflection of the other skills in any direct sense nor can it be possible to argue that the other skills are capable of handling these same functions in the way writing does. Even in education settings, students sometimes practice writing for its own sake. Secondly, a variety of writing problems can be overcome by learners' mastering of the other skills. This could have otherwise been possible if writing had indeed been approached simply as the home maid of other skills. It could be argued that mostly through writing instruction, writing practice and teacher feedback that students' writing can be improved (Krashen, 1984). Thirdly, autonomy of writing (particularly viz-a-viz speaking), can be shown by its function as a differentiating factor between literate and illiterate members of the relevant speech community. While both members can have access to speaking, only the literate ones can be said to have access to writing. Heffernan and Lincoln (1982) point out that in writing we have to communicate without facial expressions, we have to speak with words and punctuations alone. Writing has advantage over speaking, it gives us time to think, to try out ideas in paper, to choose our own words, to read what we have written, to rethink, revise, and rearrange it, and, most importantly, to consider its effect on a reader.

2.3 Criteria for Assessing EFL Writing Quality

From my viewpoint, writing quality is fully dependent upon the realization of two basic textual strategies: cohesion and coherence. This view, in fact, is highly
supported by the concept of many writing practitioners, theoreticians and applied linguists. To explain this standpoint in more logical way, let us consider these two major composing factors under their respective headings.

2.3.1 Cohesion in Writing:

For several years, the analysis of cohesion in texts has been a key topic in the study of discourse. Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exists within a text. It is part of the system of language which has the potentials for meaning enhancement in texts.

As maintained by Stephen (1981), a paragraph or section of text is cohesive if the sentences are well-organized, well linked together and these is no unnecessary repetition. He adds that in order to be cohesive and easy to understand, an essay should be divided into clear paragraphs each one containing a new idea or topic because the absence of paragraphs can make a piece of writing difficult and confusing to read. Another problem with students' essay writing according to Stephen, is the missing of linking words and expressions since they are important elements of connecting ideas between sentences in a logical way, hence, helping to make the writing more cohesive.

According to Betty (2008), cohesive writing is the writing that creates clear and logical relationship among ideas. He says that we often describe writing that cohesively ties ideas together in a seamless way as writing that "flows" and writing that doesn't as "choppy".

The best known treatment of cohesion is that of Halliday and Hasan(1976). Halliday (1976) describes five general grammatical and lexical strategies that speakers use for showing how the meanings of parts of different sentences are related to each other. These strategies are referred to in terms of reference, pronoun, substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion. He maintains that these cohesive devices create ties between sentences by linking some elements in one sentence with some elements in another.

Halliday and Hasan (ibid,4) note that cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another, adding that in cohesion, features like repetition of items as well as complex relations of collocation and structural semantics sense connections across sentence boundaries are examined. Halliday and Hasan(ibid, 279) present the categories of same item, synonymy, near synonymy, super ordinate and general word collocation as evidence of lexical cohesion. Halliday and Hasan(1985) note further that the concept of tie is the most important thing when talking about the texture of a text.

Johnstone(2002) points out that what distinguishes a written text or a conversation from a random list of sentence is cohesion, suggestion that, making cohesive ties between one's own contributions to talk and one's interlocutors' contributions can have interactional as well as semantic effects.

Additionally, Awolowo (2002) says that students' attention is expected to be directed to the acquisition of the knowledge of the rules of grammar as well as the structural patterns associated with formal and informal varieties of English and use them appropriately. He adds that this present-up on cohesion in the written texts of our subjects therefore becomes relevant as it embraces the means by which texts are linguistically and logically connected. He also Judges that for educational system to
achieve its educational aims and objectives, learners' work must show some form of cohesion and coherence in their presentation of ideas.

2.3.2 Coherence in Writing

As viewed by Stephed(1981), a piece of writing is coherence if it is clearly organized and has a logical sequence of ideas.

Kies (2008) points out that coherence is a product of many different factors which combine to make every paragraph; sentence and phrase contribute to the meaning of the whole piece. Moreover, he suggests that coherence in writing is much more difficult to sustain than coherent speech simply because writers have no nonverbal clues to inform them if their message is clear or not. Therefore, writers must make their patterns of coherence much more explicit and carefully planned. Furthermore, Kies(ibid) argues that coherence is the product of tow factors: (i) paragraph unity, (ii) sentence coherence, explaining that to achieve paragraph unity, a writer must ensure two things only: first, the paragraph must have a single generalization that serves as the focus of attention, that is, a topic sentence. Second, a writer must control the content of every other sentence in the paragraph's body such that: (a) it contains more specific information that the topic sentence and (b) it maintains the same focus of attention as the topic sentence. With regard to sentence cohesion, Kies interprets it as the link of one sentence to the next.

In differentiating coherence from cohesion, Awolowo(2002) argues that it is possible for a piece of writing to be cohesive without being coherent, explaining that coherence is the hanging together of a text, whereas cohesion is the set of linguistic resources that every language has as part of the textual metafunction for linking one part of a text to another. Every part of a text is, therefore, both text and context and the ideas in writing should hang together. Similarly, Carrell (1982) criticizes the halliday and hasan's (1976) concept of cohesion as an index of textual coherence, attempting to show that text-analysis procedures such as halliday and hasan's cohesion concept, which encourages the belief that coherence is located in the text and can be defined as a configuration of textual features, and which fail to take the contributions of the text's reader into account, are incapable of accounting for textual coherence.

2.4 Writing Approaches Across ELT Curriculum

Traditionally, there are three major approaches that seem to have influenced writing throughout ELT history. They are known in the literature as the product approach, the process approach and the communicate approach. They will successively be reviewed below under their respective headings.
2.4.1 The Product Approach

According to Hyland (2002), one way to look at writing is to see it as marks on a page or a screen, a coherent arrangement of words, clauses and sentences structures according to a system of rules. Conceptualizing L2 writing in this way directs attention to writing as product and encourages a focus on formal text units or grammatical features of texts. In this view, learning to write in a foreign or second language mainly involves linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts. This orientation was born from the marriage of structural linguistics and the behaviorist learning theories of L2 teaching that were dominant in the 1960s (Silva, 1990). Product approach is concerned with the finished texts, particularly, with the manipulation of the language structures of the relevant written texts. This approach was considered to be pedagogically weak for the insufficient attention it paid to the writing stages (Freedman et al, 1983). Rather, some writing specialists have come to the conclusion that the product approach is inadequate for solving writing problems, so that they proposed the so-called process approach which was introduced due to certain drawbacks that its advocates felt to be inherent in the product approach. Essentially, writing is seen as a product constructed from the writer's command of grammatical and lexical knowledge, and writing development is considered to be the result of imitating and manipulating models provided by the teacher. For many who adopt this view, writing is regarded as an extension of grammar—a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners' ability to produce well-formed sentences by developing the ability to manipulate lexis and grammar. In this approach, texts are often regarded as a series of appropriate grammatical structure, and so instruction may imply 'slot and filler' frameworks in which sentences with different meanings can be generated by varying the words in the slots. Writing is rigidly controlled through guided compositions where learners are given short texts and asked to fill in gaps, complete transform tenses or personal pronouns, and complete other exercises that focus students on achieving accuracy and avoiding errors. A common application of this is the substitution table which provides models for students and allows them to generate risk-free sentences. The structural orientation, thus, emphasizes writing as combination of lexical and syntactic forms and good writing as the demonstration of knowledge of these forms and of the rules.
used to create texts. Accuracy and clear exposition are considered the main criteria of good writing in this approach, while the actual communicative content, “the meaning” is left to be dealt with later.

2.4.1.1 Criticism to the Product Approach of Writing

Although many L2 students learn to write in this way, a structural orientation can create serious problems. One drawback is that formal patterns are often presented as short fragments which tend to be based on the intuition of materials writers rather than the analysis of real texts. This not only hinders students from developing their writing beyond sentences, but it can also mislead or confuse them when they have to write in other situations. Not it is easy to see how a focus restricted to grammar can lead to better writing (Hyland, 2002). According to Hunt (1983), syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy, however, are not the only features of writing improvement and may not even be the best measures of good writing. Most teachers are familiar with students who can construct accurate sentences and yet are unable to produce appropriate written texts, while fewer errors in an essay may simply reveal a reluctance to take risk rather than indicate progress. More seriously, the goal of writing instruction can never be just training in explicitness and accuracy because written texts are always a response to a particular communicative setting. No feature can be a universal marker of good writing because good writing is always contextually variable. Writers always draw on their knowledge of their readers and similar texts to decide what to say and how to say it, aware that different forms express different relationships and meanings. Conversely, readers always draw on their linguistic and contextual assumptions to recover these meanings from texts, and this is confirmed in the large literature on knowledge-based inference in reading comprehension (e.g., Barnett, 1989). For these reasons, few L2 writing teachers now see writing only as surface forms. But it is equally unhelpful to see language as irrelevant to learning to write. Control over surface feature is crucial, and students need an understanding of how words, sentences and larger discourse structures can shape and express the meaning they want to convey. Most of teachers, therefore, include formal elements in their courses, but they also look beyond language structures to ensure that students don’t just know how to write grammatically correct texts, but also how to apply this knowledge for particular purposes and contexts.
2.4.2 The Process Approach

According to Al-Koumy (2002), process writing refers to the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. As viewed by Hyland (2002), this approach emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts. This approach was introduced due to certain drawbacks that its advocates felt to be inherent in the product approach. Connor (1996) reports that the first shift from the product to the process approach was Emig’s (1972) leading research on the composing process of twelve grades. In 1980s, this approach associated with the two American scholars: Raimes (1983a, 1983b, 1987), and Zamel (1983, 1985), who are acknowledged as the most cited in the literature. According to Zamel (1983), writing should be conceived of as non-linear exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. Raimes (1983), maintains that composing means thinking, expressing ideas, conveying meaning, etc. She also points out that linguistic structures are considered as peripherals in the writing process, so writers’ preoccupation would give them little time for generating ideas for apiece of writing. She adds that when students set out to manipulate linguistic components of writing they do not more than lock themselves into a semantic and rhetorical prison, for they have little force if the piece of writing is not expressing the writers clearly and forcefully with not involved imagination. Lansford and Connor (1989) maintain that writing is not an artistic talent that only a lucky few possess, but an essential and powerful means of discovering what you know and of expressing that knowledge in communicating with others. As Joseph Epstein says:

“Writing is foremost a mode of thinking and, when it works well, an act of discovery, I write to find out what I believe, what seems logical and sensible to one, what notions, ideas and views I can live with”.

According to Harrower (1983), writing is usually described as a process-something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature. Different things happen at different stages in the process of putting thoughts into words and words onto paper. We divided the process at the point where writing idea is ready for the words and the page: everything before that is called “pre-writing”, and everything after is called “writing” and “re-writing”. Obviously, then, the manipulation of linguistic structure will be the least considered aspect of writing by
advocates of this approach. The prime concern of classroom activities will, therefore, be the generating of preliminary ideas including pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming, planning, outlining and getting started, and the writing activities, such as further drafting, revising, proofreading and editing (Jordan, 1997). Lansford and Connor (1989), argue that the mental processes that actually accompany the writing process are tremendously complex. Researchers often describe the process of writing as seamless and recursive meaning that its goals or parts are constantly flowing into and influencing one another, without any clear break between them (Hyland, 2002). He adds that, ideally, writing can be like riding a bicycle; with practice, the process becomes more and more automatic. As you become more practiced as a writer, more and more of the goals juggling you to do will become automatic. It is notable, therefore, that these processes don't occur in a neat linear sequence, but are recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous, and all work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised, even before any text has been produced at all. At any point, the writer can jump backward or forward to any of these activities: returning to the library for more data, revising the plan to accommodate new ideas, or rewriting for readability after peer text feedback (P.25).

Central to the process approach to writing is the idea of feedback. As discussed by Ken (1990), quoted in Jordan (1997:168), there are three feedback types comprising; peer evaluation (i.e., the responsibility of writer-classmates), conference (i.e. the interaction between the student and the teacher, and the written comments of the teacher), and finally, the feedback in relation to the processes of planning and revising. This basic model of writing has been elaborated to further describe what goes on at each stage of the process and to integrate cognitive with social factors more centrally (Flower, 1994). Building on this work, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), have argued that we need at least two process models to account for the difference in processing complexity of skilled and novice writers. They label these as knowledge telling and knowledge transforming models. The first addresses the fact that novice writers plan less than experts, revise less often, and less extensively, have limited goals, and are mainly concerned with generating content. The latter shows how skilled writers use the writing task to analyze problems reflect on the task, and set goals to actively rework thoughts to change both their text and idea. In addition to composing and revising strategies, such an orientation places great emphasis on response to writing. A response as viewed by
Hyland (ibid, p.22), is potentially one of the most influential tests in a process writing class, and the point at which the teacher's intervention is most obvious and perhaps, most crucial. Not only does this individual attention play an important part in motivating learners, it is also the point at which overt correction and explicit language teaching are most likely to occur. Response is crucial in assisting learners to move through the stages of the writing process and various means of providing feedback, are used, including teacher-student conferences, peer response, audiotaped feedback and reformulation. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of error correction and grammar teaching in assisting learners to improve their writing remains controversial in this model (Ferris, 1997; Truscott, 1996).

2.4.2.1 Criticism to the Process Approach

Hyland (2002) maintains that despite considerable research into writing process, however, we still do not have a comprehensive idea of how learners go about a writing task or how they learn to write. He adds that although cognition is a central element of the process, and researchers are now more aware of the complexity of planning and editing activities, the influences of task, and the value of examining writer's work and the contribution of all these understandings to teaching methods, process models are hampered by small-scale, often contradictory studies and the difficulties of getting inside writers' heads to report unconscious processing. They are unable to tell us why writers make certain choices or how they actually make the cognitive transition to acknowledge-transforming model, nor do they spell out what occurs in the intervening stages or whether the process is the same for all learners. It also remains unclear whether an exclusive emphasis on psychological factors in writing will provide the whole picture, either theoretically or pedagogically.

2.4.2.2 The Major Process Stages

According to Barnett (1989), Flower and Hayes (1981), Hall (1993), Krashen (1984), Reid (1988), and Zamel (1983), writing processes have been classified into three main groups comprising, pre-writing stages and post-writing or (re-writing) stages. Among these processes, planning, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, etc, will successively be reviewed below under their respective headings.

2.4.2.2.a The Pre-Writing Methods
As viewed by Jordan (1999), pre-writing method is the first stage of the writing process and the point at which we discover and explore our initial ideas about a subject. It is the way of organizing your thought and beginning to put the information you have in paper. It helps us brainstorm thoughts that might eventually make their way into our writing. These methods involve process activities such as planning, clustering, free-writing, looping cubing, dialoguing, dramatizing, matrixing, notetaking, outlining, etc.

For the ultimate benefit, let us handle the most fundamental pre-writing stages under their respective headings.

2.4.2.2.a.1 Brainstorming

Also called listing, brainstorming is a process of generating a lot of information within a short time by building on the association of previous terms the writer has mentioned. At this stage, the writer does activate his/her brain to get ready for thinking and expressing. Much like free-writing, it involves capturing all of the thought, ideas and fragments in your head and writing them down on paper. Often, brainstorming looks more like a list while free-writing may look more like a paragraph. With either strategy, your goal is to get as many ideas down on paper as you can (Jordan, ibid).

2.4.2.2.a.2 Planning

It is the stage during which the writer finds information and prepares to write. According to Sheal (1981), in writing an hour essay, at least ten minutes should be spent by the students in reading the question, thinking about it and making quickly an essay plan. Harrower (1983) reports that it is necessary for the student to consider why is he writing before he/she starts, so that the message will be clear. Is he/she writing to inform, to explain or recommend? With this knowledge in mind, he/she can choose the appropriate style, vocabulary and the level of formality. Wall and Petrovsky (1980) as quoted in Krashen (1984:14), found that more of their best freshmen writers reported spending a long time thinking before beginning to write and that the least able writers only sometimes think a long time before beginning to write, and rarely make any written plans or notes, preferring to begin by just beginning. Interviews conducted by Rose (1980) and Sommers (1980) as quoted in Krashen (ibid), show that not only good writers plan more, they also have more flexible plans - they are more willing to change their ideas as they write and to revise their outlines as
new ideas and arguments emerge. According to Lansford and Connor (1989),
planning includes everything the students do as they plan to draft: thinking about their
purpose, explaining a topic, coming up with a working thesis, gathering materials, and
deciding how to appeal the audience, and develop a strategy for organizing the
writing.

2.4.2.2.a.3 Clustering

According to Jordan (ibid, p.2), clustering is also called mind or idea mapping. It is
a strategy which allows you to explore the relationship between ideas. It is a non-
linear brainstorming technique whose results yield a visual representation of subject
and organization. It asks that we be receptive to words and phrases and to trust our
instincts. It is a generative tool (i.e. make use of the unconscious in retrieving
information) that help us to connect thoughts, feelings and ideas not connected before
. It allows us to loosely structure ideas as they occur in a shape that allows for the
further generation of ideas.

2.4.2.2.a.4 Free-writing

As maintained by Jordan (ibid, p.4), free-writing consists of focused but informal
writing about the topic at hand. It involves jotting down on paper all of the ideas you
have on a particular topic before you even begin to read about it or do research. You
are not worried about complete sentences, proper spelling, or correct punctuation and
grammar. Instead, you are interested in dumping all of the information you have on
paper. You should write everything that comes into your head even if it does not
necessarily make sense yet.

2.4.2.2.a.5 Looping

Oshiman (2006) argues that looping is a free-writing technique that allows you
to increasingly focus your ideas in trying to discover a writing topic. You loop one 5-
10 minute free-writing after another, so you have a sequence of free-writing, each
more specific than the other. The same rules that apply to free-writing apply to
looping: write quickly, do not edit and do not stop. Free-write on an assignment for 5-
10 minutes. Then, read through your free-writing, looking for interesting topics, ideas,
phrases, or sentences. Circle those you find interesting.
2.4.2.2.a.6 Cubing

Again, Oshiman (ibid) points out that cubing asks you to probe a topic from six different perspectives. First, select a topic (issue, person, idea, event, problem, object, scene, etc) and write at the top of your page to help you keep firmly in mind. Then, give yourself three to five minutes to write from each of the perspectives listed below. Start from what you know, but do not limit yourself: give yourself permission to identify those areas that will need further research and speculate about where you will discover this information. Try not to sabotage yourself; that is, keep going until you have written about your topic from all six perspectives.

2.4.2.2.a.7 Dialoguing

Once again, as Oshiman (ibid) explains, dialoguing asks that you interact on a personal level with your topic. It involves conversing with your topic. First, you need two characters, you may imagine two particular people or two sides of an issue, or may choose to speak as yourself to your topic or aspect of your topic, you may want to label the speakers 1 and 2, or give them names to help you keep track of who is speaking as you write.

2.4.2.2.a.8 Dramatizing

Also, Oshiman (ibid,p.3) suggests that dramatizing has a limited but powerful scope. Many writers find it invaluable when writing personal narratives to learn more about themselves or other significant people, when writing about literature, or when writing to inform or persuade the intended audience. We first need to define a few key terms, including action (the “what”): anything that happens; actor (the “who”): one who is involved in the action; setting (the “when” and “where”): the situation or the background of the action; motive (the “why”): the reason or purpose of the action; method (the “how”): whatever makes things happen.

2.4.2.2.a.9 Matrixing

Additionally, Oshiman (ibid,p.5) reports that a matrix is a two-dimensional display of information. One axis lists the questions or criteria based upon our analysis of the assignment of essay question to be applied to the items, or focuses listed on the other axis. A matrix helps us to more fully elaborate ideas via recognizing
relationships. It imposes a systematic and self-organizing method of inquiring based upon an analysis of the writing task. When used as the initial and sole pre-writing technique, a matrix can restrict association or recall and limit discovery.

2.4.2.2.b The Actual Writing Methods

The writing stage of process refers to the stage at which writing idea is ready for the words and page. It involves the actual wording and structuring of the information into written discourse or getting ideas down on paper. It is the stage of producing the first paragraphs and first drafts. This is namely, referred to as 'drafting' during which the writer puts down on paper a version of the essay.

2.4.2.2.b.1 Drafting

Lansford and Connor (ibid., p. 6) maintain that drafting is the central part of writing - the one element in the process that can never be skipped or avoided. As one student put it, drafting is where the rubber meets the road, the time when you try your ideas out in writing. As much as anything, drafting represents a process of exploration. The great British writer Forster (1962) once wrote: "how can I know what I think until I see what I say"? Indeed, some kind of understanding comes only from trying to express your ideas for others in writing. In writing the first draft of a paper, writers take previously-gathered and organized materials and structure them into a linear piece of discourse. Drafting is the process of putting ideas into visible language (Flower and Hayes, 1981). While producing the draft, writers continue to discover what they want to say and alter and refine initial plans. Especially when producing formal, analytical discourse, it is rare that ideas and organization of the piece are fully formulated in a writer’s mind before drafting begins. Flower and Hayes also point out that since it is difficult to attend to considerations on many levels (essay, paragraph, sentence, phrase, word, etc); all at once, writers typically write multiple drafts that is, a first draft with revisions for important papers. According to Lansford and Connor (ibid., p. 7), if your planning has been productive, the drafting stage may go almost as quickly as you can write.

2.4.2.2.c The Post-Writing Methods

This third process stage involves writing activities such as revising, editing and proofreading.

2.4.2.2.c.1 Revising
Lansford and Connor (ibid) report that revision means literally “to see again”. It means looking at a draft with a critical eye, seeing it a new and deciding if it accomplishes the goals you originally set out to accomplish. Some writers at first think that revising is a matter of simply correcting misspellings, inserting commas and typing up the result. Such work is much harder and more demanding than fixing misspellings and commas, for it may mean eliminating whole sections, moving paragraphs, writing new sentences, doing additional research, or even choosing a new topic all over again.

2.4.2.2.c.2 Editing and Proofreading

According to Lansford and Connor (ibid), with editing and proofreading, you make your essay ready for the word, which means it must meet those conventions of written form known as “correctness”. Sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, all must meet conventional standards. In editing, you may find yourself planning or drafting once again. Concerning proofreading, Sheal (1981), points out that at least ten minutes should be spent in reading the question, thinking about it, making quickly an essay plan. Ten minutes at the end should be devoted to proofreading in order to make your essay clear and to eliminate careless errors - these types of mistakes which can be corrected if you devote ten minutes after you have completed your essay to proofreading.

2.4.3 The Communicative Approach

Connor (1996) reports that a new discourse method was needed in the 1970s and 1980s to substitute the inadequacy of the traditional devices of language. This new method has been accorded many titles such as text linguistics, written discourse analysis and discourse linguistics. Widdoson (1991) mentions that there are two ways of dealing with language beyond the sentence level. The first sees language as text, a set of formal objects joined together by patterns of equivalence or frequencies or by cohesive categories. The second way, on the other hand, sees language as discourse, use of sentences to produce acts of communication that stick together into larger communicative units. Widdowson (1978) also points out that there is a general assumption that language is largely taught as communication by concentrating on notion, or function rather than on sentences. Raimes (1983), on the other hand, notes that the prime emphasis of the communicative approach will be on the purpose and audience of writing, that is, why am I writing and who will read it? It seems clear,
then, that learners normally need to use their knowledge of a language system so as to achieve some sort of communicative purpose. They have to focus the emphasis on language use and not simply show the abstract system of the language, and simultaneously perceive it as meaningful communicative concept. Moreover, meaning is also said to be an important element in communication. It has been mentioned that there are two kinds of meaning with regard to the communicative approach. First, sentences show meaning as instances of usage; they demonstrate propositions by combining words into structures based on grammatical aspects. This type of meaning is known as signification. For example, the signification of the sentence: "the policeman is crossing the road" stems from the fact that the type of the sentence is a declarative sentence, that the verb is present in tense and continuous in aspect, and its signification can be realized from the relationship between the grammatical meanings of the syntactic choice and the lexicon meanings of the lexical items policeman, cross and road. Secondly, sentences and parts of sentences are put to use for communicative purposes; this type of meaning is called value; the meaning sentences can take on when they used to perform various activities of communication (Widdowson 1978). Thus, the value of Widdowson's example: "the policeman is crossing the road" has been proposed to have several communicative functions based on the textual or situational circumstances in which it was used, such as commentary, warning, threat, or some other acts of communication.

