



# THE CHALLENGES OF WRITING: SOLUTIONS AND COMMON PITFALLS ELIAS BASHIR

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## ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study was to discover what writing issues students in the General Foundation Programme (GFP) have and to come up with creative solutions. The research was conducted at Oman's A'Sharqiyah University in February 2023. The researcher employed content analysis as a descriptive study method. A set of 36 GFP students were chosen at random and instructed to compose a composition of 100-120 words on a certain topic. Six GFP teachers double-checked the students' writing assignments to discover any errors. The study discovered that when children write, they struggle with capitalization, punctuation, language, verb tenses, sentence structure, and word choice. Based on the above results, a number of recommendations were made. Students, for example, should read a lot to improve their grammar, vocabulary, and overall understanding. Furthermore, the writing teacher should emphasize the positive aspects of the students' work rather than the negative aspects.

**KEY WORDS:** *writing problems, GFP, effective solutions, A'Sharqiyah University, GFPinstructors*

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## 1.INTRODUCTION

One of the most vital speaking talents is writing. People must express their emotions, opinions, and points of view in writing. People may desire to send emails, letters, reports, blogs, or notes for a variety of reasons. This is why, whenever you write, you should keep your audience in mind. When writing, for example, one can target a masculine or female readership, a single reader, a group of readers, or both. Perhaps the folks you wish to reach aren't well-known. There are two kinds of writing: formal writing and informal writing. When writing something formal, utilize standard English, make your phrases more complicated, avoid using needless personal names, and avoid using slang or everyday language. Informal patterns, on the other hand, differ because they employ slang, acronyms, and nonstandard English forms. Writing instruction should be included in any program for learning a foreign or second language for a variety of reasons. Writing, for example, aids with learning. According to Raimes (1983), this allows pupils to build on what they already know and use the language in new settings. According to Hedge (1988), more writing in the classroom helps kids learn by making it easier for them to understand new terms or

grammar rules, as well as making it easier for them to pick up new language qualities. Students can seek feedback from the teacher on their writing here and improve it. Giving pupils written projects allows teachers to better assess their students' progress and identify areas where they may be struggling with writing. In this situation, handwriting demonstrates the importance of language learning. Writing necessitates distinct abilities than speaking. You must be able to organize thoughts and information, explain information clearly and precisely, utilize correct grammar, and select the ideal language, syntax, and sentence structure for the topic and audience, for example (Hedge, 1988). The purpose of this research is to discover what issues GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University are facing. Finally, the purpose is to solve these difficulties and provide solutions. Omani college and university students frequently complain about how difficult it is to write, especially when they need to express themselves clearly, concisely, and precisely. Concerns among A'Sharqiyah University students are not unique; they are shared by many students. Teachers at the college level have observed that students' written work is riddled with errors that must be corrected. There are numerous reasons why



kids may struggle to write paragraphs. One of the primary causes for this is the difficulty of writing correctly. According to Rases (1983), "When learners express concern about how hard it is to write in a second language, they are talking about the challenges of finding and expressing ideas in a foreign language as well as the challenges of using the right vocabulary and syntax. (p. 13)." This is in contrast to the viewpoint advanced by Byrne (1988), who claims that the problem with composing paragraphs stems from psychological, linguistic, and cognitive reasons. The purpose of this research is to determine the best approaches to assist GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University who are struggling with their writing.

### **The objective of the study**

The purpose of this research is to discover what challenges GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University face when writing paragraphs and to provide appropriate solutions.

### **Research questions**

The central concept of this study is one of three research questions:

Why are GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University having difficulty writing?

Which of the following do GFP teachers believe are the most difficult aspects of writing paragraphs?

What strategies may students take to improve their paragraph writing skills?

### **Research hypotheses**

Students in A'Sharqiyah University's GFP program may struggle to write paragraphs due to issues with word choice, sentence construction, mechanics, order, and theme. According to GFP English professors, students struggle to write paragraphs for a variety of reasons, including improper wording, a lack of subject knowledge, and inaccurate spelling of words.

Teachers should not just assign a lot of writing to their students, but they should also encourage them to read a lot and recognize their greatest work.

## **2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In this segment, the researcher will talk about important writing strategies, past study on teaching writing, writing problems, and things that get in the way of writing.

### **Writing Techniques**

There are two main ways to write: the process method and the result technique.

### **Process-based writing techniques**

The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s saw the rise of process writing as an important part of teaching and researching first language writing. Both Zamel (1982)

and Raimes (1985) wrote important books that support the process writing method. It was said by Zamel in 1982 that ESL writers can learn from the way L1 writers write. He does say, though, that the hardest part of teaching English as a second language is making sure that teachers can lead students in rewriting. Process approaches, as they are now called, see every writer as a person who comes up with ideas. Lots of people thought that written dialogue hid thoughts and that writing was a way to say what you thought and give yourself an authoritative voice or character. "Process writing" is a way of writing that stresses following structured steps to come up with new ideas, solve problems, and share through writing. People often use this method by themselves, without thinking about how it might affect things in cultural, educational, social, or political settings. Zamel (1982) also says that the writing style is complicated, repetitive, and random. He goes on, "It's a way of finding and making meaning."

### **Product writing techniques**

Nunan (1989) says that the product method focuses on the language that students might have to write for their end project. When students use the product writing method instead of the process writing method, they are more responsible for reviewing and writing the required material. Getnet (1994) says that the main goal of the product way of teaching is for students to produce written work. The meeting of arrangements and formal correctness are given the most weight. This means paying close attention to spelling, grammar, and word choice. Additionally, getting help from a product approach writing teacher can make sure that the essay is well-organized and free of any biased or incomplete thinking. Byrne (1988) says that the product technique of writing is a way of doing things that puts a lot of weight on accuracy. Its main goal is to keep track of and get rid of mistakes in written work. Raimes (1983) says that the product method lets students copy and change grammatically correct text with little error.

According to Hedge (1988), students who use the product writing style should keep the following in mind. Here are a few examples:

Setting up and structure

Right spelling

Other choices for words

The shape of the phreast

A lot of delays

Implements that stick to each other

Many different kinds of sentences

5246

### **Writing problems with learners**

Byrne (1988) and Hedge (1988) say that the author must use the right transitions and patterns to keep the discourse logical so that the text's material can be understood on its own. Before writing, the author needs to order their work, carefully choose their words, and follow proper grammar rules. If you look at the work of Byrne (1988) and Hedge (1988), you may find mistakes in language, grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, and sentence structure.

### **Word-Choice problems**

Norish (1983) says that good writing needs proper grammar, a large vocabulary of appropriate words, and a variety of sentence structures. Reid (1983) says that learning writers can make their writing make sense by choosing the right words that fit with the message they want to send. Even though it's hard for them to choose the right words, second language learners do it because they use long sentences and words to interest the reader (1980, White). The end result is that this will make writing harder.

### **Sentence structure problems**

Additionally, Reid (1983) says that sentences can show different grammar patterns. Tsegaye (2006), on the other hand, says that some students do use mistakes, word gaps, and run-on sentences. Based on Kharma's research in 1986, some students may not be able to make more complex facial moves. Zamel (1983) says that people who were learning a second language often had trouble with conjunctions.

### **Spelling errors**

According to Gowere et al. (1995), the English spelling system is harder for students to learn because of things like history, different pronunciations, and the influence of other languages.

### **Problems with capitalization**

Capital letters are used for many things, according to Kroll (1991), such as starting sentences, emphasizing important words, and making topic names. But students probably have trouble with capitalization because there aren't any set rules for it and it's hard for them to tell the difference between proper and