Concerning the concepts and methods of text-linguistics and their implications for the study of writing, it has been reported that many researchers have examined the relationship between the cohesiveness of student's writing and its overall quality. Halliday and Hasan (1976, as quoted in Connor, 1996:83), for instance, indicate that there are five general types of cohesive devices that show coherence in texts: referential, ellipsis, substitution, lexical and cognitive cohesion. Empirically, the research conducted by Witte and Faigley (1981, quoted in Connor, 1996), concluded that a relationship exists between cohesion and coherence in university students' writing. Per contra, Tierney and Msenthal (1983, quoted in Connor, 1996), argue that there is no significant relationship between cohesion and coherence in American twelfth-grade students' essays.

Broadly speaking, the conclusion must be that these two elements of writing do overlap to some degree, and, therefore, we can point that a text does not necessarily be coherent in order to be cohesive.
Having highlighted the three approaches to teaching writing, certain points are worth mentioning. The first point to be made is that most of the approaches to teaching writing do overlap. That is, it is rare that a teacher will merely depend on one approach and turn a blind eye to other approaches. No doubt, therefore, in favor of Raimes’ viewpoint that a tutor using a communicative or a process approach will still use methods derived from other approaches such as model paragraphs, controlled compositions, free writing, sentence exercises, and paragraph analysis, which are useful in all approaches. Murray (1980:3, cited in Robinson, 1988:7) also adds: “Unfortunately, progress can not be inferred from product any more-just as a pig can be inferred from a sausage” (pp.3, 7).

Consequently, we can conclude that there is no one path to writing, rather, there are many different paths. Raimes, for example, states that writing can not and should not be interpreted as composed of separate skills that are learned one after another. Nevertheless, despite this overlap between the various methodologies that student-writers may come across, they are believed to have something in common. They seem to come up from the fact that writing can be meant to stand for a connected text rather than single sentences.

2.5 The Teaching of Writing

According to Hyland (2002), writing is among the most important skills that L2 students need to develop, and ability to teach writing is central to the expertise of a well-trained language teacher. But while interest in L2 writing and approaches to teaching it have increased dramatically over the last decade, teachers are often left to their own resources in the classroom as much of the relevant theory and research fails to reach them. The extreme aim behind the teaching of writing is to help language teachers become teachers of writing and to meet the needs of those who are or will be teaching students who speak English as a L2 or FL in colleges, universities, workplaces, language institutes, and senior secondary schools. This will be done by putting together the theory and practice of teaching writing to present an accessible and practical introduction to the subject. A strong teacher is a reflective teacher, and reflection requires the knowledge to relate classroom activities to relevant research and theory. The teaching of writing emphasizes the view that writing involves composing skills and knowledge about texts, contexts, and readers, so that writers need realistic strategies for drafting
and revising as well as clear understanding of their writing experience according to
the demands and constraints of particular contexts, therefore, it is necessary to
incorporate the elements of strategy, language and context. Hyland adds that, learning
how to write in a L2 is one of the most challenging aspects of L2 learning. Perhaps
this is not surprising in view of the fact that even for those who speak English as a
first language, the ability to write effectively is something that requires intensive and
specialized instruction and which has consequently spawned a vast freshman
composition industry in American colleges and universities. Within the field of L2
and FL teaching, the teaching of writing has come to assume a much more central
position than it occupied twenty or thirty years ago. This is perhaps the result of two
factors. On the one hand, command of good writing skills is increasingly seen as vital
to equip learners for success in the twenty-first century. On the other hand, the ability
to communicate ideas and information effectively through the global digital network
is crucially dependent on good writing skills in that writing has been identified as one
of the essential process skills in a world that is more than ever driven by text and
numerical data.

A number of theories supporting teachers’ efforts to understand L2 writing
and learning have developed since EFL/ESL writing first emerged as a distinctive
area of scholarship in the 1980s. Each of such theories has been enthusiastically taken
up, translated into appropriate methodologies and put to work in classrooms. According to Raimes (1983), it would be wrong to see each writing theory growing
out of and replacing the last, but they are seen as complementary and overlapping
perspectives, representing compatible means of understanding the complex nature of
writing.

The teaching of writing is mainly based on the two prominent writing
approaches. That is, the product approach and the process approach.

2.5.1 The Teaching of Writing as Product

With regard to teaching the writing as product, the skills-based teachers, teach
writing in fragmented pieces of language, with the assumption that students can not
compose until they master the sub-skills that stem from writing (Al-Koumy, 2002).
According to Hyland (2002), teaching writing in the view of this approach
predominantly involves developing learners’ skills in producing fixed patterns and
responding to writing means identifying and correcting problems in the student’s
control of the language system. Many of these techniques are widely used today in
writing classrooms at lower levels of language proficiency for building vocabulary,
scaffolding writing development and increasing the confidence of novice writers.
Hyland (ibid), points out that an emphasis on language structure as basis for writing
teaching is typically a four stages process including, familiarization, in which learners
are taught certain grammar and vocabulary usually through a text; controlled writing,
through which learners manipulate fixed patterns often from the so-called substitution
table; guided writing, through which learners imitate model texts; and finally, free
writing, in which learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay,
letter, and so forth. The above-mentioned techniques are explicitly taught in form of
sub-skills comprising a variety of classroom activities such as, copying model
compositions, organizing a set of disorganized notes into topic areas with topic
sentences and secondary points, rearranging scrambled sentences to make up a
paragraph, predicting the methods of developing a topic sentence, analyzing a passage
with the help of questions, filling in the missing connectives in a composition, filling
in the missing words or sentences in a composition, combining a set of sentences to
make up a composition, writing topic sentences to give paragraphs, reading a passage
and answering the questions about it in complete sentences to make up paragraphs,
making a summary of a reading or listening passage using one’s own words as far as
possible, rewriting a passage from another person’s point of view, changing a
narrative into a dialogue and changing a dialogue into a narrative, etc.

2.5.2 The Teaching of Writing as Process

With regard to teaching the writing as process, the whole language approach
teachers, on the other hand, handle writing by immersing students in the actual
process of writing (Al-Koumy, 2002). As maintained by Hyland (2002), for writing
teachers, this model helps explain the difficulties their L2 students sometimes
experience because of task complexity and lack of topic knowledge. Its emphasis on
reflective thought also stresses the need for students to participate in a variety of
cognitively challenging writing tasks to develop their skills and the importance of
feedback and revision in the process of transforming both content and expression. A significant number of writing teachers adopt process orientation as the main focus of their courses, and this approach has had a major impact on writing research and teaching in North America. The teacher’s role is to guide students through the writing process, by avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas. This is achieved through setting prewriting activities to generate ideas about content and structure, encouraging brainstorming and outlining ideas, requiring multiple drafts, giving extensive feedback, seeking text level revision, facilitating peer responses, and delaying surface corrections until the final editing (Raimes, 1983). The teaching strategies developed to facilitate process goals have extended to most teaching contexts and there are few who have not employed teacher-student conferences, problem-based assignments, journal writing, group discussion, or portfolio assessments in their class. A priority of teachers in this orientation, therefore, is to develop their students’ metacognitive awareness of their processes, that is, their ability to reflect on the strategies they use to write (Hyland, ibid,p.50). In the classroom of this approach, students write whole compositions and share them with the teacher or other people from the start (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988). According to Al-Koumy (ibid, p. 69), there are three consistent techniques followed in the classrooms of this approach comprising, dialogue journal writing, dialogue letter writing and actual process writing.

2.5.2.1 Dialogue Journal Writing

Dialogue journal writing is a long-term written conversation between a student and the teacher in or out of classroom. Students write on any topic and the teacher writes back to each student, making comments and offering opinions (Peyton and Reed, 1990). That is, teachers do not correct journals in the traditional sense. Rather, they respond by asking questions and commenting on the content (Jenkinson, 1988). Such responses drive the process and endow the activity with meaning (Hennings, 1992). Atwell (1987) argues that the dialogue journal partner does not have to be the teacher and that students may be paired with each other. Rather than leaving dialogue journal topics completely open-ended, Walworth (1990) suggests that the teacher can use it to focus the discussion on a certain topic. In classes with word processors that
are easily accessible to all students, Peyton and Reed (1990) suggest that the journal may be on a disk passed back and forth and if schools have access to electronic mail, messages can be sent without the exchange of disks. Naiman (1988), Wham and Lenski (1994) add that with access to computer networks, students can keep dialogue journals with other students in different parts of the world.

As argued by Hamayan (1989), Peyton (1990), Porter et al (1990), Steffensen (1988), the benefits of dialogue journal writing include individualizing the teaching of writing, using writing and reading for real communication, making students more process-oriented, bridging the gap between speaking and writing, developing students’ awareness of the real purposes of reading and writing, promoting autonomous learning, improving vocabulary and punctuation skills, raising students’ self-confidence, helping students become more fluent writers, and increasing opportunities for interaction between students and teachers and among students themselves.

### 2.5.2.2 Dialogue Letter Writing

As pointed out by Al-Koumy (2002), letter writing is another technique for immersing students in writing to a real audience for a real purpose. Students use this technique when they want to communicate through writing with someone inside or outside the school. After writing their letters, students deliver or mail them for hope that they will be answered.

Respondents accept students’ letters and comment on meaning rather than on form. Perhaps the most important reason for using letter writing is that students enjoy writing and receiving letters (Hall, 1994). In an effort to understand young children’s abilities as letter writers, (Hall, Robinson, and Crawford (1991) investigated whether or not very young native English-speaking children could sustain a letter-writing dialogue. Hall and Crawford wrote on an individual basis to all children in a class taught by Robinson. The researchers found that children from the beginning functioned totally, efficiently and appropriately as correspondents. As the exchanges progressed, children showed that they could generate novel topics, sustain topics, and when appropriate, close topics. Droge (1995) also found that letter dialogue writing improved students’ writing skills as well as their self-esteem.

### 2.5.2.3 Actual Process Writing
As viewed by Hyland (2002), this third technique of teaching the writing as
process actually seeks to find logical answers to the questions of what cognitive skills
might be involved in the writing process. What methods may help students to develop
their abilities to carry out a writing task? This will be fulfilled by applying a variety of
processes comprising, selection of a topic by the teacher
and/or student; pre-writing activities including brainstorming, collecting data, note
taking, outlining, etc; composing by getting ideas down on paper; response to drafts
by which teacher/peers respond to ideas, organization and style; revising including
reorganizing style, adjusting to readers and refining ideas; response to revisions by
which teacher/peers respond to ideas, organization and style; proofreading and editing
including checking and correcting forms, layout evidence, etc; evaluation by which
the teacher evaluates progress over the process; publishing by class circulation or
presentation of notice boards, websites, etc; follow-up tasks to address students’
weaknesses.

2.6 Summary of Research on Writing Instruction

According to Al-Koumy (2002), a review of research on writing instruction
showed that although the skills-based and the whole-language approaches have
contrasting views, both have been valued by researchers as useful instructional
approaches for developing writing. Some studies obtained positive results with the
skills-based approach by examining the mastery of certain sub-skills and their effect
on writing. The results of such studies revealed that: (1) Explicit story grammar
instruction improved the narrative writing of average and below average students
(e.g., Al-Koumy, 1999; Fitzgerald and Teasley, 1986; Gambrell and Chasen, 1991;
Gordon and Braun, 1982; Learnan, 1993, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:73); (2)
Explicit instruction in expository text structures had a positive effect on the quality of
students’ expository writing (e.g., Hiebert et al., 1983; Murray, 1993; Taylor and
Beach, 1984); (3) Explicit teaching of formal grammar improved the quality of
students’ writing (e.g., Govindasamy, 1995; Melendez, 1993; Neulieb and Brosnahan,
1987; Yeung, 1993); (4) Direct teaching of sentence combining improved the quality
of students’ writing (e.g., Abdan, 1981; Combs, 1976; Coopr, 1981). A second body
of research revealed that the whole-language approach improved students’ writing
quality (e.g., Agnew, 1995; Cress, 1990; Loshbaugh, 1993; Lucas, 1988; Maguire,
1992; Mclaughlin, 1994; Roberts, 1991, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002). A third body
of studies revealed that the two instructional approaches resulted in an equivalent statistical effect on students writing (e.g., Adair-Hauck, 1994; Shearer, 1992).

The bodies of research reviewed above provide indirect evidence that a combination of both the skills-based and the whole-language approaches can boost students’ writing above the levels that occur with either alone. Direct support of this comprehensive approach comes from studies done by Jones (1995) and Nagle (1989). Jones (1995) compared the effects of an electric approach versus a whole-language approach on the writing skills of first grade students. She found that the electric approach resulted in statistically significant writing skills’ scores than the whole-language approach. Nagle (1989) compared the stories written by students in five first grade classes being taught by a whole-language/process approach, a traditional approach and a combination of both. She found that the mean scores were consistently higher in classes with teachers that integrated the holistic and traditional teaching methods as compared to classes being taught in a more holistic or more traditional settings.

2.7 Writing in Relationship to Other Skills of Language

As mentioned in the previous chapter, writing has been proved to have an extremely great influence on the rest of the main language skills (i.e. reading, speaking, and listening), although its degree of influence is usually proportional focusing on one skill rather than another. In this context, let us shed light on integrating writing with both reading and speaking respectively and separately which are chosen as the most effectual elements on writing.

2.7.1 Integrating Writing with Reading

Influenced by the neuropsychologists who hold that comprehension is located in one area of the brain and production in another, advocates of the skills-based approach claim that reading and writing are parallel and independent aspects of language. That is, the two skills are linguistically and pedagogically different from each other. The following extracts show this point of view:

“In child language, both observational and research evidence point to the superiority of comprehension over production: children understand more than they actually produce. For instance, a child may understand a sentence with an embedded relative in it, but not be able to produce one. (Brown, 1987, pp. 26-27)”
The primary difference between the two activities (i.e. writing and reading), is that writing depends on more detailed analyzed knowledge. The required degree of analyzed knowledge about sound-spelling relationships is greater when expressively spelling words than when receptively recognizing them. Similarly, vague notions of discourse structure may be adequate to interpret written texts but are decidedly inadequate to produce it (Bialystock and Ryan, 1985). The receptive skill of reading is much more easily acquired and more easily retained than the productive skill of writing. But the learning of reading also has special characteristics that relate to its institutional or language nature. The learner must show how to respond as a reader to writing of many different types, of many different degrees of difficulty recorded at different times and in different places. Writing, on the contrary, like speaking, is a highly personal affair, in which the learner must respect all the mandatory features of the target language code as it appears when written, while at the same time, being permitted and encouraged to exploit the volitional and creative aspects of the new language to the extent that his ability and experience permit (Brooks, 1964). In a similar vein, some educators claim that a writer and a reader of a text follow inverse cognitive processes (e.g., Beaugrande, 1979; Page, 1974; Yoos, 1979). More specifically, they claim that writers encode meaning, whereas readers decode it. Figure (2.1), represents Page’s view (1974:176) in this point.

![Figure (2.1): Page's view of integrating writing with reading](image)

The previously-mentioned standpoint resulted in treading writing and reading as separate entities in the classroom as well as in language arts curricula at all levels. Furthermore, most of the empirical studies related to these skills, as Reid (1993) states, progressed so independently for the past twenty years.
On the other hand, advocates of the whole-language approach, among others, argue that both writing and reading are potentially equal and integrated. Some (e.g., Norris and Hoffman, 1993; Taylor, 1981) view the sub-skills of writing and reading as virtually the same. Figure (2.2), for example, represents Taylor’s view (1981, pp. 30 - 31) in this point.
Figure (2.2): Taylor’s subskills of integrating writing with reading
In the same vein, (Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986), Janopoulos (1986), Rosenblatt (1988), and Sternglass (1986), quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:90) describe writing and reading as similar patterns of thinking; Singh (1989) and Squire (1983) see them as two aspects of the same activity; Flood and Lapp (1987) and Morris (1981) view them as mutually reinforcing interactive processes. Furthermore, Tierney and colleagues (1981, 1983) hold that writing and reading activate schemata about the content and form of the topic which consequently influence what is produced or understood.

In line with the assumption that writing and reading are interdependent, some language teaching theoreticians assert that the teaching of reading involves the teaching of writing and vice versa. As Kenneth and Yetta Goodman (1983) note, people not only learn to read by reading, and write by writing, but they also learn to read by writing and write by reading.

As a balanced view, Al-Koumy’s comprehensive approach (2002) holds that there are differences and similarities between reading and writing. He maintains that, unlike writing which is meaning-generating, reading is meaning-abstracting. On the other hand, readers and writers alike use a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, reading should be taught separately from writing at the beginning of foreign language learning to stress the unique properties of each skill. Then, both skills should be integrated at the intermediate level to stress the commonalities between them.

2.7.1.1 Summary of Research on Writing-Reading Relationship

A review of research on the relationship between writing and reading revealed that some studies support the view that the two skills are independent behaviors (e.g., Evans, 1979, Fuller, 1974; Perry, 1980; Siedow, 1973, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:91); whereas other studies offer support for the view that the two skills are interdependent (e.g., Acuna, 1986; Balkiewicz, 1992; D’Angelo, 1977; Flahive ad Bailey, 1993; Hill, 1982; Holtz, 1988; Hullett, 1986; Kane, 1983; Popplewell, 1984, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:91). Similarly, some studies showed that training in writing produced positive effects on reading (e.g., Denner et al, 1989; Donohue, 1985; Kelley, 1984; Zuckernmann, 1987, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:92); whereas other studies indicated that writing instruction did not lead to improvement in reading (e.g., Frey, 1993).
In the light of the experimental literature reviewed above, there is indirect
evidence that there are differences and similarities between writing and reading.
Direct support as argued by Al-Koumy (ibid:92), comes from Webster and Ammon’s
(1994) study which revealed that there are some skills specific to writing and others
common to both writing and reading.

2.7.1.2 Classroom Activities for Integrating Writing with Reading

According to Al-Koumy (2002), writing and reading integration can be
implemented in the EFL classroom through two opposite activities comprising:
writing-to-read activities, and reading-to-write activities. Each of these activities is
divided into three main stages, and each stage follows a variety of techniques.

2.7.1.2.1 Writing-to-read Activities

Such activities can be divided into three instructional stages including: (a) Pre-
writing activities, e.g., asking students to read materials that teach various
organizational patterns before writing. (b) While-writing activities, e.g., asking
students to pause to scan and read during writing. (c) Post-writing activities, e.g.,
asking students to read each other’s writing and respond to it.

2.7.1.2.2 Reading-to-write Activities

Likewise, such activities can be constrained through the above-mentioned
instructional stages of: (a) Pre-reading activities, e.g., asking students to write their
own questions, thoughts and associations about the theme of the text before they read
it. (b) While-reading activities, e.g., asking students to take notes while reading. (c)
Post-reading activities, e.g., asking students to write summaries, syntheses and
critiques about what they have read.

2.7.2 Integrating Writing with Speaking

Advocates of the skills-based approach take the position that writing and
speaking are completely different skills of language. According to Lakoff (1982), it is
generally acknowledged that written and oral communication involve very different
kinds of strategies: what works orally does not work in print, and vice versa. The
reasons for this discrepancy, according to Al-Kourny (2002), are that oral
communication works through the assumption of immediacy or spontaneity; writing
on the other hand is planned, organized and non-spontaneous.

Ordinary speech, unlike the written word, contains many ungrammatical,
reduced, or incomplete forms, as well as hesitations, false starts, repetitions, fillers
and pauses, all of which make up 30-50% of any conversation (Oxford, 1990, 1993, p. 206). The fact that writing is a slow, deliberate and editable process, whereas speaking is done on the fly leads to a difference that Al-Koumy (ibid) called the integrated quality of written language as opposed to the fragmented quality of spoken. The fact that writing is a lonely activity whereas speaking typically takes place in an environment of social interaction causes written language to have a detached quality that contrasts with the involvement of spoken language (Chafe, 1985).

The above position resulted in treating writing and speaking as separate entities in the classroom as well as in language arts curricula. On the other hand, advocates of the whole-language approach, among other language theoreticians, assume that speaking and writing are equal and integrated skills (e.g., Goodman, 1986; Johnson, 1989; Myers, 1987). One reason for this assumption is that both oral and written language come from the same source which is one’s communicative competence. A second reason is that both writing and speaking are productive modes of the language and employ many of the same faculties (Larson and Jones, 1984). A third reason, as Magnan (1985) notes is that writing is sometimes the only possible form for speech, and speech is the most feasible form for writing.

A final reason is that writing involves talking to oneself which is considered one of the characteristics of effective speakers (Klein, 1977).

In line with the above assumption, some language teaching theoreticians assert that speaking and writing should be taught simultaneously and that involvement in the meaningful and communicative use of language is central for the development of both skills. Al-Koumy’s comprehensive approach (ibid, p. 96) holds that although speaking and writing are different in some aspects, they share others. They are different in that a speaker uses intonation, stress patterns and facial expressions to convey information, whereas a writer conveys information through words and writing conventions. In other words, the speaker uses the sound (phonetic) system, whereas the writer uses the print (graphemic) system. They are similar in that both speakers and writers create meaning. Therefore, Al-Koumy’s above position is that the unique properties of each skill should be taught first before focusing on the elements common to both.

2.7.2.1 Summary of Research on Writing-Speaking Relationship

Research on the writing speaking relationship yielded two sets of findings. One set showed that writing and speaking are different forms and/or not correlated
(e.g., Hildyard and Hidi, 1985; Lee, 1991; Mazzie, 1987; Redker, 1984; Sweeney, 1983, as cited in Al-Koumy, 2002:96). The other set showed that writing and speaking are similar forms and/or correlated (e.g., Abu-Humos, 1993; Cooper, 1982; Negm, 1995; Tannen, 1982, a and b, as cited in Al-Koumy, 2002:96). These bodies of research collectively provide indirect support for Al-Koumy’s comprehensive position that there are similarities and differences between writing and speaking.

2.7.2.2 Classroom Activities for Integrating Writing with Speaking

As suggested by Al-Koumy (2002), writing-speaking integration can be implemented in the EFL classroom through many activities among which are: (1) Asking students to write down sentences in the way they are spoken. (2) Asking students to discuss the topic they are going to write about. (3) Asking students to discuss what they have written in pairs or groups (4) Asking students to orally narrate the stories they have written. (5) Giving writing assignments in which students can manipulate features of voice such as stories, dialogues, letters, etc.

2.8 English Language Grammar

As defined in Wikipedia’s "Free Encyclopedia", English grammar is the study of the rules governing the use of the English language. Grammars of English can be either prescriptive or descriptive. Prescription sets rules for language while description simply describes the way a language is spoken and written. The grammar of English is in some way relatively simple, and in other ways complex. For example, there is no grammatical gender, and plurals and tense are mostly regular. On the other hand, the use of the progressive tense (i.e.ing), is unique, subtle and basic to everyday expression, therefore, it presents a significant hurdle to many second-language speakers.

2.9 Grammar and Vocabulary

In recent years, there is a strong tendency among the linguists and theoreticians that to be able to use a word, EFL learners must be aware of the grammatical pattern that suits the word. That is to say, to be able to recognize the different ways of combining words together to make meaningful sentences. Thus, grammar and vocabulary are largely interrelated. In fact, corpora information reveals that there is more lexical patterning than ever predicted, and that much of what has been taken as grammar turned to be influenced by lexical choices (Schmitt: 2001). So, such a point of view will make one to argue that grammar and vocabulary are related.
entities. Importantly, we might be in a position to think of them as relatively linked patterns with each one impacting on the other. Wilkins (1983) points out that the assumption that vocabulary learning can be delayed until a considerable proposition of the grammatical system has to be acquired is possible only where the learner is not likely to have an encourageable social need to use the language. However, what can be added is that to communicate effectively and adequately through the language, a command of both grammar and vocabulary is needed. Experience shows that to learn a heap of words without knowing to construct them is of little practical value. Likewise, there is not great value in being able to establish grammatical sentences if a learner has not got the right lexemes that are needed to convey what he/she wishes to say. Thus, Wilkins argues that people should not accept the belief that vocabulary is less important than grammar on the ground that while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed, and adds that what people normally think of as “vocabulary items” - nouns, verbs, and adjectives do indeed contain more information that is carried by grammatical elements. Empirical research studies have shown that some word classes are much easier to master than others. In this respect, Morgan and Bonham (1944), quoted in Schmitt, 2001:59), found that nouns were the easiest items to be learned, while adverbs were considered to be the most difficult items.

Generally speaking, the belief held by researchers and many language teachers is that lexicon plays an important part in learning grammar. Summers (1988, quoted in Nunna, 1991:127) indicates that lexicons are not only used for finding out meanings and checking spellings, but also for gaining insights into the grammatical aspects of the words. Similarly, Sinclair’s (1987, quoted in Nation, 2001:56) research studies have proved that lexical choice shows the grammatical construction of the rest of the sentence. Leveit (1989) also suggests that aspects of grammatical knowledge are included in the lexicon. Cocostegue (1991) proposes that grammar instruction appears to be very essential for achieving a good level of proficiency in the target language. He adds that if we accept that fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicative in that language, then we must try to integrate the teaching of grammar into a communicative framework.

Principally, some teachers tend to pay a substantial attention to the concept of grammatical well-formedness of an essay. But, according to Schmitt, it seems clear that words might be the factors demanding more consideration. Santos (1988), also
argues that vocabulary choice is an important step towards a student’s writing quality. In other words, the standard of the student’s writing will strongly show whether he/she has used or chosen the appropriate words for the essay.

From the foregoing statement, we can conclude that grammar is closely linked to vocabulary and that failure to observe its importance in learning vocabulary can result in an inappropriate use of that vocabulary especially in writing. So, it is highly recommended that EFL learners should consider the functional, lexical and grammatical aspects as necessary elements in carrying out their written tasks.

2.10 Summary

This chapter has further portrayed the research’s theoretical structure. It has covered some major discourse analysis studies closely related to both writing and grammar. In so fulfilling, it has specifically defined the writing and its major processes as well as shedding due light on the teaching of writing and its integration with other language skills, namely, reading and speaking. In addition, this chapter has touched on defining English grammar and showing its relationship with vocabulary.

The following chapter will specifically review the literature within the studies previously carried out in a close relevance to the theme of the current research. In so achieving, the researcher will depend on a variety of materials obtained from different sources comprising, books, theses, journals, academic and conference papers, websites, etc, which will actually act as logical and relevant representation for the target research literature.
Chapter Three
Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will specifically review the literature within the studies previously carried out in a close relevance to the theme of the current research. Broadly speaking, it can be acknowledged that there is a considerable literature written in the field of writing in general and in the areas combining EFL learners' grammar with writing in particular. Despite the fact that there are some studies whose results might have shown very little impact of EFL students' grammatical knowledge standard on the qualitative value of their written production, there still many other studies stand firmly in line with the assumption integrating EFL learners' level of grammatical proficiency with their overall composing quality. In an attempt to show this evidence, let us shed some light on a variety of studies which have proved to be a logical and relevant literature to the current research's topic.

3.2 The Current Research's Relevant Literature

Arabi (2004) investigated the correlation between lexical competence and EFL students' writing quality, pointing out that the learners' vocabulary adequacy very considerably affects their textual quality. In so proving, he had tested EFL students' both lexis and writing standard separately and then conducted a detailed comparison between the target students' composing and lexical tests' findings concluding that the most lexically competent students have shown the best writing accuracy.

Abdellah (2000) conducted a study that investigated Sudanese EFL learners' written discourse competence as the case of fourth year English students in some Sudanese national universities. The researcher has deeply analyzed the target students' writing with regard to their discourse competence. He has further pointed out that the target students' composing was characterized by a low awareness of the properties of English written discourse, i.e., discourse cohesion, discourse coherence, and discourse mechanics. Furthermore, he has concluded that the students' low awareness of these discourse attributes seems to correlate with their overall writing quality in that the majority of their written performance was below the average.

Again, in the same study (2004), under a topic entitled: "Grammar and Vocabulary", Arabi indicated indirectly to the importance of learners' grammatical
knowledge for achieving a good level of their writing proficiency. He concluded that grammar is closely linked to vocabulary and that failure to observe its importance in learning vocabulary can result in an inappropriate use of that vocabulary especially in writing. So, it is highly recommended that EFL learners should consider the functional, lexical and grammatical aspects as fundamental elements in carrying out their written tasks.

Similarly, Cocostegue (1991) proposes that grammar instruction appears to be very essential for achieving a good level of proficiency in the target language. He maintains that if we accept that fundamental purposes of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in that language, then we must try to integrate the teaching of grammar into a communicative framework.

Al-Zain (2006) in a study carried out to investigate EFL Students' paragraph writing concluded that EFL learners' inadequacy of paragraph writing is highly attributed to their low awareness of many of essential writing skills and strategies through their different learning stages. The researcher has argued seriously that students must first experience the major composing rules, then, they will have enough opportunity of being capable of well-paragraphing. Thus, this study meets with the objectives of the current research in that both of them seek to examine the learners' written performance.

Additionally, Al-Koumy (2002) in his book that handles the comprehensive approach of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, definitely, in the section of, "The Importance of Grammar", explained that there is great evidence that grammar instruction improves students' written and/or oral language proficiency.

In the same book, under a topic entitled: "Summary of Research on Writing Instruction", Al-Koumy has gathered some studies examining the mastery of certain linguistic sub-skills and their effect on writing. The results of such studies have revealed that: (1) Explicit story grammar instruction improved the narrative writing of average and below average students (e.g., Al-Koumy, 1999; Fitzgerald and Teasley, 1985; Gambrell and Chasen 1991; Gordon and Braun, 1982, 1983; Leaman, 1993). (2) Explicit instruction in expository text structures had a positive effect on the quality of students' expository writing (e.g., Hiebert et al, 1983; Murray, 1993; Taylor and Beach, 1984). (3) Explicit teaching of formal grammar improved the quality of students' writing (e.g., Covindasamy, 1995, Melendez, 1993, Neulieb and Brosnahan,

A second body of Al-Koumy's gathered studies revealed that the whole-language approach improved students' writing (e.g., Agnew, 1995; Grawford, 1995; Cress, 1990; Loshbaugh, 1993; Lucas, 1988; Maguire, 1992, McLaughlin, 1994; Robert, 1991).

A third body of Al-Koumy's gathered studies revealed that both the skills-based approach and the whole language approach resulted in an equivalent statistical effect on students' writing (e.g., Adair-Hauck, 1994, Shearer, 1992).

The three bodies of research reviewed above provide indirect evidence that a combination of the two instructional approaches can boost students' writing quality above the levels that occur with either alone. Direct support of this comprehensive approach comes from studies done by Jones (1995) and Nagle (1989). Jones (1995) compared the stories written by students in five first grade classes being taught by a whole-language (i.e. process approach), a traditional (i.e. product approach) and a combination of both (i.e. comprehensive approach). She found that the mean scores were consistently higher in classes with teachers that integrated the holistic and traditional teaching methods as compared to classes being taught in a more holistic and more traditional setting.

With the above views in mind, we reveal obviously that the best writing instruction involves the combination of all sub-skills that stem from writing such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling handwriting, punctuation, etc.) With the communicative setting, hence, providing an objective support to the target research's major assumption.

Similarly, Hyland (2002) in his book on the teaching and researching of writing pointed out that the teaching of writing emphasizes the view that writing involves composing skills and knowledge about texts, contexts and readers. Therefore, he argues that it is necessary in writing to incorporate the elements of strategies (i.e., composing rules), language (i.e., grammatical, syntactic and lexical components), and context (i.e. audience, purpose, situational settings). Practically, this view also bases a considerable literature for the ongoing research by relating writing proficiency possibility to other effectual factors, particularly, grammatical accuracy.
Likewise, McCa (1991), in his book discussing the discourse analysis methods and strategies for language teachers, namely, under a topic entitled: "Grammatical Cohesion and Textuality", very deeply investigated the interdependent relationship between grammar and writing, arguing that learners' grammatical competence, to a large extent, affects their textuality, explaining that while in oral communication, grammatical mistakes can be expected and tolerated, because speech is usually a spontaneous process and, thus, very little attention can be paid to its mistakes of sentence structure, in writing on the other hand, writers have to be aware of the importance of avoiding such grammatical mistakes so as to compensate for the absence of the elements related to spoken language. Therefore, it clearly appears from the foregoing view that it constitutes a very logical relevance to the current study's core hypothesis that grammaticality influences textuality, and vice versa.

In a similar vein, Cooper (1981), wrote an article in the Modern Language Journal, with regard to sentence combining process as an experimental step in teaching writing. The writer has indicated to the significance of EFL learners' grammatical adequacy as a basic factor in achieving good quality levels of their textuality, maintaining that to be well-backgrounded with the essential composing skills, learners must, first and foremost, be acquainted to the syntactic rules judging their proper use and usage, hence, representing a close relevance to the current research since syntactic rules are the first components of grammatical rules.

Another considerable study related to the current research is the one carried by Agnew (1995), focusing on improving students' composing competence by using the whole-language instruction as the most practical methodology in which the researcher proposes that the so-called whole-language approach to the learning and teaching of writing as contrary to skills-based approach, is the most effective instructional method for enhancing students' writing quality. The researcher has importantly recommended that instead of being taught as explicitly fragmented pieces of language, the sub-skills of writing such as grammar, vocabulary punctuation, spelling, handwriting, etc, should be learned or taught simultaneously with writing with a purpose of performing more positive communicative tasks. In the light of this argument, it seems clear that the whole-language approach goes straightforward in line with the current research's central assumption in that both views do correlate grammatical knowledge with written production.
Starting from the same point of view, Concepcion (1992), conducted a study to examine the effects of grammar knowledge on the writing skills of business English students in Puerto Rico, on their overall writing skills. The researcher investigated profoundly the extent to which grammatical and composing capabilities of business English students influence each other, maintaining that, to prove themselves as proficient student-writers in the material associated with their subject matter, business English students have to, first, demonstrate higher levels of grammatical proficiency, otherwise, they will show very poor performance in dealing with their business material. In spite of the fact that the researcher has focused the emphasis only on investigating the business students' writing, he implicitly included the examination of other learners' writing status from grammatical perspective, thus, drawing a typical linkage with the target research's theme.

Another relevant study to the current research is the one carried out by Siedow (1973) to investigate the close interrelationship between learners' syntactic maturity in oral and written language and their reading comprehension of materials of varying syntactic complexity. Although it specifically investigates the role of both syntax and written language in achieving reading comprehension by students, the research implies indirectly to the role of syntactic awareness in fulfilling writing proficiency for EFL learners, since syntax is the first component of grammar as acknowledged by many or even all linguists, therefore, it makes another indirect implication to integrating the learners' grammatical competence with their overall writing quality which is the central quest of the current study.

Likewise, in the academic website "ERIC". Document No. ED413780, under a topic explaining the effects of instruction in story grammar on the narrative writing of EFL students, Al-Koumy (1999) pointed out to the close association of EFL students' grammatical accuracy with their written discourse improvement, arguing that in so doing, adequate knowledge of both grammatical and composing rules should be incorporated. Thus, it is obviously recognized that the above-mentioned study constitutes a very close attachment to the current research's major theme.

Another relevant material supporting the current study's view can be drawn from the occasional paper on the development of English education, 17, 81-106, presented by Ibrahim (1993), under a topic interpreting the integration of speakers' grammatical structure with their communicative practice through situationally based dialogues, in which he touched on the inevitability of correlating grammatical skills
with the communicative ones in the direction of establishing a logical basis for realizing constructive conservations among speakers. In spite of the fact that the researcher has paradoxically handled the correlation between the learners' grammatical and oral knowledge, written discourse is not clear-cut separable, since writing and speaking are closely integrated skills of language as mentioned repeatedly in the previous chapter.

Additionally, under a topic handling grammar as source in writing a composition, Schleppegrell (1998) explained how the achievement of good grammatical proficiency by EFL/ESL students constitutes a vital platform for their composing progress. Therefore, it goes in the direction of supporting the current study's core assumption of linking grammaticality with textuality.

Similarly, Montague (1988) pointed out in the educational database ERIC Document No. ED502819, under a topic comparing the study of story grammar and learning disabled students' comprehension and production of narrative prose, to the interdependent link between EFL students' grammatical and textual competence.

In another topic in ERIC database (1996) Document No. ED292067, discussing the educational implication of a study on grammar and basic writing skills in a developmental English course, Davis maintained that the study of both grammatical and writing skills has proved to contribute effectively to the process of developing the qualitative status of students' course materials. Despite its apparent indication to the role of both grammar and writing in promoting learners' courses, the foregoing study indirectly reveals the correlation between the learners' grammatical and composing abilities, hence, producing an objective literature for the ongoing research.

Dekeyser (1993), in "The Journal of Modern Language", 77, 501-14, under a topic explaining the effects of error correction on L2 grammar Knowledge and oral proficiency, drew an indirect relationship between students' grammatical accuracy and textuality, since students' oral and written production are closely interrelated elements of language according to the previous chapter. Thus, it acts as a significant addition to the current research's review of literature.

At ERIC database (1981) Document No. ED217388, under a topic exploring the effects of sentence-combining on fifth grade reading and writing achievement, McAfee demonstrated the extent to which fifth grade students' sentence structuring practice affects their both reading and writing proficiency, which goes in line with the
current study's assumption as an important addition to its review of literature despite its investigation of the target learners' both reading and writing.

Moreover, in the "Journal of Basic Writing", 6(2), 29-35, under a topic entitled: "Teaching Grammar to Writers", Brosnahan and Neulieb (1987) maintained that student-writers must be seriously taught the grammatical rules which will guide them to the proper handling of their L2 or FL writing as an important indication to the correlation between the students' grammatical competence and their written discourse quality, hence, creating another direct contribution to the target study's literature review.

Furthermore, Hiebert, et al (1983), in the "Journal of Reading Behavior", 15(4), 63-79, under a topic addressing the awareness of text structure in recognition and production of expository discourse, also indicated indirectly to the necessity of sentence-combing awareness as a vital platform for achieving good proficiency levels in the learners' written discourse production, because text structure awareness acts as a part of students' grammatical well-formedness. Thus, it represents an indirect indication to the correlation between the learners' grammatical awareness and composing abilities.

In a similar vein, Hidi and Hidyard (1985), in their book investigating the oral-written differences in the production and recall of narratives, touched on the differences between students' oral and written discourse, maintaining that, while speaking is largely a spontaneous process in which speakers pay no considerable attention to their grammatical errors of sentence combing, in writing, on the other hand, writers have to be responsible for such errors so as to compensate for the absence of the elements related to oral speech as mentioned previously in another argument in this chapter. Therefore, this explanation reveals another confirmation to the importance of EFL students' grammatical adequacy as a starting point towards guaranteeing any composing success.

Likewise, in another book written by Hendrickson (1977), examining the effects of error correction treatments upon adequate and accurate communication in the written compositions of adult learners of ESL, the writer indirectly drew correspondent picture of integrating ESL learners' grammatical proficiency with their overall written discourse quality, because the learners' errors correction mentioned above is largely associated with their grammatical deviations, hence, reviewing an acknowledged amount of evidence for the current research's literature.
Another relevant literature to the current study can be reviewed from Henderson's book (1992) seeking to reveal the interface of lexical competence and knowledge of written words, in which he described the close correlation between the learners' lexical competence and writing quality as a suitable example to Arabi's previously-mentioned research. Since grammar and vocabulary are very closely-integrated aspects of language as viewed sufficiently in the preceding chapter, it can be logically argued that the above writer also draws another correlation between the learners' grammatical competence and their overall written discourse quality, hence, providing a strong support to the current research objectives.

Additionally, Convidasamy in his research carried out (1995) that seeks to introduce the effect of contrastive grammar instruction on clarity and coherence in writing of Malay ESL college students, also provides a sharp interrelationship between the Malian ESL students' grammatical proficiency and their textual levels. Thus, it goes in line with the current study's central assumption with regard to EFL learners' grammatical and composing integration.

Similarly, in a research on the teaching of English which aims to define the further effects of sentence-combining practice on writing ability, Combs (1976), also described EFL/ESL students' grammatical cohesion in relation to their textual status, although the above-mentioned researcher did not indicate paradoxically to grammar which acts as a complete representation of sentence combing, therefore, constituting a real addition to the target research's review of literature.

Also, in his book on grammar consciousness-raising tasks as negotiating instruction while focusing on form, Fotos (1992) argues that learners' grammatical consciousness is crucial to measuring their expressiveness and well-formedness, hence, creating another strong support to the current research's core hypothesis based on correlating between EFL students' grammatical competence and their composing quality.

In a similar vein, Fotos (1994), in the TESOL Quarterly, 28(2), 323-351, under a topic displaying the linkage between grammatical instruction and communicative language use through grammar consciousness-raising tasks, also correlated between the learners' grammatical richness and their communicative tasks, thus, making an apparent link between the target students' grammatical proficiency and their written discourse quality, since the learners' composing activities usually act as a major part of their communicative tasks, a matter which produces considerable
evidence for the current study's core hypothesis and, then, strengthens its literature review.

Likewise, in a book written by Gordon (1983) with regard to improving reading comprehension and writing by applying the story grammar learning approach, the researcher so far explained the impact of learners' formal grammar instruction on their both reading comprehension and writing improvement, taking into account that reading and writing, as negotiated earlier in the preceding chapter, are extremely interrelated skills of language.

In addition, Schleppegrell (1998) maintained that grammar is taught to EFL students because it is the tool by which messages are produced and without which learners can not speak or write effectively.

Moreover, Eskey and Grabe, (1989); Scarcella and Oxford (1992) pointed out that grammar helps make language input more comprehensible. With respect to reading comprehension, for example, Eskey and Grabe (1989:226) argue that reading requires a relatively high degree of grammatical control over structures that appear in whatever readings are given to students.

There is also evidence that grammar instruction improves students' written and/or oral language proficiency, (Dans, 1996; Fotos, 1992; Govindasamy, 1995; Melendez, 1993; Yeung, 1993).

Furthermore, Mohammed (1999) investigated the composing problems faced by university students in handling the English paragraph. The subjects of the study were preliminary students (medicine), University of Khartoum of the academic year (1999). After collecting data through an achievement test, marking the corpus and, then, calculating the mean and the standard deviation, the results have shown that the majority of student's performance was below average and that students had acute difficulties with cohesive devices and paragraphing.

Cling (1990) reports that the "Intensive Learning Experience Writing Programme" at the California State University, Sacramento, is designed to help basic and ESL writers learn composition skills by linking the resources of classroom instructors, lab instructors and a computer writing lab. The programme has separate tracks for native English speakers with limited skills and for ESL students. Students are placed into classes with low student/teacher ratios and are given access to a computer writing lab. Students also receive instruction in computer operation and word processing, and in the writing labs, are given individualized writing of computer
assistance. During the first semester of this four semesters programme, content is stressed over form and student-centered methods of instruction are combined with positive commenting strategies. Students participating in this programme have shown significant declines in writing anxiety.

A second computer-based study is that of Liou (1997). He investigated the effectiveness of the use of worldwide web (www) tests in a college of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing class. He has found that reading comprehension and writing skills of (15) students using the web-based materials improved more than those of students not using the materials.

Valdes (1992) conducted a study to: (1) examine assumptions made about development of second language writing skills by the teaching profession, as reflected in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines, and (2) investigate the relationship between those assumptions and actual skills development, as reflected in the work of competent English writers as they begin writing in Spanish. Subjects were students enrolled in three levels of Spanish instruction at a selective university. Writing samples during class time were analyzed for general characteristics (quality of message, organization and style, and standards of language use) of the sets of samples at each level. The analysis provided evidence that there are clear distinctions in the writing products of students at various levels of foreign language study. However, this group of students did not appear to follow the developmental sequence implicit in the ACTFL proficiency guidelines when beginning to write Spanish but began by building on English language writing skills.

Johnson (1991) carried out an exploratory study to determine whether knowledge gained through reading academic tests can facilitate writing of composition. Ten subjects were enrolled in a developmental English as Second Language (ESL) University-level class. Self-report sessions were conducted for seven compositions during a 15-week semester. An examination of transcripts of the recorded sessions suggests that the effects of knowledge gained from reading instruction on expository writing can be categorized as follows: information or comprehension of the concept of the reading passage; process or adoption of the method of organization of information in the passage; and transaction or awareness of the reader/writer relationship. Although the boundaries between these categories sometimes merge, the writer's ability to use and organize information obtained from reading a passage is supported by the transcribed self-report sessions. The
implications are that the teaching of reading and writing skills should be interrelated for comprehension and communication in a foreign language.

Davis (1990) conducted a comparative study to evaluate the writing growth of (97) college freshmen before and after instruction to determine if a process-centered mode of teaching had a more significant impact than a traditional form-centered mode of instruction on discourse coherence in composition. The study used a present/past test, quasi-experimental design with both qualitative and quantitative analysis with statistical analysis. The analysis of overall coherence has shown that form-centered students had a statistically significant gain over the process-centered students, suggesting that writing instruction in discourse forms or structure had a significant effect on the form-centered students for learning "organizational schemate" to guide them in writing connected/coherent discourse. An analysis using the discourse matrix has shown that the process-centered group made statistically significant gains over the form-centered group in the number and percentage of T-units contributing to local and global coherence. The results have indicated that combining traditional teaching of discourse forms with modern process-centered instruction may be of substantial benefit for the writing growth of college freshmen in discourse coherence.

AKyel (1996) studied the relationship of first-language and second-language writing processes and possible effects of L2 writing instruction in an academic context on L1 and L2 writing strategies and attitudes. Specially, the study asked whether (1) there are similarities and/or differences between Turkish and English writing processes of Turkish students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), (2) L2 writing instruction affects their L2 writing processes; (3) L2 writing instruction influences the L1 writing processes in a way indicating the process of transfer is bidirectional, and (4) L2 writing instruction affects attitudes towards writing in English and in Turkish. Subjects were eight Turkish students of EFL in freshman composition course in an English medium Turkish University. Data were drawn from analysis of think-a-loud protocol/students' compositions, questionnaires and semi-structure interviews. Results have indicated that L1 and L2 had more similarities than differences. In addition, writing instruction in L2 affected these EFL students' L1 and L2 writing strategies and attitudes towards writing.

Wong and Zour (1993) investigated the writing of incipient bilingual (students who were in the initial process of acquiring a second language). A total of four Chinese-speaking children were chosen for final, in-depth study over a 2-year period
at the middle school in the San Francisco Bay area in California. Data included initial interviews and observations, assessments of English language proficiency, classroom and school observations, written products produced inside and outside of school, and interviews with students and school personnel. Results have indicated that: (1) the students encountered problems in adjustment and language learning shared with other immigrant students, but also faced complex challenges peculiar to their own age bracket of (12) to (14) years old; (2) the students' native-language proficiency could be considerably more advanced than was generally recognized; (3) the English language development of the students proceeded very unevenly, contradicting the widespread notion that English development proceeds in a listening-speaking-reading-writing sequence; (4) students' writing products showed that considerable problems with English morphology and syntax coexisted with highly developed organizational and cognitive skills; (5) writing instruction based on audiolingual assumptions about the nature of language learning had an inhibitory if not retarding effect on some students' writing; (6) extremely high motivation to learn English coexisted with high motivation to associate with fellow Chinese speakers; and (7) at the end of two years, all students made some progress, but all were far from exhibiting native-like control of English.

Ostler (1987) compared English essays by Saudi Arabian students with ten English paragraphs selected randomly from books. The comparison has revealed that the essays written by Saudi Arabian students contained significantly higher number of coordinated sentences than English passages.

In another relevant study, Dong (1998) investigated the literacy background of nine non-native English-speaking students of varied ages and language groups who failed the freshman composition test. Data were gathered in focused interviews which asked for the students' recollection of the experience of learning to write in the native language, of learning to write in English, and difficulties in dealing with the composition test. Results have indicated that the students had had extensive writing instruction before coming to the United States, and came from home backgrounds having similarities in writing experience. However, their educational backgrounds varied in emphasis on the function and genre of writing. Formal writings was often connected with the study of literature. Students had varied cultural, educational constructions of the writing experience in three areas: interpreting a writing task,
anticipating the reader's needs and developing and organizing ideas. The interviews confirmed some findings of contrastive rhetoric research on organizational patterns, but also suggested that cross-cultural differences are not limited to the organization of writing task and goes about orienting the reader.

Matalene (1985) investigated sample essays written by Chinese ESL learners in China. She has concluded that the arguments were delayed. She has also observed that the Chinese students tend to use statements that seem unconnected from the point of view of the European reader. To European readers, Matalene argues, Chinese writing lacks argumentative coherence due to its reliance on appeals to history, tradition and proverbs. These categories matalene proposes, are used to ornament discourse, but are not more than distraction to the European reader.

Schlumberger (1989) reports a study that investigated whether exposure to contrastive rhetoric would deepen international students' awareness of first and second-language conventions characterizing their own and other students' writing. Participants included (46) University of Arizona students who represented a variety of language background and enrolled in four sections of English as Second Language (ESL) freshman composition. One week of class time was devoted to a presentation on contrastive rhetoric, and writing samples were collected from each student. From the samples, aspects of the writers' purpose message and audience were analyzed. The features noted were then charted and discussed in class. Finally, the students' reactions to the contrastive rhetoric lesson and chart were expressed in free-writing exercises. No evidence emerged that consciousness of first-language rhetorical conventions makes adoption of second-language discourse patterns easier. However, it was concluded that awareness of context, enhanced by knowledge of linguistic and rhetorical forms, is a valid objective in ESL writing instruction.

Atari (1984) studied the reading and essay writing in English as a Second Language (ESL) at Birzeit University (Israel). He hypothesized that in ESL writing, college students apply many strategies of communication more typical of the spoken mode of language than of the written mode, an extension of the stylistic transfer made from spoken to written Arabic. A sociolinguistic method of analysis that sees essays as a communicative event involving the writer, the reader and his/her expectation and the message was used. Two elements in the essays were examined: (1) moments in the text at which the writer assumed that the reader possessed all the appropriate background information not provided in the text, and (2) textual and syntactic
structures more appropriate in spoken than in written language. The analysis has supported a hypothesis concerning the transfer of Arabic stylistic practice to English. Two classroom procedures for helping students make the transition from spoken to written styles are proposed: that in oral language classes teachers guide students to be topic-focused in their narratives through questioning and requesting for more specific information; and that, in writing classes, teachers engage in similar, but written dialogues, to cultivate specificity.

Liebman-Kleine (1987) studied the writing of students in two college freshman composition classes (one American and one English as a Second Language) at a Southern University. The students researched the theory of contrastive rhetoric by exchanging pen pal letters and by progressing through sequence of five formal assignments with revisions. These assignments led the students to consider their own experiences as members of native and foreign cultures. Students learned various research skills, as well as how to use a variety of data-gathering techniques. One assignment asked students to defend or criticize Robert Kaplan's article on contrastive rhetoric, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Education". Results have shown that about half the ESL students disagreed with Kaplan in some way, while over two thirds of the American students disagreed. Many pointed out that Kaplan ignored writing's dynamic nature, and that there is not necessarily an equivalence between a language and a nationality. The paragraph and discourse structures of the students did not reflect cultural differences, but there were contrasts in how students from different cultures approached the assignment. Americans tended to be the most self-reflective and thoughtful. The project, beneficial for both teachers and students, indicates that contrastive rhetoric, despite its limitations, is a powerful and informative concept.

Reid (1992) examined the use of four English cohesive devices in expository essays written by native English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, Chinese-speaking and Arabic-speaking students. The cohesive devices were pronouns, coordinate conjunctions, subordinate conjunction openers and prepositions. The results have shown that there were significant differences among the groups in the frequency of the use of the four cohesive devices. Native English-speaking students used more pronouns that the other three groups. Arabic-speaking students used significantly more coordinate conjunctions than the other three groups. Chinese-speaking students used more subordinate conjunctions than the members of the other three groups did.
And finally, Spanish-speaking students used more prepositions than the other three groups.

Kobayshi (1984) reports a research that compared the use of general statements (topic sentences) in the writing of U.S. and Japanese students. U.S. college students formed a single group whereas the Japanese students formed three groups: Japanese advanced ESL students in U.S.A, English major students in Japan and non-English-major students in Japan. Members of the four groups were asked to write three compositions involving narration and exposition. The first three (i.e. U.S. students, Japanese students in U.S.A and the Japanese English-major students) wrote in English while the non-English-major Japanese students in Japan wrote in Japanese. The results have shown that U.S students wrote deductively, i.e. their writing proceeded "from general to particular" placing the topic sentence at the beginning. The writing of the Japanese students who wrote in Japanese followed the inductive pattern, placing the topic sentence at the end. As for the Japanese students who wrote in English, they wrote differently: the Japanese students in U.S.A wrote more like U.S. students whereas the English-major students in Japan wrote more like the non-English-major students in Japan.

Prichard (1980) investigated cohesive devices as an index of writing quality in connection with good and poor compositions written by eleventh grades. She, specifically, studied the occurrence of redundant repetition in the students' writing. She has concluded that poor writing was characterized by proportionately more cohesive devices of all types, i.e., writing problems were caused by overuse and unsuccessful use of cohesive devices.

Harnet (1986) studied the effectiveness of the cohesive devices in essays written by basic writers (he defines a basic writer as someone who enters college without the traditional skills needed for success in the customary introductory course in English composition). The results have shown that his subjects seemed to be aware of the power and importance of cohesive devices, although they failed to use them effectively.

Roen (1985) investigated the effects of text linguistics' revisions on the comprehensibility of expository prose. His subjects were (92) high school juniors who read original and revised revisions of two passages from a high school history textbook. The revisions include changes regarding the given new contract, schemata, reference, lexical cohesion and cohesive conjunctions. The dependent measure
consisted of the number of propositions included in the subjects' written free recall examples. The results have indicated significant main effects for both topic (old war and Vietnam war) and version (original and revision), with subjects recalling the revised version and the Vietnam passages best. There has also been a significant topic by version interaction, with the percentage of the total propositions recalled greatest for the revised Vietnam passages. The results have suggested that whole-discourse revisions should receive greater empirical and theoretical attention.

Gaibir (1995) and Biraima (1995) conducted some kind of discourse analysis studies that can, indeed, be conceived as non-correlational- Viz. They did not seem to be interested in discovering whether learners' awareness or lack of awareness of the English cohesive devices can correlate with their overall writing quality as did the researchers that have just been reviewed. Gaibir and Biraima simply wanted to find out whether instruction can enhance learners' awareness of English cohesive devices. But this can be argued to be totally irrelevant, for the cohesive devices are functional categories that may (or may not) contribute to improving learners' use of language. Moreover, learners can be proved to be highly aware of the cohesive devices but may tend to overuse or misuse them in speech and writing as it was the case of Prichard (1980) and Harnet (1986) above. However, Gaibir and Biraima's (1995) studies have shown no significant statistical differences between the groups they investigated in handling cohesive devices (the former study compared the performance of the second and fourth year university students whereas the latter study compared the performance of the first and second year university students).

Beene (1985) reports a study that applied two basic issues in text linguistics: "Grice's Cooperative Principle and Schema Theory". The findings have indicated that schema transfer from a narrative passage can be used as an effective activity for English as a Second Language (ESL) students to learn how underlying propositions in a text form an important part of that text's coherence.

Kim (1996) investigated the linguistic, rhetorical and strategic variables of the writing processes and products of three groups of graduate and undergraduate students: (28) Native English-speaking Americans, (28) Koreans studying in the United States, and (90) Korean students in Korea. The last two groups were learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). Data were drawn from persuasive writing assignments, follow-up questionnaires about the writing process, and writing background and attitude surveys. Writing samples were analyzed for (10) linguistic
variables (length variables, cohesion variables, discourse markers), (13) rhetorical variables (coherence variables, openings, closings, rhetorical questions, reader inclusion and counter arguments), and (12) strategic variables (outline, revisions, writing confidence, writing attention, discourse knowledge use and audience awareness). Results have indicated significant differences in process and product variables between native and non-native writers and between non-native advanced and basic writers which were significant predicators of writing quality. These variables were distributed across linguistic, rhetorical and strategic categories suggesting that writing quality depends on all three groups of variables. The differences in process and product variables between native and non-native advanced writers can be accounted for in contrastive rhetorical terms. That is, advanced native English-speaking writers outperform their advanced ESL counterparts due to their greater familiarity with the rhetorical conventions of their L1. On the other hand, advanced ESL students outperform their basic counterparts due to the greater body of instruction that they have received.

In a study carried out (1990), Thonus compared the language of interactions of teachers with students who are native speakers and non-native speakers of English in academic writing tutorial sessions. Data were gathered through discourse analysis of transcripts of (12) tutorials and interviews with the participants. Analysis of talk examined topic initiation, directive and mitigation type of frequency and negotiation of acceptances and rejections of suggestions and evaluations. Also investigated were volubility, overlaps, backchannels and laughter. The results have shown that tutors were less conversationally involved with non-native speakers than with native speakers. Non-native speaker students expected their tutors to behave as high-status interlocutors, and interpreted tutor behavior such as volubility, directive frequency, and forcefulness as consistent with their constructions of tutors as a type of teacher with inherent rights to such behavior. In contrast, tutors were largely critical of their own behavior and of their students' expectations that they behave authoritatively.

Attia (1990) conducted error analysis research on the writing of the first year students of the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum. The materials she used in eliciting data were the composition components of the English final examinations of three academic years: 1986, 1987, 1988. The only mechanical problem that she looked for was spelling. She was able to identify the total of (4380) spelling errors in the corpus. She has, eventually, concluded that spelling, compared to the other
research data, was a major problem and is extremely irritating. There are three reasons which she thinks are responsible for learners' spelling problems: (1) Difficulties are partly stemming from the English orthography; (2) Difficulties can result from the students' mother tongue background; and (3) Miss-spelled forms can be due to the inefficient teaching.

Ibrahim (1995) set out to investigate the lexical errors in the written production of the second year English students of the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum. He also made use of materials that had been originally written for examination purposes. He has concluded that the students were suffering from acute spelling problems. Of the seven types of lexical information that he investigated, spelling errors turned out to be associated with the highest percentage (37.4%). He attributed learners' spelling problems to two reasons: the English spelling system and the students' ignorance of the rules of language. By ignorance of the rules of language Ibrahim means that the students were unaware of the application of the rules of inflection, e.g., the noun monkey is marked for plural as monkies.

Karadawi (1994) investigated the writing of Sudanese secondary school final year students who studied English via the Nile Course series. The subjects were asked to write a composition on a topic taken from secondary school examination paper of the academic year 1983. After a week, the same topic was translated into Arabic and was submitted for composing in Arabic. Upon marking the two tests holistically and impressionistically, it has been concluded that the subjects wrote better Arabic compositions than English. The study has also revealed the fact that: (1) 60% of the students were unaware of paragraphing. (2) The English compositions were characterized by bad handwriting. (3) The English compositions were of reduced linguistic value due to non concern of punctuation on the part of the subjects (4). The subjects tended to overuse the fullstop. Karadawi primarily attributed the writing difficulties experienced by his subjects to the English language teachers, reporting that the records of the Khartoum English Education Office (KEEO) show that quite a number of English language teachers are not necessarily English (B.A.) holders ,in that, many of them have empirically shown to be unaware of the specific current methods of teaching composition.

Arabi, in his unpublished M.A. research in English language (1999) entitled: "An Investigation of Writing Performance Among Preliminary Year Students", revealed that the target students' writing performance is characterized by three
different weaknesses at the level of sentence connecting, structure and orthography, maintaining that evidence for this is, badly connected sentences, so many grammatical and spelling errors that dominating the sampled data, and altogether blurring the realization of the intended meaning. After analyzing the students' errors, it has become evidence that the way of teaching English in Sudanese secondary schools (where writing received less attention than other learning skills), in addition to the general decline of English learning standards among Sudanese secondary schools, and the students' influence by their first language when writing, are behind the students' shortcomings. He concluded that as an attempt to foster students' ability of writing in general and sentence connection, structural grammar and orthography, the remedial suggestions are hoped to be incorporated into writing teaching courses in schools and universities alike. He concluded that, writing is a social interaction by whose means FL learners are taught to communicate and process their ideas without playing down the grammatical accuracy.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has effectively reviewed the literature within the studies previously carried out in a close relevance to the present research topic. In so doing, the researcher has depended upon a variety of materials taken from different sources, comprising books, theses, journals, magazines, academic and conference papers, websites, etc, which have actually contributed to providing a relevant literature to the target research subject.

The next chapter will be a methodological survey. It will specially define the target population of the study, describe the materials, subjects, instruments and show the procedures followed in gathering and interpreting the research data as well as explaining its validity and reliability.
Chapter Four
Methodology of the Research

4.1 Introduction

In order to carry out such a research, it seems that its methodological approach will, usually, be empirical and analytical in nature. In this chapter, the researcher will present the target population of the study, describe the materials, subjects, instruments and show the procedures followed in collecting and analyzing the research data as well as the difficulties and problematic aspects encountered during the gathering of these data. Finally, the researcher will go forward to present the validity and reliability of the study.

4.2 Methods

Under this title, population, subjects and instruments of the study will be deeply investigated under their respective headings.

4.2.1 The Study Population

The population of this study comprises EFL students chosen from three faculties of two governmental universities in Khartoum State. They include two faculties of Education and one faculty of Arts. In the three faculties collectively, the students are studying English as a major field of specialization. The preferred sample design adopted for the present study is the stratified random sampling. Or, it is fundamentally a probability selection method in which the population of the study is just grouped on the basis of some definite characteristics which are called "Strata". From these strata, the sample is chosen by applying a random selection technique on each stratum (Nourain, 2002). Randomization is, therefore, a technique giving every subject in the population an equal chance for participating in the experimental tests. For the ultimate benefit, let us consider the table (4.1), below, which shows the population groups of the target universities and faculties on the basis of their number, sex and percentage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number of EFL Students</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudan (GC)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52.7% 47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juba (GA)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.7% 31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juba (GB)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.7% 33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Total'</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62% 38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4.1): "Population Groups According to Number, Gender and Percentage".

4.2.2 Subjects

In choosing a particular number of students from the general study population, it was assumed that this number would be proportional to the stratum's share of the total population.

The subjects of this study were fourth year EFL students enrolled in three academic faculties of two national universities comprising Sudan University of Sciences and Technology (henceforth U of S) and University of Juba (henceforth U of J).

In fact, there are some important motives behind targeting fourth year EFL students as a case study at these three faculties of the above-mentioned universities. First, all the target students are majoring in English. Secondly, they have had almost the same exposure to English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thirdly, they are almost of the same ages and seem to share some identical academic factors with regard to their motivation, self-esteem and anxiety. Fourthly, the three faculties of these Universities do enroll both male and female students. Fifthly, fourth year EFL students are supposed to have been exposed to a variety of EFL courses during their different learning stages and covered all the prescribed curricula to the extent that they are generally viewed as being capable of mastering its both grammatical and composing rules, hence, providing a logical justification with respect to testing their linguistic competence, that is, their overall grammatical and writing abilities. In short, the subjects of this study will definitely, form what Mil (2004) calls a "Community of Practice" through which factors will allow vivid academic and social interactions as well as the exchange of different viewpoints of linguistic knowledge. Moreover, this sampling method was adopted for a number of objective reasons: firstly, it is
considered to be one of the best strategies for selecting subjects as it enables the researcher to objectively generalize the results he obtains to the whole research community. In principle, randomization, as stated earlier, does give every subject in a population an equal chance to appear in the selection process. Secondly, it does identify the characteristics that are being researched. Thirdly, it is practically impossible as regards time and space to take a complete and comprehensive study of the whole population of the study because of both the nature and pattern of distributing and dispensing the elements of the population. The subjects were basically divided into three main groups. The first group comprised 47 students from the Faculty of Education, University of Juba, who were chosen randomly out of the total number of 48 students and was labeled as 'GA'. The second group comprised 37 students from the Faculty of Arts, University of Juba, and were chosen randomly out of the total number of 42 students and was labeled as 'GB'. The third group comprised 50 students from the Faculty of Education, University of Sudan and were chosen randomly out of the total number of 55 students, and was labeled as 'GC'. Again, in describing the research community, let us view the table (4.2), below which summarizes the information about the subjects of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Subjects</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>7th Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Juba</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>8th semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Juba</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>8th semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4.2): "Subjects' Distribution According to Number, University, Faculty, Department, Level and Semester".

It is worth mentioning that members of the chosen three groups altogether have studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for almost ten years, four years at university level and six years at pre-university levels, and they are currently in their eighth and final semester of the academic year (2006-2007) and preparing themselves to graduate with a B.A. degree in English language. Thus, as negotiated so earlier, the
target subjects' overall linguistic proficiency level with regard to their period of attachment to English is logically expected to be progressed and appreciated for the reason that a ten-year period of exposure to a language can be judged as quite enough for an EFL learner to become a good or, even, proficient student-writer as well as being a skillful grammarian, hence, having access to functioning its grammatical rules properly in portraying its cohesive textuality. More obviously, the subjects of the current study are highly believed to have been exposed to various English Foreign Language courses which might make them look more competent and mature to the extent that their maximum standard of proficiency deserves being subject to a broader investigation as intended by the objectives of this research. Conversely, general observations and considerable research findings on EFL students' grammatical and textual performance usually seem to prove their linguistic inadequacy, in that, the overall quality of their both grammatical and composing feedback has been judged to be below average, most of the time, which can be acknowledged to have negative implications for their overall learning obtainment. Unfortunately, this academic attitude has been observed by the researcher to apply similarly to the target students' written production; therefore, it has really been a spectacular and problematic linguistic phenomenon that needs deeper explanation. Moreover, the subjects of the present study were also divided into subgroups on the basis of number, sex and age. In the first group, there are 33 males and 14 females who constitute (70.2%) and (29.8%) of the total sample respectively. Both males' ages in this group are ranging between 22 and 30 years. In the second group, there are 27 males and 10 females who constitute (73%) and (27%) of the total sample respectively. Males' ages in this group are ranging between 22 and 30 years, whereas females' ages are ranging between 21 and 30 years. In the third group, there are 26 males and 24 females who constitute (52%) and (48%) of the total sample respectively. The age average of this group is ranging between 22 and 30 years for males and between 21 and 30 years for females. Males in the three groups collectively represented (64.25%) while females represented (35.8%) of the whole sample. Once again, to have further information about the research community, let us contemplate on the table (4.3) below which shows subjects' distribution according to number, sex and age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

68
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>33(70.2%)</td>
<td>27(73%)</td>
<td>26(52%)</td>
<td>86(04.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>14(29.8%)</td>
<td>10(27%)</td>
<td>24(48%)</td>
<td>48(35.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>22-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4.3): "The Subjects' Distribution According to Number, Gender and Age".

4.2.3 Instruments

For the purpose of the current research's data collection, two types of instrument in form of experimental tests have been appropriately designed to cope with the central research hypothesis that based on finding out the impact of the target students' grammatical proficiency on their overall written discourse quality. They originally comprised grammatical competence test (henceforth GCT) and writing competence test (henceforth WCT).

It is noteworthy that both tests were designed by the researcher and revised by the supervisor, and that, prior to their distribution and use, the tests were also evaluated by other two experienced language teachers with titles of a lecturer and assistant professor, respectively doing as full-time practitioners at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum with a purpose of further assessing, revising and checking up their validity and fitness for the testees. In turn, the consulted English practitioners have faithfully recommended for the validity, objectivity and, most importantly, the suitability of all test questions to the target students' general academic standard, as well as to the present research's valuable thematic objectives, as viewed earlier in the previous chapters. However, they have seriously advised for the necessity of determining a sufficient period of time and choosing much convenient atmosphere for the carrying out of such tests due to their importance and sensitivity.

Generally speaking, it has been argued by Schmitt (2000) that there are numerous possible reasons behind testing subjects' grammatical competence. Firstly, to reveal if students have efficiently and successfully mastered EFL grammatical rules to the extent that it could possibly make them to be viewed as grammatically...
proficient and mature (i.e. achievement test). Secondly, teachers and other language experts may sometimes wish to find out whether the students' grammatical knowledge has gaps, so that great deal of attention can be devoted to this linguistic domain (i.e. diagnostic test). Thirdly, grammatical tests can also be carried out so that examiners can have accessibility to place students in the proper class levels (i.e. placement test) and so forth. Turning a glance at the grammatical competence test (GCT) of this study, it is obviously recognizable that it is a multiple-choice grammatical test (henceforth MCGT) covering various and the most effectual fields of EFL grammar to which the target students have been occasionally exposed through their different academic stages either at university or pre-university level. This test type has covered various questions chosen precisely from the widely-known English grammatical areas in terms of tenses, affixation, passivisation, reported sentences, prepositional practice, connectives, adjectival and adverbial practice, phrasal verbs, lexical competence and syntactic patterns respectively. In effect, the researcher has mainly focused the emphasis on such grammatical categories attempting to provide as complete picture as possible of the areas in which EFL students need their status of grammatical knowledge to be brought into play. Moreover, it is clear that all items in the grammatical competence test have almost the same format. That is, ten question types each of which consists of five question units, so that the total number of the question points will amount to 50 questions with an intention that each question point will be marked out of two scores so that the total grammatical competence test will, eventually, be marked out of (100) marks in order to be identical to the marks of the equivalent writing competence test.

As shown in appendix (1), the grammatical questions in the first set of the grammatical competence test have specifically dealt with the English area of tenses. Since tenses are usually seen to be the first elements or ingredients of introducing grammar, the researcher has focused on this first starting point of gaining any grammatical knowledge as the case with all languages as a whole and English in particular. Going in line with the researcher's viewpoint that considerable number of EFL students usually seem to demonstrate very poor performance as regards English tenses, due consideration has first been given to the investigation of the target subjects' standard of tensing knowledge with an aim to discover the most critical points in which EFL learners always seem to encounter difficulty.
With regard to grammatical knowledge test (henceforth GKT) on affixation, the researcher seeks to reveal the target students' morphological constraints when dealing with the construction of the different parts of speech and the derivation of some word classes from others which seems to act as the point of departure towards acquiring syntactic competence, and then, synthesizing well-formed sentences.

Concerning grammatical size test (henceforth GST) on passivisation, the researcher has observed for so long period of time that many students have no sufficient access to sorting out well-formed passive expressions at both written and oral situations, a matter which drew the researcher's attention to this significant grammatical item, believing that inaccessibility to handle passivisation in a proper manner may result negatively in the overall value of the students' both written and oral production and performance.

According to the researcher, reported sentences seem to constitute another problematic grammatical area for EFL students that deserve deeper explanation. It has been observed through the researcher's constant daily interaction with many EFL students that they still have difficulty in the process of transforming direct sentences into their indirect equivalents and vice-versa. Thus, the researcher attempts to shed substantial light on this grammatical issue.

As regards students' prepositional practice, the researcher has further revealed that prepositional use and usage among EFL learners was scoring and still scores the lion's share in the frequency percentage of learners' grammatical deviations. This linguistic phenomenon was empirical empirically confirmed through a study carried out previously by the same researcher on investigating EFL learners' prepositional errors. It was made as a part of program for obtaining the degree of B.A. (Honors) in English language. The findings of the said research have revealed five prepositional error types committed by learners, comprising: (1) literal translation errors. (2) Errors due to inserting un-needed prepositions. (3) Errors due to using some prepositions and adverbs interchangeably. (4) Errors resulting from doubling prepositions. (5) Errors resulting from deleting prepositions.

Viewing connectives as tools of construction, the researcher seeks to find out whether the target students can function these linguistic categories appropriately, particularly, with respect to writing competence test which seems to depend fully on both the quantitative and qualitative employment of connectives.
Drawing on the fact that there is an outstanding resemblance and link between adjectival and adverbial forms of English, in addition to the function of certain lexis such as (late, hard, fast, etc) as both adjectives and adverbs according to their contextual senses, many learners are found confused of differentiating between such word classes when forming sentences, hence, producing ungrammatical constructions to the extent that it has resulted in turning the researcher's attention to subjecting them to much broader investigation.

As a matter of fact, it can be said that numerous EFL students are found accustomed to using English phrasal (complex) verbs more scarcely than their equivalent simple ones. This passive linguistic phenomenon, undoubtedly, explains the fact that those students' awareness of phrasal verbs knowledge is characterized by being inadequate although the modernity process in language use and usage seems to face to the direction of using phrasal verbs more than their simple counterparts as the case with American English version. For such a reason or others, the researcher aims to pay substantial attention to the status of EFL students' phrasal verbs alongside with the encouragement of their proper utilization.

It is widely acknowledged, as mentioned so earlier in chapter (2) that grammar and vocabulary are very closely-related language components, in that, attempting to learn one component involves considerable awareness of the other component. That is, learning grammar mainly depends on the amount of lexemes that learners store in memory. Similarly, the need of lexicon to grammar arises from the fact that in order to function the words structurally to build up sentences, this process can only be possible upon employing certain grammatical rules. This interdependence of lexicality and grammaticality on each other makes them to hold complementary influence on EFL students' written discourse quality which constitutes the core thematic value of the current research objectives.

Since syntax, according to many linguists, is regarded as the second component of grammar after morphology, this linguistic linkage leads us to judge that they are inseparable grammatical units that affect EFL learners' written feedback. Thus, students have to first be well- back grounded with both syntactic and morphological knowledge if they have to achieve optimum written tasks. It appears obviously that such a grammatical instrument is intentionally designed to address the most fundamental points of the research problem in section (1.2) , that have been investigated by posing the most significant questions of:
1. Is there any significant correlation between EFL students' grammatical competence and their overall writing quality?

2. Is grammatical competence a differentiating factor between a good and poor student-writer?

3. To what extent can grammatical adequacy be the basic index of writing quality?

The second research instrument, on the other hand, was formulated as a written test comprising three different topics in which the subjects have to choose only one topic and write an essay of about (300) words (for more details see appendix "2"). This written instrument was based on the following questions:

1- Woman plays a pioneering role in the society's educational development. Discuss! (about 300 words).

2- Some people suggest that Arabicization plays a negative role in Sudanese higher education institutions. Others, in contrast, argue that it has a very positive role to play in this context. Comment on one side of this argument! (about 300 words).

3- Man is universally titled as household leader. Discuss! (about 300 words).

Considering the titles of the above-mentioned topics, it can be judged that the researcher has cautiously intended to avoid any sort of inequality or sex prejudice among the subjects. Therefore, the researcher has chosen such kinds of alternative topics aiming at revealing a sense of neutrality to male and female students, since each of them can have a chance to simply and freely express his/her views about these debatable and argumentative issues, taking into account that they are not based on any background knowledge.

It is noteworthy that answers to this test part were written essays based on effective expository writing assessment including various elements of composing such as description, cause and effect, comparison, contrast, narration, persuasion, analysis of stages, vocabulary, organization, mechanics, and so forth. In effect, this strategy goes in line with Wilkins and Raimes' (1983) criteria for assessing students' written tasks comprising vocabulary, syntax, process spelling, and comprehension, density of information, handwriting and layout. Nevertheless, since learners can produce expository written tasks by adopting various philosophies, the researcher has based his answers to the written part of test on a purely impressionistic method which highly considers components such as, topic sentence, introduction, paragraphing, the
use of connectives, punctuational practice, spelling, lexicon, grammar and conclusion, etc.

4.3 Data

Broadly speaking, data collection is one of the most problematic stages facing many researchers. In this context, the researcher was seriously encountered with the obstacle of gathering the needed data in an appropriate time because of the difficult surrounding circumstances associated with the general atmospheric conditions as well as with the subjects themselves. This can be largely attributed to the terrible weather as a result of the cut off of the electric power during the final days of the eighth semester of the academic year (2006-2007). Under such terrible climatic conditions, the researcher was, unfortunately, faced with the problem of convincing the students to sit for the experimental tests, because: first, most of the students were preoccupied with the process of preparing themselves academically for the eighth semester expiry examinations. They were accustomed to entering the library repeatedly for reading, revising and planning for their basic exams without paying due attention to such external matters, believing that it will actually be at the expense of their gracious time which should be, as they view, exploited only in their semester's prescribed exams. As a result, this sudden coincidence of the subjects' mandatory exams with the research's data gathering tests has stood as a great hindrance in front of the researcher. Secondly, the test type related to investigating the subjects' composing abilities, itself, seems to be very critical in nature to be fulfilled under these terrible atmospheric conditions since writing, as a unique linguistic activity, usually involves that writers have to, first, guarantee great deal of moral, psychological and material readiness so as to adapt themselves to the different writing processes as regards brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting, revising, proofreading, etc, as explained in detail across the previous chapters, and which are characterized by being difficult to fulfill under inconvenient surrounding environments. Thirdly, many students, very often, seem to be uninterested in dealing with writing activities such as essays, compositions, letters, reports, exercises, etc, viewing them as boring activities. Fourthly, the research questionnaire itself is typically problematic in procedure because it involves taking very long time, at least four hours and, most importantly, it involves that students
have to take part fully in both test types bearing in mind that missing any one of the two components of test could, very simply, jeopardize the whole research objectives.

Considering the above-mentioned impeding factors, the convention of the tests has been unwillingly postponed to the end of the eighth semester of the academic year (2007-2008.) The data of this research have been elicited from both primary and secondary sources of data gathering. Concerning the former, they were originally written answers to achievement tests on grammar and writing knowledge held in the academic year (2007-2008) at three EFL faculties of two Sudanese national universities including faculty of Education, University of Juba and was represented as 'GA', Faculty of Arts, University of Juba and was represented as 'GB' and Faculty of Education, University of Sudan and was represented as 'GC'.

It is to be said that the testing process has targeted all Sudanese EFL university students, in principle, by practically taking the above-mentioned faculties as representative samples with a purpose of introducing the real impact of EFL student's grammatical richness on their overall composing quality. The total number of the answer books considered for learners' performance assessment were (134) answer books for both test types and were classified as follows:

1. Fifty answer books have been chosen randomly from the total (55) answer books of the Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of Sudan.
2. Forty seven answer books have been chosen randomly from the total (48) answer books of the Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of Juba.
3. Thirty seven answer books have been chosen randomly from the total (42) answer books of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Juba.

As it has been stated earlier, the data of this study have been made accessible through using two different tests. That is, grammatical competence test (GCT) and writing competence test (WCT). The first type of test was heterogeneous in structure and content, and was originally based on registering a suitable answer for each question point according to its design and theme; therefore, it can be described as a multiple-form test. The second item of test was concerned with answers of overall scores of the subjects' written tasks, therefore, it was deliberately designed in a form of compositions or essays, namely, three various topics to be dealt with according to
the choice of the testee. In this test part, students were kindly required to write a composition about (300 ) words, the essence of which is to be compared with the grammatical competence test scores in order to find out whether there is a significant link between the subjects' grammatical performance and their overall written discourse status. In other words, the actual performance assessment of both tests was based on holding an extremely precise comparison between the students' grammatical competence test findings and their written test findings with an ultimate goal to confirm, as hypothesized by the researcher, that the grammaticality of learners' linguistic production very considerably influences their textuality. Or more obviously, the most grammatically competent students are, themselves, the best student-writers, and vice-versa.

4.4 Procedures

As a procedural step, the present study has adopted the so-called stratified random sampling as its sample design strategy. It aims at reducing bias view of the population. In fact, using too low sample will negatively affect the reliability of the answers to the research questions that are under investigation, whereas using too large sample size will waste the testing time and resource for minimal gain. Data collection test (henceforth DCT) was used to gather the needed data for this study. Every subject in the population was given an equal chance of doing the experimental test. The researcher did not need to interfere to explain any of the testing questions or situation in most of the data collection process. The subjects were requested to appropriately respond to the questions as directed to reveal their use of grammatical and writing skills, each influences the other. All the questions of both test types were common to the testees and widely used upon their constant academic interactions and daily life situations. The subjects in the three faculties were tested in their lecture rooms during their customary lecturing times. They were supervised by their own lecturers in addition to the researcher. The subjects felt free to do the (DCT) and express themselves without the intervention of the researcher or the testing controller and they had enough time to plan, read, think and
respond appropriately and did not need to ask for any explanation except in some rare cases.

As argued by Beene and Cummings (1996) who support the procedure of (DCT), the written questionnaire data yield the generalization of the findings to the whole research community. Blum-Kulka et al (1989) also agree and point out that using written elicitation techniques enables researchers to obtain more stereotyped responses.

One interesting point to be made is that, prior to the distribution of the tests and commencement of testing, the subjects were seriously notified that the tests were absolutely designed for experimental and evaluative purposes and had nothing to do with their prescribed academic courses and examinations. As a matter of fact, the motive behind such an instruction was to boost subjects' confidence and raise their degree of moralization which could have resulted positively in the process of gathering sufficient and valuable information relevant to both the scope and theme of the target study. Thus, as far as clarity, accuracy and objectivity are concerned, the subjects were kindly requested by the researcher and other concerned persons to take part fully in both tests reminding them that missing any one of the test components could inevitably undermine the whole research objectives and lead to its defect.

As negotiated earlier, see section (4.3), the researcher has faced many critical procedural difficulties in the journey of collecting the required data for the study, particularly, in the first stages of the data gathering process during the eighth semester of the academic year (2006-2007). Bending from these procedural troubles, the researcher has decided, in consultation with other reliable figures, for the postponement of the carrying out of tests to the last semester of the next academic year (2007-2008) as a precautionary step in order to guarantee the convention of tests under relatively accessible and vital conditions. Indeed, having been delayed, the tests were fulfilled in a more valid atmospheric and social environment although it has led to scarifying the researcher's gracious time and effort for the sake of better stability.

It is worth mentioning that the tests were also first marked by the researcher and then deliberately revised by other two experienced EFL instructors in the same department and, then, accurately assessed and statistically analyzed by using the so-called "Statistical Package for Social Sciences" programme (henceforth SPSS).
Generally speaking, it has been observed during the testing time that the subjects were acting responsibly carefully and enthusiastically to the extent that no any passive attitudes or illogical comments were recognized on the part of examinees, and no much explanatory questions were directed to the researcher and the tests controller except from fewer students who so politely requested to be given extra time to reorganize and revise their performance. The tests have taken almost four hours – two hours for each test part. Before starting the tests, the subjects were informed by the researcher and the testing supervisor to bear in mind the following procedural instructions:

1. Time allotted for each test type is two hours.
2. Not to write their names on the test sheets and they had to depend on the assigned index numbers instead.
3. Not to rely on any kind of assistance, e.g., from peers, teachers, dictionaries, electronics, other students, etc, while taking part in the tests, but they have freedom to inquire about any other vague or ambiguous points associated with the test questions.
4. To carefully fill in the personal identification data provided in the top side of each testing paper. These statements cover some important information about the testees, including their index No., university, faculty, academic level, sex and age, taking into consideration that providing such personal data is very crucial to the research's analytical procedures and, that, neglecting any of these personal identity data will, unfortunately, result in a vague or non-denotative work.
5. To be fully aware of the fact that participating in only one test type and neglecting the other will achieve nothing of the desirable research objectives as well as shaping unbalanced image with respect to research's methodological approach. This procedural step is basically attributed to the nature of the current research itself as a comparative study seeking to reveal the extent of the close interrelationship between the learners’ grammatical proficiency and their overall written discourse quality, therefore, it is exceedingly nonsensical to handle its test components, one in isolation from the other.
6. Not to leave the testing place before passing half of the allotted time as a precautionary step for guaranteeing students' good performance at a reasonable period of time.
7. Most importantly, the subjects were kindly instructed to participate actively in both tests as planned without making any kind of alteration with regard to its prescribed strategy and methodology. That is, to answer the grammatical test questions in the spaces provided immediately after each question branch, whereas for the writing competence test, they have to freely choose only one favorite topic and write essays of at least (300) words in the specified sheets taking into account that making any methodological change while doing the tests, will contradict negatively the essential research objectives and hypotheses.

4.5 Validity

As defined by Trochim (1985), validity of research is the best available approximation to the truth of a given proposition, inference or conclusion. He says that an instrument is valid when it measures what is supposed to measure and perform. For example, an instrument that is a valid measure of third grades' math skill probably is not a valid measure of high school calculus students' math skill. So, validity is a specific to the appropriateness of the interpretation we wish to make the score. Moreover, Selinger and Shohamy (1989) regard validity as an indication of how sound a research is. They assume that validity applies to both the design and the method of the result. They go further to maintain that validity in data collection means that the findings truly represent the phenomenon claimed to be measured.

However, they state some factors that affect validity and may invalidate findings. These factors are: size of subject population, time given for data collection, maturation, and task sensitivity. Further, they distinguish four validity types which build on one another as follows:

1. External validity that emphasizes the idea of generalizing the effect to another person, place and time.
2. Construct validity that assumes generalization to the construct of cause and effect.
3. Internal validity that claims the existence of casual relationship between the variables.
4. Conclusion validity that argues for a relationship between the cause and effect.

As stated earlier in section (4.2.2), the instruments of this research were basically experimental tests constructed by the researcher himself in full consultation with many other EFL specialists. To prove the validity of the tests, the researcher adopted
various practical measures by referring their assessment to more than ten EFL referees holding different academic titles ranging between teaching assistant and professor. Among those consultants, the research supervisor was the first to assess the tests by making some technical comments and observations, particularly, on the grammatical competence test, arguing that it seems longer to some extent with regard to the time allotted for it, but he, eventually, ratified its validity and presentation as it is, as well as his agreement for the number of the subjects suggested to be targeted by the testing process, that is, 150 EFL students from different faculties and universities.

Secondly, the tests were referred to other two English practitioners in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, one of them with a title of assistant professor and the other with a title of lecturer who made their technical comments on the tests within a week's period of time and then ratified their validity in spite of the fact that both of them were deeply worried about how to convince the students to sit for the tests, saying that they seem as if they were actual prescribed exams.

Thirdly, prior to their presentation, the tests were also subjected for a week's time to further evaluative assessment of the teaching staff members of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Juba represented in the dean of the faculty who is a prominent academic figure with a title of professor in addition to the head of the Department of English who is an assistant professor. Likewise, they showed their individual comments and then jointly endorsed their validity and helped fully in the process of carrying them out.

Fourthly, the tests were also referred to the assessment of the teaching staff members of the English Department, Faculty of Education, University of Juba represented in the person of the dean of the faculty who holds the title of associate professor, besides the deputy dean of the faculty who is an assistant professor of English. Similarly, they approved the validity, accuracy and objectivity of the tests with only one observation from an EFL lecturer that the grammatical part of test is characterized by being exceedingly intensive and accumulative, arguing that it is preferable that each grammatical area contains only three grammatical categories instead of five categories. However, she got convinced that this was mainly intended to cover broader and significant scopes of EFL grammar.

Finally, the tests have also spent about five days of assessment by the teaching staff members of the English Department, Faculty of Education of Sudan University
for Sciences and Technology represented, particularly, in an EFL lecturer and a teaching assistant who helped effectively in the carrying out of the tests in addition to marking them as inter-raters.

As for the written tests, it primarily comprised only one topic, but some referees recommended the objectivity of existing more than a single topic, because, as they think, multiple choice essays would offer examinees an opportunity to express their views more easily and freely. Accordingly, the researcher has applied this multiple strategy by suggesting three different topics on the basis that this could simply facilitate the validity of the study.

Acting on all the previous standpoints of different referees, it is to be argued that the instruments of the current research could be viewed as being highly valid entities.

4.6 Reliability

In order to prove the reliability of the current research data, the researcher will depend on four types of reliability: intra-rater, inter-rater, alpha scale and split half. With regard to intra-rater reliability, the tests of the research have been first marked by the researcher himself before subjecting them to other referees for more reliable assessment.

As for inter-rater reliability, it is assumed to be based on the fact that the stability of scores should be proved by more than one rater for the same test. This reliability type is argued to be one of the most effective and relevant categories of reliability, because it could result in a tangible correlation between the scores.

Accordingly, the researcher has used this type of reliability by referring the marking of the experimental tests to other two EFL specialists comprising a lecturer and a teaching assistant who acted as inter-raters. As regards alpha scale reliability, it is theoretically based on the assumption that values which range between 1.0 to 0.0 readings could be reliable regardless of expected different degrees. Moreover, values of 0.8 and above show strong positive correlation between the assigned scores and those around 0.5 show moderate positive correlation while those below 0.3 show weak positive correlation. Concerning split half reliability, it is said to be based on the assumption that the given marks for the same test, if divided into two halves, identical values will be realized in both cases (Abdallah, 2000).
Having assigned the scores of the written test by the researcher and of grammatical test by both the researcher and inter-rater, the following reliability results were obtained:

Group 'A' : \( r = 0.9656 \) (Alpha scale reliability)
Group 'B' : \( r = 0.8375 \) (Alpha scale reliability)
Group 'C' : \( r = 0.9564 \) (Alpha scale reliability)
Group 'A' : \( r = 0.9657 \) (Split half reliability)
Group 'B' : \( r = 0.8376 \) (Split half reliability)
Group 'C' : \( r = 0.9576 \) (Split half reliability)

Since reliability correlation can be accepted as high as 1.0 and as low as 0.00, the scores of the present research are said to be highly reliable.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology of the current research. It has defined the target population of the study, described the materials, subjects, and instruments and showed the procedures followed in collecting and analyzing the research data with special emphasis on the difficulties and obstacles the researcher encountered in the process of gathering these data. Moreover, the researcher has gone forward in the course of this chapter and explained the validity and reliability of the research.

The next chapter will be purely analytical in nature. It is the core chapter of the whole research. It will deal with displaying the research's data analysis, results and their interpretation.
Chapter Five

Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will be referred to as the central chapter of the whole research. It will be mostly analytical and explanatory in nature. It will be basically confined to displaying a precise analysis of the research data and showing its results and interpretation. In so achieving, it will start with examining the research hypotheses, then, presenting a detailed analytical picture for the subjects' performance of the experimental tests.

5.2 Examination of the Research Hypotheses

Generally speaking, the main reason behind testing the research hypotheses is to examine the significance levels of these hypotheses. That is to say, to find out whether the subjects' overall performance resulting from the experimental tests is similar or not by showing the correlation between variables. In addition, having known the strength of the association between the given variables, one could reach to a point that there is a strong positive relationship between the subjects' grammatical competence and their writing ability in general and writing quality in particular. In so achieving, the researcher will depend fully on comparing the findings of the subjects' grammatical competence test with those of their written test with a purpose to find out if there is a strong association between the findings of the two components of test and to what extent these findings are logical support to the research hypotheses. In this study, the researcher will use the standard significance values: (0.05) and (0.01) to represent the significance level of each hypothesis. Accordingly, if the hypothesis' P-value, i.e. the observed significance level is less than these two values, significant differences can be observed between the means of the three groups, but if the P-value is greater than the noted values, no significant differences can be found. For the ultimate benefit, let is consider the examination of these hypotheses in the light of this view under their respective headings.
5.2.1 Hypothesis One

This hypothesis indicates that there is an extremely significant correlation between EFL students' grammatical competence and their overall writing quality. In verifying this hypothesis, one important analytical procedure must be taken into account. Simply, put the scores of both grammatical and written tests of each group and investigate the level of association between the different grades and scores of the two tests and see how they were correlated on the basis of statistical analysis using Spearman's Correlation Coefficient procedure which is assumed by Triola (1989) as one of the effective methods for testing significance probability hypotheses as it provides evident relationship between different variables. Based on this, let us consider the tables below of hypotheses as it provides which show the results of the three groups' performance, i.e. GA, GB and GC. The table below shows the results.

Table (5.1): Spearman's Correlation Coefficient Test Between Grammatical Competence and Writing Quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>q2 Score (GCT)</th>
<th>q4 Score (WCT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.875**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q4 Score (WCT) Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>0.875**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>134</td>
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</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the analysis above, it can be recognized that there is a positive correlation between grammatical and written test scores since the significance probability observed from the statistical analysis is (0.000) which is less than both the correlation significance levels (0.01) and (0.05). Similarly, since the observed significance levels (0.875**) is less than (0.05), we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the two variables of the hypothesis.
Additionally, we can have another evident verification for this hypothesis through regarding the table (5.2) below:

**Table (5.2): Distribution of Group (A) Grammatical and Written Tests Scores (%).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Competence Test</th>
<th>Writing Competence Test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the levels of classification of students' scores of grammatical test with the ones of the written test in the above-mentioned table, it can be reported that, in general, there is a positive correlation between the two levels. Given the strong evidence of such a relationship, the research results have shown that most of the high-rated essays which have been categorized as types of either excellent or very good writing quality were, in fact, written by students whose grammatical competence is considered as either very advanced or advanced level. For example, it has been observed that among the four students of group 'A' who have scored (As) (i.e. very advanced level) in grammatical competence test, three of them have scored (As) and reached a level of excellent writing quality (see appendix '3'). For more evidence, let us consider the distribution of the group 'B' scores.

**Table (5.3): Distribution of Group (B) Grammatical and Written Tests Scores (%).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Competence Test</th>
<th>Writing Competence Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>Number of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, turning a glance at the above table, it would be clear evidence that the same argumentative interpretation given about group 'A' can be applied to group 'B'. Considering the scores of this group, it has been revealed by the research findings that among the four students who have scored (As) in grammatical competence test, three of them have scored (As) in the written test and reached a level of excellent writing quality. On the other hand, among the five students who have scored (As) in the written test in this group, three of them have scored (As) and two
of them have scored (B+s) in the grammatical competence test (see appendix '4'). For further investigation, let us consider the distribution of the group 'C' scores.

Table (5.4): Distribution of Group (C) Grammatical and Written Tests Scores (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Grammatical Competence Test</th>
<th>Writing Competence Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likewise, having a look at the above table, it would be obviously recognized that the same argumentative evidence drawn from the distribution of scores of the groups 'A' and 'B' can also be drawn from group 'C' scores' distribution, in that, among the five students who have scored (As) in the grammatical competence test, four of them have scored (As) and only one has scored (B+) in the equivalent written test and successfully reached the position of excellent writing quality (see appendix '5').

Another important point to be reported here is that the mid levels' achievements of the students in the written test also seem to be almost identical to those levels of grammatical competence test. That is to say, this gradual identically and similarity in the subjects' performance of the two components of test, can also be seen between the students' satisfactory writing and satisfactory level of grammatical competence, very poor writing and very low level of grammatical competence. Having believed in that, it could be true to argue that the research findings, as it could be expected, would support the central research assumption that a student's level of grammatical knowledge will have a direct influence on the quality of his/her writing.

5.2.2 Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis argues that grammatical competence is a major differentiating factor between a good and poor student-writer. As for confirming this hypothesis, Pearson's Correlation test procedure was used to show its significance level as shown in the table below:

Table (5.5): Pearson's Correlation for the Written Test and the Use of Grammar.
The above analysis shows that, firstly, since there is a strong positive correlation between students' grammatical competence and their overall written discourse quality as confirmed previously in discussing hypothesis one, it entails that any possible progress in students' grammatical level will be followed by a similar progress in their writing quality. Secondly, since the observed significance level (i.e. 0.000) is less than P-value (0.05) it can be argued that there is a statistically significant correlation between the students' written essays and the standard of their grammatical proficiency used, hence, differentiating between good and poor student-writers. Additionally, contemplating on the scores distribution of the groups 'A', 'B' and 'C' in the previously-mentioned tables (5.2), (5.3), (5.4), it would be clear evidence that the most grammatically competent students have, themselves, proved to be the best student-writers, in that, most of or even all the high-rated grades (i.e. grades A and B+) of the grammatical competence test in the three groups, collectively, have been obtained by the same students who have scored the same grades in the equivalent writing competence test and reached the position of excellent writing quality. Similarly, looking at the same tables, it would also be clearly recognized that most of the low-rated grades (i.e. grades C, D and F) of the grammatical test in the three groups, collectively, have been scored by the students who earned the same rates in the equivalent written test and reached the position of poor and very poor writing quality. Thus, the research results would make us to conclude that grammatical richness had helped competent student-writers in producing excellent pieces of writing and, then, obtaining high marks. Having noticed that, it would be true to argue that grammatical competence, no doubt, does draw very clear distinguishing barriers between good and poor student-writers.
5.2.3 Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis suggests that the writing which is based on grammatical competence is better evaluated than the writing which is not. Again, upon applying Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient test as indicated formerly in table (5.1), it is notable that the target learners' grammatical and written production have realized a significant correlation at (0.875**) which, in turn, indicate that their scores on both tests were positively related, in that, their observed significance probability level (i.e. 0.000) is less than P-value (i.e. 0.05), hence, supporting the above-mentioned assumption that the writing which is based on grammatical competence is better evaluated than the writing which is not. Also, starting from the main thematic objective of the hypothesis two in section (5.2.2) above, it would be logically acknowledged that the majority of the high-rated scores of the subjects' written test which have actually constituted the maximum standard of success with respect to their performance, have proved to be a natural result of the subjects' prior grammatical proficiency, as shown by the findings of the experimental tests, hence, justifying the research assumption that the writing which is based on grammatical competence is better evaluated than the writing which is not. Accordingly, it has been suggested that productive utilization of academic grammar is a core component of academic success.

5.2.4 Hypothesis Four

This hypothesis states that the target students' both grammatical and written production can be largely viewed as being poor quality entities. In testing this hypothesis, the researcher has applied Independent Samples T-test for the two variables as the table below shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>T-test</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table (5.6): Independent Samples Test of Grammatical Competence and Writing Ability.
As it has been pointed out (see 5.2), if the significance level is smaller than (0.05), significant differences can be found between the variables and the reverse is true. Accordingly, it should be noted that since the P-values for the grammatical and writing performance are (0.615) and (0.429), respectively, which are both greater than the standard significance value (i.e. 0.05), then, no significant differences can be observed between the subjects' both grammatical and written tests' means. That is to say, the suppositional T-test value (i.e. 50) is identical to the actual standard of assessing students' performance (i.e. 50) a matter which justifies the existence of an evident deficiency within their both grammatical and written production. Having another look at the previous three tables (i.e., 5.2, 5.3, 5.4), it would also be obviously recognized that the general academic standard of the subjects’ performance is of poor standard, in that, the majority of their scores in both tests have proved to be below the average because, as shown by the research findings, most of the subjects' scores in the three groups, collectively, are ranging between low and very low levels (i.e. C, D and F). For example, in group 'A', the grade (D) has scored the highest percentages of the subjects' performance in both components of test amounting to (39%) in grammatical test and (34%) in the written test, hence, constituting the lion's share in the learners' total scores register. Similarly, in group 'B', this grade has amounted to (33%) in the grammatical test scores and (30%) in the written test scores. Likewise, in group 'C', the grade (C) has registered the biggest amount of the subjects' scores with a percentage of (32%) in both types of test, hence, representing the highest rate of the subjects’ total register of scores. In order to have broader information about the subjects' poor quality standard, let us consider the following table which acts as another strong evidence for the above-mentioned assumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Competence</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>47</th>
<th>48.0000</th>
<th>17.2009</th>
<th>-0.504</th>
<th>0.615</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49.0000</td>
<td>19.1674</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.1200</td>
<td>18.5210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Ability</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>47</th>
<th>46.8511</th>
<th>17.4655</th>
<th>-0.809</th>
<th>0.420</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49.3243</td>
<td>19.3090</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.1200</td>
<td>17.2705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test value = 50.
Table (5.7): Distribution of Subjects' Grammatical and Written Tests Averages (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Competence Test</th>
<th>Writing Competence Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.5 Hypothesis Five

This hypothesis explains that it is obviously recognizable that the target learners' both grammatical and writing deficiency can be highly attributed to their low awareness of the relevant EFL grammatical and composing rules. To give an objective verification for this hypothesis, let us view upon the descriptive statistics table below:

Table (5.8): Descriptive Statistics of Subjects' Grammatical and Writing Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q2 Score (GCT)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>49.21</td>
<td>18.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q2 Score (WCT)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>48.75</td>
<td>17.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (list wise)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having viewed the table above, it could be argued that since the means of students' scores in both types of test (i.e., GCT and WCT) are (49.21) and (48.75) respectively which are below the standard average (50), this linguistic phenomenon will, undoubtedly, interpret the target students' poorness of performance in both tests as a natural result of their low awareness (if not ignorance) of EFL grammatical and composing rules. As it could be expected, the research findings of the two components of test have considerably indicated that the subjects of the three groups, collectively, have confronted much difficulty in dealing with EFL grammatical and
composing rules along their different learning periods. This confirmation seemed to be basically associated with the target students' low awareness or even ignorance of the relevant grammatical and textual rules of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). By the ignorance of grammatical rules, the researcher means that an expression such as: "woman plays a pioneering role in the society", will, unfortunately, be formulated by some learners as: "Woman play a pioneering role in the society", by violating the grammatical rule of verb inflection, i.e. third person singular(s), whereas by ignorance of composing rules, the researcher definitely indicates to students' deficiency in dealing with the basic writing conventions with respect to the core composing elements in terms of paragraphing, determining the topic sentence, punctuating, practicing connectives, language use, in addition to lexical and grammatical representation, etc., which will be exemplified intensively in section (5.3) when the researcher will be describing the subjects' performance in a broader analytical manner.

Finally, it can be judged from the previous analysis that the hypotheses of the research have been practically confirmed.

5.3 Description of the Subjects' Performance

This part will explore in detail the target students' performance in both grammatical competence and writing competence which will be carried out in relation to the examination of the research hypotheses which have been discussed in section (5.2).

5.3.1 Grammatical Competence

Since the data of the present research have been obtained from three separate groups, i.e. 'GA', 'GB', 'GC', it is very important to compare different means and standard deviations to see subjects' grammatical competence variation. Thus, grammatical competence means and standard deviations of these three elements were as follows:

Table (5.9): Means and Standard Deviations of Grammatical Test Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Group &quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having a glance at the above table, it seems that there is a sort of resemblance between the means of the scores of the three groups. It is clear that all means were equivalent to the grade (C+) (see appendices 3, 4 and 5). As the grammatical test has been marked out of (100), it becomes evident that the majority of the subjects in all groups obtained grades below the average. For example, as shown by the grammatical test scores, (61%) of the students in group 'A' and (62%) in group 'B' and (54%) in group 'C' have performed below the average.

From the standard deviations of the groups, it can be judged that scores of the students’ grammatical performance in group 'A' tend to be more homogeneous than the scores of the groups 'B' and 'C'. This could be attributed to the fact that there is a consistency between the scores of this group to some extent because according to Triola (1989), if scores are close together, this will result in a small standard deviation, but when they spread farther that will yield a larger standard deviation.

It is worth noting that one important way of showing variance between the scores of the subjects is through exploring the ranges of scores as shown in the Table (5.10) below:

**Table (5.10): Ranges of Grammatical Competence Test Scores.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Highest Score</th>
<th>Lowest Score</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Group &quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it is obviously recognized that differences can be registered in terms of ranges which would suggest that, individually, the subjects' grammatical test scores are varied to some extent. Based on this fact, it has been statistically assumed that much larger range suggests greater dispersion (Triola, 1989). As indicated in the above table, the ranges of the subjects' scores are varied between (72) for group 'C' as the largest range, and (69) for group 'B' as the relatively medium range and (66) for group 'A' as the smallest range. Accordingly, it can be said that the large range for group 'C' indicates more variance among its subjects' scores than in groups 'A' and 'B'. Similarly, the medium range of group 'B' indicates more variance among its member students' scores than the case with group 'A'. Thus, it
seems clear evidence that the subjects' ranges of scores do constitute one of the most significant criterial features of introducing variances of their performance.

Broadly speaking, in investigating the subjects' grammatical competence, the researcher has divided the level of their proficiency into six principal categories including, very advanced level, advanced level, good level, satisfactory level, low level and very low level. The classification of these categories is based on letter grading evaluation whose aim is to compare these levels with those of the subjects' writing quality which will be discussed later in section (5.3.2). So, these levels can be classified according to the scores assigned as shown below:

Table (5.11): Letter Grading and Levels of Grammatical Test Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Level of Grammatical Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>very advanced level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>advanced level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>good level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>satisfactory level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;D</td>
<td>low level (pass level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>very low level (failure level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking the above-mentioned grade levels as criterial measures, it has been found from the grammatical test findings that (see appendices 3, 4 and 5), four students in group 'A' have reached very advanced levels of grammatical competence with a percentage of (9%) and only two students have reached an advanced level with a percentage of (2%). Similarly, in group 'B' the same grade levels have been reached. That is to say, in this group, also four students have reached a very advanced level with a percentage of (9%) and only two students have reached an advanced level with a percentage of (2%). In group 'C", the case seemed to be relatively improved. That is to argue, in this group, five students have reached a very advanced level of grammatical competence with a percentage of (10%) and only three students have reached the position of advanced level with a percentage of (6%).

From the foregoing, it could be judged that with regard to these two grade levels, no major differences can be noticed among the three study groups because their competence behavior tends to be similar to a distant extent. However, making a
precise comparison to find out if the subjects could practice the same quality performance in their written work standard which will be touched on later in section (5.3.2), is of great importance. Nevertheless considering the rest of grammatical competence levels, it is noticeable that the situation seems to be quite different. For example, concerning good level, it was found that seven students in group 'A' (i.e. 15%) and four students in group 'B' (i.e. 10%) and seven students in group 'C' (i.e. 14%) have been categorized as good level students. Regarding satisfactory level (i.e. C+), six students in group 'A' with a percentage of (13%) and four students in group 'B' with a percentage of (10%) and eight students in group 'C' with a percentage of (16%) have been classified as satisfactory level students. Having a glance at the low levels (i.e. C and D), one could argue that the three groups seem to be described as nearly equal in low levels of grammatical proficiency, in that, in group 'A', seven students with a grade (C) and eighteen students with a grade (D) have been categorized as low level students. Similarly, in group 'B' twelve students with a grade (C) and seven students with a grade (D) have been viewed as low level students. Likewise, in group 'C', sixteen students with a grade (C) and six students with a grade (D) have been classified as low level students in the grammatical competence test. This gradual movement within the subjects' levels of performance would also confirm an important fact that starting from the point of the subjects' high and mid levels' scores to the direction of low levels' scores, no greater differences can be observed between their scores of grammatical competence.

With regard to the point of very low level, i.e. failure or weak level it has been found from the grammatical test results that, the number of failure level students in group 'C' (i.e.5 students), has exceeded the number of those who have reached the same level in group B (i.e. 4 students) which itself has exceeded the number of the students who have reached the same level in group 'A' (i.e. 3 students). In percentage terms, the failure levels constitute (7%) for group 'A' and (10%) for both groups 'B' and 'C'.

In order to obtain more detailed information on the interpretation of the three groups' grammatical competence scores, let us consider the following tables and figures.

Table (5.12): Distribution of Group (A) Grammatical Test Scores (%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turning a glance at the table (5.12) above which shows group 'A' students' grammatical test distribution, it is noticeable that grade (A) was obtained by only 4 students in the whole group - 2 males and 2 females with a percentage of (9%). This result seems to emphasize that both sexes of subjects have not practiced grammatical use sufficiently and appropriately during their different academic stages. As emphasized by this grade register, the target subjects have very low awareness or even ignorance of the fixed EFL grammatical rules. This claim has been confirmed intensively by the quantity and quality of grammatical errors committed on the part of the target students as shown by the research findings. Grade (B+) acts as the least obtained grade in the whole group. That is to say, it was obtained by only 2 students - 1 male and 1 female with a percentage of (5%). The medium grade (B) was obtained by 7 students - 4 males and 3 females, whereas the satisfactory grade (C+) was obtained by 6 students - 4 males and 2 females, with a percentage of (13%). The low grades (C) and (D) were scored by 7 and 18 students respectively as equivalent to (15%) for (C) and (39%) for (D). In this concern, it is to be said that grade (D) has the lion’s share in students’ scores percentage. Finally, the failure level score (F) was obtained by 3 students - 2 males and 1 female as equivalent to (7%).

Taking all the above-mentioned grades into consideration, it could be said that the general academic status of the students of this group with respect to grammatical competence, is of low standard and that male students seem to have done better than their female counterparts by outperforming them and scoring most of the highest marks of the test. This can be attributed to a claim that male students of this group might have been supported by a guide that helped them obtain relatively higher scores than female students did. That is to say, they might have practiced EFL grammatical rules in their different learning stages rather than females. It can also be referred to the bigger number of males in this group, i.e., 33 students, in comparison to females' number, i.e., 14 students. For further emphasis, figure (5.1) below will show us clearer representation of the subjects' grammatical status in this group.
Considering the figure (5.1) above, it seems clear from the curve shape that most of the group 'A' grammatical scores are to the right of the vertical line of the curve which seems to show some sort of fluctuation as an indication that these scores are relatively heterogeneous. Additionally, the top point of the curve indicates to the concentration of most of the group 'A' students' grammatical scores on the low level grades i.e. D, C and C+.

As a part of discussing students’ performance, let us consider the table (5.13) below which explains the distribution of group 'B' grammatical test scores.

Table (5.13): Distribution of Group (B) Grammatical Test Scores (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glancing at the table (5.13) above, it is notable that grade (A) was scored by 4 students in the group - 3 males and 1 female as equivalent to (10%). This result seems to emphasize that male students' larger number, i.e., 27 students in comparison to females' number, i.e., 10 students, might have reflected positively in giving them much opportunity to obtain most of the highest grades. Grade (B+) was the least obtained grade of the test. It was scored by only 2 students in the whole group – 1 male and 1 female with a percentage of (5%), whereas the medium grade (B) was also obtained by 4 students - 2 males and 2 females as equivalent to (10%). Likewise, the satisfactory grade (C+) was also obtained by 4 students - 2 males and 2 females as equivalent to (10%), whereas the low grades (C) and (D) were scored by 12 students for (C) and 7 students for (D) with percentages of (33%) and (19%) respectively. Finally, the failure grade (F) was scored by 4 students in the group - 3 males and 1 female as equivalent to (10%).

Based on these grades, it could be judged that the general academic status of this group's members in relation to grammatical competence is of low level. These grades' distribution can also be represented by the figure (5.2) below:
Looking at the figure (5.2) above, it has been proposed that if the distribution of scores is normal, the curve will be bell-shaped curve and if a vertical line is drawn from the top frequency score to the baseline, it will split the scores into nearly two equal parts. Thus, it seems clear that most of the group 'A' grammatical scores are bunched to the center of the curve which reveals that their distribution is a little bit symmetric, in that, if we divide them into two segments at the peak, the two parts seem to be similar to some extent. This of course supports an earlier finding that there are no significant differences between grammatical test scores of group 'B' as compared to that of group 'A', or they are relatively homogeneous scores. Similarly, the top of the curve shape interprets the focus of the learners' scores in the low level grades, i.e., D.C and C+.

Again, for the ultimate benefit, let us view upon the table (5.14) below:
Table (5.14): Distribution of Group (C) Grammatical Test Scores (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having a look at the table (5.14) above which interprets group 'C' students’ grammatical test findings, it is recognizable that grade (A) was obtained by 5 students in the whole group which comprises 50 students. It was scored by 2 males and 3 females as equivalent to (10%). Likewise, grade (B+) acts as the least obtained grade of the test. It was earned by only 3 students in the group - 2 males and 1 female as equivalent to (6%). The medium level grade (B) was obtained by 7 students - 4 males and 3 females with a percentage of (14%), whereas the satisfactory level grade (C+) was gained by 8 students- 4 males and 4 females with a percentage of (16%). However, the low level grade (C) has gained the lion's share in the students' scores percentage, in that, it was earned by 16 students with a percentage of (32%), whereas the low level grade (D) was earned by 6 students as equivalent to (12%). Finally, the failure grade (F) was also obtained by 5 students - 3 males and 2 females with a percentage of (10%). Assessing these grades precisely, it could be decided that there is no considerable variance in the subjects' performance on the basis of gender and that the general picture of students' grammatical status can be characterized by being poor standard because the majority of their scores frequencies were below the average.

This picture portraying group 'C' students’ grammatical test scores can also be seen clearly in the figure (5.3) below:
Glancing at the figure (5.3) above, it could be realized that if a vertical line is drawn from the highest frequency score of group 'C' grammatical test scores (i.e. 45) to the baseline, the curve will positively skew to the right which means that most of the scores are bunched around the mean (i.e., 50.54) which is larger than the value of the median (50) which could also add another interpretation of expecting no significant differences in the subjects' grammatical standard. That is to say, with regard to standard deviations, the scores of this group seem to be more homogeneous than of group 'B' but more heterogeneous than of group 'A'.

Broadly speaking, it has been found from the research's grammatical test findings that most of the subjects' performance was characterized by their low awareness or even ignorance of the rules judging the functional utilization and proper representation of EFL grammar to the extent that the overall value of many grammatical constructions produced by them seemed to be largely non-denotative, less expressive, ambiguous or even misleading. As the results have shown, great deal of subjects' grammatical deviations were found to be highly concentrated on EFL grammatical areas in terms of tensing, affixation, passivisation, reported sentences
and phrasal verbs. These five problematic categories of grammatical breaks within the learners' performance can be clearly represented by a variety of errors samples chosen randomly from the subjects' grammatical competence test answer books.

Firstly, with regard to the grammatical area of tensing, the following errors samples were found committed by the students (see appendix (1) to have a view about the questions).

1. He is busy revise; to revise; revised; revises; on revising; that he revised; revision his lesson.

2. Before he arrived; he send; was send; sended ; sending ; sent; had send; has sent ; sends; has sended a telegram.

3. He has studied; has studies; has studying; has studing; has studied; has been studed; has been studing; has been study; has student medicine since 2000.

4. Had you worked hard; you passed, well pass; pass ; would pass; are passing; should pass; will pass; passed; passing; has passes; could pass; will passed; passes; can pass; may pass successfully.

5. Good education does develops; developed; developing; developept; developer; development peoples' skills.

Secondly, affixation (see appendix (1) to have information about the questions). Regarding the subjects' miscomprehension of affixation, the following errors samples have been extracted randomly from the students' answer books as representative items:

1. His articles were not only informative, but also ...(entertain). The proper word is (entertaining). The errors committed by students are: (entertainment; entertain; ementertain; entertainem; entertainen).

2. By the help of weather ..(cast), we can predict the coming of storms. The proper word is (forecast). The errors committed by students are: (casting; castfore; castem; encast; casten).

3. Much reading can ....(rich) one's vocabulary. The proper word (enrich). The errors committed by students are: (richen; forerich; riching; richfore; emrich).

4. Many western women have been.....(power) for bearing official tasks. The proper word is (empowered). The errors committed by students are: (powering; empower; poweren; power powerfore; forepower empower; powerem; empowering).
Thirdly, passivisation (see appendix (1) to have the equivalent active sentences). As regards the grammatical category of passivisation, the following errors samples have been taken randomly from the students' answer books:

1. Case is discussed yesterday; doctors had been discussed the case; the case were discussing yesterday by doctors; the case discussing by doctors yesterday; the case were discussed yesterday by doctors.

2. A telegram is sended to Cairo; a telegram will being send to Cairo; a telegram send to Cairo by he; a telegram to Cairo send when he is going; a telegram to Cairo is going to send by him; to Cairo to send is going a telegram.

3. The match is win last week; last week, our team is won in the match; the last week match were won.

4. The dishes is cleaned; the dishes had cleaned by someone; the dishes should have cleaned by someone; the dishes was have cleaned by someone; the dishes should cleaned by someone.

5. The rooms are furnishing by them; the room was furnishing by them; the room are furnishing by them; the room was be furnishing; the room were furnishing.

Fourthly, reported sentences (see appendix (1) to have the equivalent direct sentences). Concerning reported sentences, a variety of errors samples have been chosen randomly from students' answer books as indirect expressions used by the students as included in the following written categories:

I am feeling ill now. Tom said; he said that he feels ill; he said that have you comprehended the novel well; he said that you must go to school next day; he said that his parents lefted fo Cairo the previous day; you need to go to school tomorrow; the teacher had asked the student that have he comprehended the novel well.

Fifthly, phrasal verbs (see appendix (1) for a detailed view). With regard to phrasal verbs, it has been found from the research findings of the grammatical test that many students have acute difficulty to give the equivalent simple verbs of the phrasal verbs used in the rest. This linguistic phenomenon can be exemplified by the following errors samples chosen randomly from the students' answer books:

1. To look people down (i.e. despise). The meanings given by students are: (see, help, observe, discourage, insult, look, dissatisfy, etc).

2. The elections broke out (i.e. began, started, commenced). The meanings used by students are: (stop, scope, ended, broke, finished, and destroyed).
3. The meeting was put of (i.e. postponed). The meanings given by students are: (put, left, interrupted, meet and canceled).

4. To carry out research (i.e. conduct). The meanings given by students are: (study, stated, investigated, carry, stop, completed, writing, etc).

5. Turn down (i.e. refuse, reject). The meanings registered by students are: (unemployed, applied, researched, gave, etc).

In addition to the previously-reported grammatical deviations, it is to be acknowledged that the students' grammatical production was also characterized by comprising a variety of lexical errors which seemed to have considerably affected its both quantitative and qualitative content. These lexical errors can be exemplified by some miss-spelled items which have been selected randomly from the students' answer books of the grammatical competence test as shown in the following table:

Table (5.15): Samples of Subjects' Lexical Errors of the Grammatical Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss-spelled Item</th>
<th>Proper Item</th>
<th>Miss-spelled Item</th>
<th>Proper Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sendy</td>
<td>sending</td>
<td>passe</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sand</td>
<td>send</td>
<td>well</td>
<td>will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revis</td>
<td>revise</td>
<td>developing</td>
<td>developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangous/dangrous</td>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>revision</td>
<td>revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enriche</td>
<td>enrich</td>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>quite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having so far described the statistical findings of the subjects' grammatical competence test, let us consider the subjects' written test findings statistically to see to what extent these statistical facts can support an assumption that university students' academic writing quality is heavily dependent on the level of their grammatical proficiency.

5.3.2 Writing Competence

As it has been stated earlier in section (5.2), the main purpose of this study is to investigate the possible link between grammatical competence and Sudanese EFL
students' writing quality at university level. Based on this fact, it becomes necessary to give a general description of subjects' written performance.

With respect to investigating subjects' writing competence, it is helpful to consider the interpretations of means and standard deviations of their written test scores as the table below indicates:

Table (5.16): Means and Standard Deviations of Written Test Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Group &quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46.85</td>
<td>17.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49.32</td>
<td>19.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.12</td>
<td>17.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above shows, there are no substantial differences between the mean scores of the groups 'B' and 'C', i.e. group 'B' mean is (49.32) while group 'C' mean is (50.12). Since there are no significant differences between the two groups' scores, then, it is conceivable to argue that their written performance is similar to a great extent. However, group 'A' scores show a relatively different mean from the groups 'B' and 'C', i.e. (46.85).

Concerning the standard deviations, the analysis shows that there is a great similarity in the writing standard of the groups 'A' and 'C', i.e. (17.47) and (17.27), respectively, which reveals that their scores seem to be homogeneous. In contrast, there is some degree of inconsistency between the scores of group 'B' subjects, that is, they seem to be heterogeneous and highlight an important point that their standard of writing is not so similar. To shed more light on the differences in the subjects' written test scores, it is also necessary to consider the analysis of their scores' ranges as the table below shows:

Table (5.17): Ranges of Written Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Highest Score</th>
<th>Lowest Score</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Group &quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is known, the ranges of scores indicate their level of differences and similarities. That is, the larger ranges explain the differences of scores whereas the smaller ranges explain the similarities of the scores. Based on these measures (see the table (5.17) above), it could be argued that group 'A' students' written test scores tend to be more heterogeneous as compared to those of groups 'B' and 'C', and that group 'B' students' written test scores tend to be more heterogeneous than those of group 'C'. Or in other words, group 'C' students' written test scores tend to be more homogeneous rather than being heterogeneous as compared to the scores of groups 'A' and 'B'. Thus, it is notable that the students' range of scores does interpret their variances in terms of homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Based on the previously-mentioned grammatical test evaluation of a letter grading method, the researcher has applied a similar criterion used by both Moll (1998) and Karadawi (1994) to classify the subjects' written discourse quality as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table (5.18): Letter Grading and Standards of the Written Test Scores.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Grade</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
very poor writing performance (failure standard)

Applying the above levels of classification in interpreting the learners' written test scores, as the case with the grammatical test scores, let us consider the distribution of the different groups' written test scores, separately, under their respective tables and figures.

**Table (5.I9): Distribution of Group (A) Written Test Scores (%).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon viewing the above table, we will notice that, grade (A) was obtained by only 4 students 3 males and 1 female in the whole group which comprises 47 students as equivalent to (9%) of the total grade percentages. This result seems to explain the fact that male students' bigger number, i.e., 33 students, as compared to females' smaller number, i.e. 14 students, might have resulted positively in availing them good opportunity to obtain most of the highest scores of the test. Similarly, grade (B+) was scored by only 2 male students with a percentage of (5%), whereas the medium level grade (B) was scored by 7 students in the group as equivalent to (15%). In the same vein, both the satisfactory level grade (C+) and the low level grade (C) were also obtained by 7 students amongst all group members. However, it is notable that the low level grade (D) has gained the lion's share in the frequency of scores percentage, in that, it was earned by 16 members of the group as equivalent to (34%), whereas the failure level grade (F) was scored by 5 students in the group-3 males and 2 females with a percentage of (11%). Taking these grades into account, it could be acknowledged that this group's written performance status can be characterized by being poor writing performance, in that, the majority of its scores were found to be below the average.

The distribution of the above-mentioned scores can also be represented by the figure (5.4) below:
Viewing the above figure, it would be evident from the curve shape that the majority of group 'A' students' written test scores are focused on the right of the vertical line of the curve which seems to show some sort of fluctuation due to the high and low frequencies which, in turn, seem to explain the heterogeneity of these scores. In addition, the top of the curve indicates to the concentration of subjects' standard performance on the low level grades, D, C and C+. Moreover, comparing this curve with that of figure (5.1), it would be noted that there is a great resemblance between the two curves which could add another explanation of finding a significant correlation between students' grammatical competence and their writing abilities.

Once again, in our journey to investigate students' written test scores, let us go through table (5.20) below which explains the distribution of group 'B' students' written test scores:

**Table (5.20): Distribution of Group (B) Written Test Scores (%)**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having a look at the table (5.20) above, it is recognizable that grade (A) was scored by only 5 students-3 males and 2 females with a percentage of (14%) in the whole group which comprises 37 students. Grade (B+) is viewed as the least obtained grade of the test because it was scored by only 2 students- 1 male and 1 female as equivalent to (6%), whereas the medium grade (B) was obtained by 3 students-2 males and 1 female as equivalent to (9%). Moreover, the satisfactory level grade (C+) was obtained by 4 students – 2 males and 2 females with a percentage of (11%). However, it is noticeable from the above table that the low level grade (C) has gained the lion's share in the students' scores percentages, in that, it was obtained by 11 students in the group - 10 males and 1 female with a percentage of (30%), whereas the low level grade (D) was earned by 7 students - 6 males and 1 female as equivalent to (19%), and ,finally, the failure standard grade (F) was earned by 5 students in the group - 3 males and 2 females with a percentage of (14%). Having a precise assessment for these scores, it seems logical to judge that male students' larger number of 33 students in comparison to females' number of 10 students always seems to make remarkable gap among the students' levels.

In addition, it becomes clear evidence from these grades and percentages that the ultimate description of students' performance in this group is of poor writing quality since most of their grades were found to be below the average. Likewise, the figure (5.5) below will give us clearer picture about those students' scores and their frequencies.
Turning a glance at the figure above, we will again notice, as the case with figure (5.2), that the sub-bell-shaped curve of the figure seems to reveal that most of the group 'B' students' written test scores are bunched nearly to the center of the curve which shows that their distribution is symmetric to some extent, which may also explain that they are relatively homogeneous in comparison to group 'A' written test scores. Another important point to be noted is that there is an obvious resemblance between the curves' shapes in the figures (5.5) and (5.2) which could explore another important fact that there is a significant interrelationship between students' grammatical accuracy and their written discourse tasks.

For further interpretation about the target students' written performance, let us contemplate on the table (5.21) below:

**Table (5.21): Distribution of Group (C) Written Test Scores (%).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Viewing the table (5.21) above, we will notice that grade (A) was scored by only 5 students - 3 males and 2 females with a percentage of (10%) in a group comprising 50 students. Meanwhile, grade (B+) acts as the least earned grade in the group. It was scored by only 2 students- 1 male and 1 female as equivalent to (4%), whereas the medium level grade (B) was scored by 6 students- 3 males and 3 females as equivalent to (12%). Moreover, the satisfactory level grade (C+) was obtained by 10 students in the group - 6 males and 4 females as equivalent to (20%). However, the low level grade (C) was obtained by the biggest number of students in the group, i.e. 16 students with a percentage of (32%), hence, having the lion's share in the students' scores percentage, whereas the low level grade (D) was obtained by 7 students in the group as equivalent to (14%) and, finally, the failure grade (F) was registered by 4 students - 3 males and 1 female with a percentage of (8%). Likewise, taking the evaluation of all these grades into consideration, one can decide that in this group, the learners' general academic standard in relation to their written performance seems to be described as poor writing quality since the majority of their scores were below the average. For further explanation of the target students' scores and their frequencies, let us consider the figure (5.6) below:

**Figure (5.6): Distribution of Group(C) Written Test Scores**

![Distribution of Group(C) Written Test Scores](image)
Upon viewing the figure (5.6) above, we will also recognize, as the case with figure (5.3), that the curve positively skews to the right of the vertical line which means that most of group 'C' students' written test scores are bunched around the mean (i.e., 50.12) which is a little bit larger than the value of the median (50) which could also add another interpretation of expecting no substantial differences in the learners' written test standard which could be termed as being homogeneous as compared to groups 'A' and 'B'. In effect, the similarity in the curves' shapes of the figures (5.6) and (5.3) will logically refer to the existence of an essential correlation between the students' grammatical adequacy and their overall writing quality.

Generally speaking, it is worth noting that the overall findings of students' written discourse test have actually revealed that the majority of them lack the primary principles of essay writing which would, undoubtedly, explain their low awareness or even ignorance of the basic EFL composing rules and strategies relevant to such categories as, topic sentence, cohesive devices, coherence representation, punctuations, paragraphing, capitalization, language use, in addition to grammatical accuracy, spelling and handwriting, etc, all of which are highly believed to be important factors of assessing EFL writing quality. However, what is noticed from the students' written essays is that,

grammatical breaks, miss-spelling, mispunctuation, miss-handling connectives and poor handwriting seemed to constitute the lion's share in the subjects' miscomposing causes among all the above-mentioned essay writing conventions.

These major textual deviations related to students' writing can be exemplified by some errors samples extracted randomly from the subjects' written essays.

With regard to grammatical errors, the following samples have been recognized abundantly in the students' written feedback which constitute a gross violation to HFL grammatical rules:

1. *Woman play a pioneering role in the society.*
2. *Because he live many years and faced by many difficulty.*
3. *The man was faced all the harmful of life and take the difficult duties to himself and the others choose the easier to practice themself.*
4. *Because he don't care abut how much money to be pay.*
5. *To make their work and being activeness in their life.*
6. *That they belief he was awareness and wise man.*
7. The people had responsibility from this programs.

8. Because this ideas was not scientific ideas.

9. They can not planning for this matter, yet or assumes that they planning to this scheme. It was very awkward because it is inaproperiatenes to the developing country like Sudan.

10. A home which have no man as a leader have a lot of weakness.

Likewise, learners' written test answer books were also characterized by including a huge number of orthographic (spelling) errors as mentioned in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss-spelled Item</th>
<th>Proper item</th>
<th>Miss-spelled Item</th>
<th>Proper Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sociaty</td>
<td>society</td>
<td>repeted</td>
<td>repeated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awore</td>
<td>aware</td>
<td>beacause</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrable</td>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>schame</td>
<td>scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drive</td>
<td>derive</td>
<td>quiet</td>
<td>quite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>marrage</td>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same vein, students' written test findings have predominantly revealed the fact of their mispunctuating and mistreating connectives in the distributional representation of sentences, clauses, phrases, paragraphs, etc, which would have a negative reflection in their thematic messages and ideas. In order to have such composing behaviors in practice, let us consider the following textual pieces which have been taken randomly from the target students' answer books of the written test:
"Basically man is universally titled as a household leader because the who can able to do any things in this world.

So, I think a man is very important person in the house or he is a leader of his house, thus man can do first of all he can choose his life or his wife in the first time so as to married because he was encourage person and power, so he select his life in choosing wife and when they are two agree that chosen the man can prepared any that belong to the marrage such as clothes, tups, beds and furnitures of the house and after that he choose one day to make his marrage with his relatives, because it need participation from other people. Therefore, already the man work before that and bought his house and get money”.

From the above written piece of text, it is obviously recognizable that most of the previously-mentioned areas of difficulty within students' writing are excessively available. These difficulties include, ungrammaticality of certain items, miss-spelled lexemes, mispunctuating, misusing connectives, misparagraphing, absence of cohesion and coherence, etc.

Comparing the results of the different groups, it could be decided that group 'A' seems to be the best group in the grammatical competence test, in that, it has scored 4 (As) vs. 3 (Fs), whereas groups 'B' and 'C' seem to show identical pictures, in that, group 'B' has scored 4(As) vs. 4 (Fs), and group 'C' has scored 5 (As) vs. 5 (Fs).

Concerning the written test, on the other hand, group 'C' seems to be the best group because it has obtained 5 (As) vs. 4(Fs) as compared to group 'B' which acts to be the second level by obtaining 5 (As) vs. 5 (Fs), and group 'A' which seems to be the third level by obtaining 4 (As) vs. 5 (Fs). Moreover, the longest essay in the three groups collectively was (450) words, it was written by a male student and was graded as (A), whereas the shortest essay in all groups was (120) words, it was written by a female student and was graded as (F). Furthermore, in the GCT, females seemed to have done better than males by scoring 6 (As) vs. 4 (Fs), whereas males have scored 7 (As) vs. 8(Fs). In the WCT, the case seems to be balanced in relation to sex, in that, males have scored 9 (As) vs. 9(Fs) and females have scored 5 (As) vs. 5 (Fs).

However, it could be argued that the males have difficulty in experiencing writing mechanics since they have scored most of the (Fs). In addition, it has been acknowledged from the results of both tests that the factor of age seems to have nothing to do with respect to students' performance bearing in mind that, their ages in all groups are ranging between (21 -30)years.
One important point to be noticed is that students' writing quality can not be improved by achieving only grammatical competence, in that, some of the students who have gained (As) in the grammatical test, have themselves scored grades below the average such as (C+) in the equivalent written test.

From the analysis of this study, it can be concluded that learners have confronted two problematic obstacles represented in obtaining grammatical knowledge and then using this knowledge in achieving reasonable written discourse quality.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has certainly acted as the core chapter along the whole journey of the research. It has dealt with the most fundamental issues of the study which are the examination of the research hypotheses and the demonstration of a detailed description of the subjects' performance in both components of the experimental test, i.e. grammatical competence test and writing competence test. In doing so, the researcher has tested the subjects' grammatical competence and writing competence separately aiming at giving a clear picture of students' status with respect to each of these two linguistic aspects. After investigating students' both grammatical and composing abilities separately, the researcher has conducted a precise comparison between these two linguistic skills with an intention to find out if there is a strong association between the learners' knowledge of grammar and their written discourse quality. As a result, it has been found that the overall quality of learners' grammatical knowledge acts as the most influential tool in assessing their written tasks. However, it has also been concluded that it is not only by grammatical proficiency can students' writing be improved, rather, other aspects of language should be considered.

The next chapter will be an evaluative and conclusive chapter. It will summarize the results, make a comprehensive assessment for the whole study and present valuable recommendations by determining some pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.
Chapter Six
Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is, far and foremost, evaluative in nature. It will bring the research into conclusion by summarizing the results, making a final assessment for the study and presenting some objective recommendations in a form of pedagogical implications for students, teachers, course designers and instructors, as well as suggesting some significant areas to be dealt with for further study.

6.2 Summary of Results and Evaluation of the Study

Broadly speaking, this research is, first and foremost, an evaluative study. It has been an attempt to investigate the correlation between grammatical competence of some Sudanese EFL university students and their overall writing quality in English. The research has also shown a significant point that learners’ grammatical proficiency is assumed to be the most fundamental element through which EFL students express their ideas in achieving the best levels of writing quality in terms of functional and communicative grammatical knowledge rather than single categories of rules. Moreover, the research has touched on the influence of some other linguistic items such as vocabulary in teaching and learning grammar, in addition to some writing approaches across ELT curriculum, the major writing processes and the approaches of teaching and learning of both writing and grammar. In so fulfilling, three representative samples of the fourth year EFL university students were asked to sit for two types of experimental test including: grammatical competence test, and writing competence test. The results of both tests have been analyzed on the basis of the research questions and hypotheses.

In investigating the research problem, the researcher has posed the following researchable questions:

1. Is there any significant correlation between EFL students’ grammatical competence and their overall writing quality?

2. Is grammatical competence a differentiating factor between a good and poor student-winter?
3. To what extent can grammatical adequacy be the basic index of writing quality?
4. Can the target students’ both grammatical and written production be viewed as being poor quality entities?
5. What are the major probable reasons behind the target students’ both grammatical and writing deficiency?

With a purpose to find possible answers to the above questions, the researcher has made the following hypotheses:

1. There is an extremely correlation between EFL students’ grammatical competence and their overall writing quality.
2. Grammatical competence is a major differentiating factor between good and poor student-writers.
3. The writing which is based on grammatical competence is better evaluated than the writing which is not.
4. The target students’ both grammatical and written production can be largely viewed as being poor quality entities.
5. It is recognizable that the target learners’ both grammatical and writing deficiency can be largely attributed to their low awareness of the relevant EFL grammatical and composing rules.

The findings resulted from the research data analysis were as follows:

1. There were not considerable differences found in the scores of the three groups in both components of tests. That is, in grammatical proficiency test, 29% of the students in group 'A' and 25% of group 'B' and 30% of group ‘C’ have performed above the average, and 61%, 62% and 54% respectively have performed below the average. In addition, it was also found that group 'C' students have performed better than their counterparts of the groups 'A' and 'B' in the grammatical competence test. This little variance of group ‘C’ students’ grammatical performance may be attributed to their general academic standard or to the honorable attitude they showed when doing the test as noticed by the researcher. In fact, the writing ability of students in all groups seemed to be relatively similar, in that, 29% of the students in group 'A' and 29% in group 'B' and 26% in group 'C' have performed above the average, and that 60% of the students in group 'A' and 63% in group 'B' and 54% in group 'C' have performed below the average. Thus, it is obvious from the foregoing that groups 'A' and 'B' have performed better than group 'C' in the written test. These percentages
indicate that students’ grammatical test scores seemed to be relatively heterogeneous whereas their written scores could be judged as being relatively homogeneous.

2. The research results have also confirmed that there was a significant correlation between students’ grammatical competence scores and their written test scores. That is to say, it has been reported that most of the high-rated students in grammatical proficiency test have written good quality essays. Similarly, it was also found that low-rated students in grammatical competence test have also obtained low scores in the written test.

3. Starting from point(2) above, the research findings have also proved that grammatical competence is, undoubtedly, a major differentiating factor between good and poor student-writers, in that, the writing which is based on grammatical accuracy was found to be better evaluated than the writing which is not.

4. Research results have also revealed that the students’ both grammatical and written performance have largely proved to be poor quality in that the majority of their scores in both tests were found to be below the average.

5. The research findings have also confirmed that the subjects’ poor performance in both components of test seemed to be highly attributed to their low awareness or even ignorance of the relevant grammatical and composing rules.

6. The results have also revealed that most of the subjects’ deficiency in test was associated with the grammatical areas of tensing, affixation, passivisation, sentences, and phrasal verbs, and that most of their problematic aspects in the written test have focused on the major composing conventions with respect to punctuations, connectives, grammar knowledge, lexicon, spelling and handwriting, and that only competent student-writers were able to deal appropriately with such grammatical and composing categories.

7. Finally, the research findings have indicated that most of the low quality writing was produced by male students, in that, (9) out of (14) grade (F) students in writing competence test were, in fact, male students. Thus, this attitude seems to show that they have some degree of difficulty in dealing with grammar knowledge and composing skills across their different academic stages.

### 6.3 Recommendations

Under this heading, the researcher will specifically handle some objective pedagogical implications and display suggestions for further research.
6.3.1 Pedagogical Implications

In effect, the results of this research seem to have some implications for the most concerned categories of the educational society, including students, teachers, course-designers, as well as instructors. For further objectivity, these societal categories will be handled in a detailed manner under their respective headings.

6.3.1.1 Implications for Students

With regard to the first category, it has been found from the research findings that the majority of students’ both grammatical and written performance was characterized by being a medium or, even, below average level of achievement. Certainly, such an academic trouble might arise from the fact that those students had not mastered enough knowledge of grammatical and composing rules across their different learning stages, particularly, at pre-university stages. Broadly speaking, in an attempt to judge whether the students see grammatical competence as a major factor for realizing written discourse proficiency, hence, controlling good English command, the major part of the burden will be fallen on the students themselves. That is to say, students should be well prepared and directed to think that they are, first and foremost, the real responsible for the duty of progressing their grammatical skills so as to ensure acceptable standards of their writing achievement. More obviously, Sudanese EFL learners need to keep studying grammar on a regular basis which is believed to have a tremendous impact on their overall written discourse tasks. In so fulfilling, it seems that the learner-oriented method of instruction will be a solid foundation of developing students’ grammatical skills, taking into account that failing to observe such measures will, inevitably, result in EFL students’ poor grammatical and writing performance. It is clear that this student-centered orientation, then, involves that students should become self-sufficient writers and grammarians through using their grammatical knowledge in writing conferences and feedback. In other words, students should not only depend on generating formal and respective grammar, rather, they have to transfer themselves from being passive receivers of grammar, to active producers of it by processing the grammatical knowledge they have learned using certain relevant rules into actual communicative contexts.

It seems from the foregoing argument that, in this learner directed approach, students have to participate actively in self-learning process by availing any possible
opportunity to develop self-control methods rather than merely submit to teachers’ control. That is, instead of controlling students by their demands, teachers should develop learning communities characterized by mutual respect, and trust communities in which many decisions are made cooperatively, and students have numerous opportunities to make individual choices and take responsibility for their own learning. In such environments, learning flourishes and behavior problems subside. By doing so, students will have enough chance to develop their creativity and critical thinking, because when students link themselves into a learner-centered curriculum, teachers normally focus the emphasis on what their students can do rather than what they can not do which, in turn, will result positively in building students’ self-esteem as well as raising their teachers’ good expectations towards them. As Weaver (1990) puts it:

“Students in whole-language classrooms are thinkers and doers, not merely passive recipients of information. They learn to think critically and creatively and process and evaluate information and ideas rather than merely to accept them” (PP. 26-27).

As shown by the grammatical test findings that the majority of learners’ grammatical errors were represented in tensing, affixation, passivisation, reported sentences and phrasal verbs, students should refrain from committing such grammatical errors by paying much greater effort to introduce the fixed functional rules of each of these grammatical categories, hence, using them appropriately.

6.3.1.2 Implications for Teachers

In spite of the fact that the greatest deal of burden with regard to students’ progress is fallen on the students themselves, there is no doubt that teacher’s role constitutes another key factor of assessing students’ performance and feedback. Certainly, teachers are usually viewed to act as the major guiders and providers of some technical assistance to serve in the learners’ problematic areas. Thus, Barret (1997) stresses that a good writing teacher should act as a co-writer, collaborator, coach and facilitator rather than a lecturer. In fact, creating such cooperative and friendly modes of classroom environment would encourage EFL learners to, effectively, employ the grammatical knowledge they have learned in writing activities. Having confirmed by the research results that writing has been found to be a difficult task for students, teachers need to create an environment that makes writing
more likable and interesting for students. Martin (2000) argues that one of the best and effective ways of enhancing students’ writing is to let them engage in the so-called free writing in which students feel relax and enthusiastic, and do not worry about the mistakes. It was also found in many occasions that free writing does reduce learners’ feeling of frustration which seemed to be the main reason behind disliking and, even, abandoning writing on the part of many learners.

In setting up this classroom environment which will make students use their grammatical knowledge as functional tools of shaping their written products, Al-Koumy (2002) argues that this technical step can be achieved through a approach, combination of grammar instruction and whole language activities. In this according to him, grammar should be taught for the sake of communication, not for its own sake. That is to say, such an approach should shift from explicit teaching of grammatical rules to using these rules for understanding and, then, expressing meaning in communicative contexts. To explain this, let us consider below, the three-step procedure of Al-Koumy’s comprehensive approach to teaching and learning grammar to EFL students in a communicative context:

1. Presentation of grammatical rules. In this step, the teacher explains one grammatical rule at a time. Such a rule should provide the basis for the other two steps.

2. Understanding grammar in whole texts. In this step, the teacher provides students with an oral or written text in which the grammatical rule explained to them in step (1) is used. While listening to or reading this text, the students focus on the meaning given by this specific rule, and they also try to pick up other rules on their own.

3. Using grammar in producing whole texts. In this step, students use the grammatical rule explained to them as well as the rules they acquired by themselves in writing whole texts or interacting with one another. In doing so, they move from summarizing the text presented to them in step (2) to creating a text of their own.

Another important strategy for adapting classroom environment to learners can be applied through achieving student-student interaction, which can be carried out by involving students in cooperative learning. As reported by Al-Koumy (2002), student-student interaction can play an important role in developing students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing altogether. Quoting Long and Porter (1985) and McGroary (1988), Ford (1991) outlines the advantages of cooperative learning in the following ways:
“Cooperative learning provides students with greater opportunities to interact with each other, negotiate for meaning, work in a variety of projects that are of interest to them and participate in real-world communicative activities more frequently than in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms” (P. 45).

Moreover, additional advantages of cooperation in second/foreign language learning include more student talk, more varied talk, more relaxed atmosphere, greater motivation, increased amount of comprehensible input, higher self-esteem and confidence, decreased prejudice, and increased respect for others (Christison, 1990; Olsen and Kagan, 1992). Likewise, in order for student-student interaction to be effective, educators suggest that teachers should pay substantial attention to the following four factors:

**Firstly, Individual Accountability:** many educators suggest that individual accountability promotes student-student interaction and helps avoid loafing by less active or less able students (Hooper et al., 1989; Jacobs, 1987). Such an individual accountability as Fandt et al (1993) suggest, can be created either by task structure, reward structure, or some combinations of the two.

**Secondly, Learning Tasks:** the tasks assigned to group members also influence their interaction with one another (Van Lier, 1988). For group or peer involvement in interaction, some educators e.g., King, 1989; Palincsar and Brown, 1988; Sadow, 1987) suggest the use of problem solving task to promote interaction and divergent thinking. In the same vein, other educators (e.g. Palincsar et al., 1990) suggest that open-ended problems provide greater opportunities for collaboration than do closed problems.

**Thirdly, Group size:** with respect to group size, there is a remarkable agreement that small groups have advantages over large groups. According to Johnson et al (1984), small groups take less time to get organized. It’s also very difficult to drop out of a small group (kohn, 1987; Vermette, 1998). Also, learning in a small group, as Hertz-Lazarowitz, Sharan and Steinberg (1980) state, provides for the acquisition of social skills needed for sustaining cooperative interaction. In contrast, large groups, as Danserau (1987) states, are more likely to result in the formation coalitions and passivity on the part of some students. Additionally, in a recent study, Bada and Okan (2000) have found that Turkish students at the ELT Department, Faculty of Education, Cukuvova University, do not like working in large groups. They conclude from this study that students feel more comfortable,
productive and relaxed by working in pairs, where their voices would be heard and their views be listened to and valued. Similarly, studies done by Long and Bulgarella (1985) have also led them to conclude that clashes of points of views that encourage children's development of individuality, creativity and ability to think.

**Fourthly, Self-assessment:** in order to improve student-student interaction in group work, some educators (e.g., Angelo and Cross, 1993; Rendon, 1995) suggest that each student should self-assess what he/she learned from the members of the group and what the other group members learned from him/her. Such educators claim that this type of assessment helps learners participate actively in group interaction.

Finally, since the grammatical items in terms of tensing, affixation, passivisation, reported sentences and phrasal verbs seemed to constitute the top of learners’ errors frequency, as shown by the results of the grammatical part of test, it becomes inevitable that teachers have to bear a great burden to put their students in the proper track of well introducing and functioning these effectual grammatical categories as fixed by their relevant rules.

### 6.3.1.3 Implications for Course-Designers

First of all, turning a glance at the research findings, it can be argued that grammatical and writing learning strategies at both pre-university and university levels need to be an issue of great concern for the course-designers. That is to say, the respective faculties and departments have to focus on the importance of grammatical accuracy in the Sudanese EFL students’ written discourse competence.

Secondly, well-organized grammar-based courses must be introduced as part of the departments’ courses. Therefore, it is high time that most of the Sudanese colleges and universities had radically reshaped the status of grammar learning so as to ensure that writing-oriented courses are on the right track. That is, students’ written work should be highly assessed on the basis of grammar knowledge, but without too much bias for the reason that other aspects of language are of great importance.

Thirdly, special writing-centered and grammar-directed courses taking the example of the so-called teachers’ directory books should be designed independently of the students’ basic grammar and writing courses, with a pretext that these types of course will actually, act as training instruments in order to strengthen students’ academic standard alongside with their general courses.
Fourthly, it also seems as an objective learning procedure that functional and communicative grammar courses should be effectively established. That is, the kind of courses whose basic function is to train students so as to reveal how they are capable of employing their grammatical knowledge communicatively, especially, in performing well-formed written tasks.

6.3.1.4 Implications for Instructors

As regards instructors’ role in this context, it can be said that Sudanese educational institutions in general, and EFL departments in particular, should establish a vital writing environment for L2 writers through providing technology-based materials such as computers and digital video conferences. Having done that, EFL learners, for instance, can easily have access to employing technological skills in L2 writing in terms of word processing, communicating, conferencing by e-mail and searching websites.

In addition, it will be an honorable step that instructors should direct the establishment of writing and grammar specialized schools, institutes or centers as independent academic organs beside the general specialized faculties or higher institutes, with an intention to enhance learners’ writing and grammatical capacity, hence, producing proficient grammarians and student-writers.

6.3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

In spite of the fact that the central purpose behind this educational study is to assess the ultimate role of Sudanese EFL students’ grammatical proficiency in portraying their written discourse tasks at tertiary level, further points for extra research in relation to learners’ writing in general, and EFL students’ writing in particular, are to be seriously considered for deeper investigation, since the present researcher can not have access to covering all the problematic and researchable areas with regard to EFL writing status in which students, most of the time, seem to confront difficulties.

As recognized along the journey of this study, it is obvious that the researcher has only examined the interdependent relationship between the learners’ grammatical competence and their composing quality of only one academic level, that is, fourth year students, in addition to the fact that this one academic level also belongs to only one academic department that is English department, as well as its representation of only two types of tutorial faculties, that is, faculties of arts and education. Thus, the
researcher proposes that further research into this field of study would be of great importance and comprehensive benefit to examine the interrelationship between grammatical proficiency and writing quality of other departments’ students. Having this fulfilled, researchers will have done their best in drawing broader assessment of Sudanese EFL learners’ grammatical achievement and its impact on both the qualitative and quantitative value of their written products rather than limiting the focus on specific groups and scopes. Moreover, the researcher would like to suggest that a similar comparative study can be carried out to investigate if there is a probable discrepancy in EFL students’ writing performance between some faculties of arts and education whose findings, as a comparative study, will have positive implications for boosting learners’ status with regard to their motivation, anxiety and self-esteem, which are generally viewed as the most fundamental factors of learning as a whole, and language learning in particular. Furthermore, it was found from the research results that misusing punctuations, miss-handling connectives, misspelling and poor handwriting were seemed to be the major problematic aspects that the target students have confronted in the written test, hence, constituting the most fundamental elements which differentiate between good and poor student-writers.

As mentioned by Davis (1996), good writing tends to be meaningful if coherence is present in the learners’ performance. That is, to look for language features in grammatical choice in addition to the matters of punctuation, spelling, handwriting, connectives, lexical competence, etc. This simply means that while learners focus on mastering grammatical items, they should be aware of the fact that writing quality depends on the availability of integrated devices that are necessary for achieving effective written discourse. Thus, grammatical knowledge can not be taken as the only tool that students use to generate written products; rather, other components of the language must be present to facilitate the task.

Firstly, as misusing punctuations was proved to be one of the subjects' main problems as far as the written test is concerned, further research is needed to be carried out in order to find out the influence of students' mispunctuating on EFL writing performance at college level. This, in fact, emphasizes the importance of demonstrating an adequate mastery of punctuations in dealing with the written form of language in general and achieving composing quality in particular because students' writing status, to be reinforced, is much more dependent on the extent to which they use such linguistic elements of language appropriately.
According to Al-Koumy (2002), the importance of punctuations lies in the fact that it achieves the clarity and effectiveness of writing. It also links or separates groups of ideas and distinguishes what is important in the sentences from what is subordinate (Bruthiaux, 1993). Punctuation marks are also the reader’s signpost. They send out messages that say stop, ask a question and so on (Backscheider, 1972; Rose, 1982).

It is worth mentioning that the skill-building teachers teach punctuation as a separate skill through explicit instruction of the punctuation rules. Students, then, practice what they have been taught by punctuating individual, uncontextualized sentences. Advocates of this approach claim that direct instruction of punctuation rules makes punctuation easier to learn. However, critics of this approach claim that such rules are meaningless when taught alone. They add that the teaching of such meaningless rules leads to rote learning and to negative attitudes towards punctuation and writing in general. These negative attitudes lead, in turn, to writing behavior whose purpose is to avoid bad writing, not to create good writing (Limay, 1983). They also claim that direct instruction in punctuation takes the time that can be profitably spent in actual writing. Whole-language teachers, in contrast, leave punctuation instruction out, claiming that punctuation grows out of students' experience with written language (Wilde, 1992). In spite of the fact that this ‘approach stresses meaning, its critics claim that not all students can acquire punctuation rules simply through immersion in a print-rich environment, and that some students need direct instruction in this aspect of language.

From the foregoing, it appears that the two approaches can make a contribution. That is to say, none of them can do the whole job. In other words, it seems that combining them can be more effective than relying exclusively on either alone. Therefore, the so-called comprehensive approach, as viewed by Al-Koumy (2002), claims that a combination of the two approaches can be superior to just adopting one of them. This approach, according to him, holds that the teaching of punctuation should move from the presentation of rules to using these rules in reading and writing activities. Moreover, Al-Koumy goes further to add that this comprehensive approach to punctuations instruction is fulfilled in a three-step procedure as follows:

1. Presentation of punctuation. In this step, the teacher explains one punctuation rule at a time. Such a rule should be relevant to his/her students’ communicative needs.
2. Understanding punctuation in whole texts. In this step, the teacher provides students with a written text in which the punctuation rule explained to them in step (1) is used. While reading this text, students focus on the meaning given by this specific rule as well as trying to pick up other rules on their own.

3. Using punctuation in producing whole texts. In this step, students use the punctuation rule explained to them as well as the rules they acquired by themselves in writing whole texts. In doing so, they move from summarizing the text they read in step (2) to creating a text of their own.

A literature review related to punctuation instruction revealed that some studies demonstrated that the teaching of punctuation through explicit instruction increased students’ awareness of punctuation marks (e.g., Abou-Hadid, 1994; Nazir, 1985). Other studies indicated that the whole language programme resulted positively in the acquisition of punctuation skills (e.g., Calkins, 1980; Edelsky, 1983). Still other studies showed that the whole-language approach was as effective as the skills-based approach in increasing students’ awareness of punctuation marks (Lopez, 1986; Mancillas, 1986; Miller, 1986; Varner, 1986, as cited in Al-Koumy, 2002:46).

The bodies of research reviewed above are clearly in line with Al-Koumy’s assumption (2002) that the teaching of punctuation should move from skills to meaning.

Secondly, since misspelling, as shown by the research findings, appeared to be one of the subjects’ most problematic aspects of language, the researcher recommended that further study is hoped to be conducted to reveal the impact of EFL learners’ misspelling on their overall written discourse quality. From the skills-based perspective, spelling is viewed as one of the sub-skills involved in reading and writing. It involves many micro-skills such as letter-naming, phonics, word structure, etc. Conversely, the whole-language approach views spelling as a developmental process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

According to Al-Koumy (2002), the importance of spelling lies in the fact that to be literate, one must become proficient in spelling. Learning to spell correctly is necessary for being a good writer (Graham, 1983, Scardamalia, 1981; Treiman, 1993). Treiman (1993), for example, expresses this idea in that ability to spell words easily and accurately is an important part of being a good writer and that a person who must stop and puzzle over the spelling of each word, even if that person is aided by a
computerized spelling checker, has little attention left to devote the other aspects of writing.

Spelling also improves reading because knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences is a basic component of reading (Al-Koumy, ibid). As Adams (1990) notes, skillful reading depends critically on the deep and thorough acquisition of spellings and spelling-sound relationship. Moreover, research has shown that there is a strong relationship between spelling and reading (e.g., Bears and Barone, 1989; Ehri and Wilce, 1987; Gough et al., 1992; Henderson, 1990; Juel et al., 1986; Zutell, 1992; Zutell and Rasinski, 1989, as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:29). Instruction in spelling has also been found to have a strong effect on beginning reading (e.g., Bradley, 1988; Bradley and Bryant, 1985; Uhry, 1989, quoted in Al-Koumy 2002:30). Research has also shown that there is a strong relationship between spelling and word recognition (e.g., Bears, 1982; Juel et al., 1986), and between spelling and reading comprehension (e.g., Bears, 1980). Moreover, poorly developed spelling knowledge has been shown to hinder children’s writing and to obstruct their vocabulary development (e.g., Adams et al., 1996; Read, 1986), and to be the most frequent and pervasive cause of reading difficulty (e.g., Bruck 1990; Perfetti, 1985; Rack et al., 1992; Vellutino, 1991, quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:30). Furthermore, some spelling theorists add that spelling is very much a part of listening and speaking (e.g., Buchanan, 1989; Gentry and Gillet, 1993 as quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:30).

As regards the teaching and learning of spelling in skills-based classrooms, Al-Koumy (ibid, p.30) maintains that teachers teach spelling rules through mechanical drills. He adds that although this approach directs students’ attention solely toward spelling, it has its own weakness. One weakness is that it draws students’ attention away from the communicative function of spelling. Another weakness according to Parry and Hornsby (1988), Smith (1982) is that spelling rules have too many exceptions to be consciously learned. In whole-language classrooms, on the other hand, spelling is learned by immersing students in or exposing them to print (Goodman, 1986). Students are also encouraged to use invented spelling (approximations) in writing (Clay, 1985; Invernizzi et al., 1994; Wilde, 1992). Despite the fact that the whole-language approach to teaching spelling promotes independence and integrates spelling with language use, Al-Koumy (ibid) argues that we can not assume that proficiency in spelling will follow directly from engaging
students in reading and writing activities. The reasons for this are stated by Treiman (1993) as follows:

“There is some truth to the whole-language philosophy. Many children do pick up correspondences between letters and sounds on their own, even when the correspondences are not explicitly taught. However, the insight behind the whole-language approach that children can learn many things on their own should not be pushed too far. For one thing, not all children easily pick up relations between phonemes and graphemes on their own. For another thing, this learning is more rapid for some correspondences than for others” (PP. 124-125).

Opponents of the whole-language approach also claim that students can not invent spelling without linguistic information. Such information is, indeed, the primary source of invented spelling. In support of this claim, Tangelo and Blackman (1992) found that phonemic awareness instruction positively affects children’s invented spelling. They then concluded that in order to produce invented spelling, a child must possess some degree of linguistic awareness. Additionally, Al-Koumy (ibid, p. 31) claims that FL learners can not invent spelling because they lack the speaking skill which they segment during this process.

From the foregoing discussion, it seems that we need an approach that shifts from direct instruction to incidental learning of spelling. Here is the three-step procedure of this approach as suggested by Al-Koumy (ibid):

1. Presentation of spelling rules. In this step, students receive direct instruction in a spelling rule at a time.
2. Learning spelling through reading. In this step, students see how the spelling rule explained to them in step (1) is applied in a context. They also develop visual images of words in the reading material.
3. Producing spelling through writing. In this step, students apply the spelling rule explained to them in summarizing the text they read in step (2). While summarizing this text, they also invent spelling of words whose spelling is unknown to them.

As noted above, the comprehensive instructional approach asserts that it is of utmost importance that the teacher should teach the spelling of some words and ask students to acquire the spelling of others from context and through invented spelling.

It is noteworthy that many studies demonstrated an increase in spelling ability under the skills-based approach (e.g., Ball and Blackman, 1991; Connelly et al., 1999; Ghazi, 1983; Gordon, 1992; Huan, 1999; Lie, 1991; Robinson, 1980; White, 1988
Other studies demonstrated an increase in spelling ability under the whole-language approach (e.g., Gunnigham and Stanovich, 1990; Shapiro and Gunderson, 1988; Stanovich and West, 1989, quoted in Al-Koumy, 2002:32).

As shown above, research in the area of spelling provides indirect evidence that instead of either-or planning of spelling instruction, the comprehensive approach can be more effective in increasing spelling achievement. Direct support for this approach comes from studies done by Castle et al., (1994), Rosencrans (1995) and Shefelbine (1995). Castle et al. (1994) found that providing phonemic-awareness instruction within a whole-language programme had significant effect on spelling and reading performance. Rosencrans (1995) found that direct instruction within a whole-language spelling programme increased children’s spelling achievement. Shefelbine (1995) found that combining temporary (invented) spelling with systematic, formal spelling instruction resulted in more rapid growth in both correct spelling and word recognition than did either approach alone.

Thirdly, as handwriting demonstrated to be another differentiating factor between good and poor student-writers, as resulted in the subjects’ written test, carrying out further research will be significant to introduce the effects of handwriting quality on EFL learners’ written products as a first researching attempt to draw attention towards Sudanese EFL students’ handwriting as an effectual linguistic skill.

According to Al-Koumy (2002), the skills-based approach views handwriting as one of the sub-skills involved in writing. It also holds that handwriting involves many micro-skills such as shaping, spacing, slanting, etc. From the whole-language perspective, handwriting is viewed as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created. This approach, according to Al-Koumy (ibid), holds that although we live in a world that venerates typewriters and computers, handwriting is still necessary in our daily lives. In early 1980s, Rose (1982) expressed this idea which still holds true in the third millennium arguing that many situations still require a handwriting effort and that typewriters are usually impractical for note taking; and even when a typewriter is available, most of us prefer our love letters, notes of condolences and other personal communications to be handwritten.

In addition to the great extent to which handwriting is used in our lives, its importance as an aid to the various aspects of language has been recognized by many educators and applied linguists (e.g., Feitelson, 1988; Getman, 1983; Graham and

“The various language skills used to produce and receive language all find support in handwriting. If reading is essentially decoding, handwriting is encoding; if composition is the communicating of ideas in an orderly way, handwriting lends a rhythmic stride to the whole process mental organization, the act of writing, and the visual product; if spelling is arranging letters in an accepted sequence for the communicating of a world, handwriting is the physical act of doing it as well as the ordinary application of spelling skills”. (P. 7).

To the above benefits, Ruedy (1983) adds that good handwriting enhances students’ self-confidence, develops positive attitudes towards writing, and makes the teacher’s job more pleasant and less time-consuming. On the other hand, research has shown that bad handwriting lowers essay scores (e.g., Robinson, 1986).

It appears from the foregoing that handwriting is an important skill that does not operate in isolation. That is, it affects success in spelling, vocabulary, reading, and writing. This skill, therefore, deserves the attention of both teachers and researchers.

With regard to teaching and learning handwriting in skills-based classrooms, Al-Koumy (ibid,p.19) maintains that it is taught as a separate skill through visual and verbal demonstrations of the formation of letters. That is, students see and listen to a description of the order and direction of the strokes of each letter, then, they practice what has been demonstrated to them through the following:

1. Tracing: in this type of practice, students trace the letter on dot-to-dot patterns in which the direction and order of strokes are guided through the use of arrows and numbers.

2. Copying: in this type of practice, students are asked to copy a model letter several times.

As shown above, although the skills-based approach directs students’ attention solely towards letter formation, such an explicit letter formation instruction, as viewed by the opponents of this approach, may be arduous, demotivating and time-consuming (Al-Koumy, ibid). In whole-language classrooms, in contrast, Al-Koumy argues that teachers do not teach students explicitly about letter formation claiming that students unconsciously acquire letter formation through purposeful reading and writing activities. He adds that although this may appear to be so far first language acquisition, it can not be applied to EFL learners, particularly, in the Arabic context.
where the mother tongue alphabet is completely different and runs from right to left. According to Al-Koumy, an effective approach to teaching handwriting to Arabic-speaking students must, therefore, move from skills to meaning through the following three-step procedure:

1. Presentation of letters. In this step, the teacher presents letters one by one utilizing the auditory, visual, kinesthetic and tactile modalities of his/her students.

2. Reading and writing letters within the context of words and sentences. In this step, students practice reading and copying letters within a single word by sorting mixed words out, then, they copy segments from substitution tables to make meaningful sentences.

3. Reading and writing letters within the contexts of whole paragraphs. In this step, students practice letter formation through reading scrambled sentences and rewriting them to make a meaningful paragraph.

Generally speaking, one can say that a literature review indicated that there is little research in the area of handwriting. Most of the studies done in this area revealed that training through copying improved students' performance (e.g., Askov and Greff, 1975; Hirsch and Niedermeyer, 1973). Moreover, Goldberge (1997) found that the skills-based approach produced more legible handwriting than did the whole-language approach. Nevertheless, Al-Koumy (ibid, p.20) claims that handwriting is not only a mechanical, lower-level skill, but also a meaningful process. Therefore, he adds that a comprehensive approach to teaching handwriting can increase students' motivation which, in turn, can boost their handwriting performance above the levels that occur with either the skills-based approach or the whole-language approach.

Fourthly, having been proved by the subjects' written test results that miss-handling connectives has considerably contributed to undermining their writing performance, there is no denying the need for further research to be carried out in order to discover the ultimate effects of misusing connectors on portraying Sudanese EFL students' writing quality.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has, certainly, brought the research into conclusion. It has displayed an informative and expressive summary for the results, made final assessment for the whole thematic dimension of the study and presented some reasonable recommendations in a form of some pedagogical implications directed to
students, teachers, course-designers and instructors, as well as proposing some effective areas to be dealt with for further research.
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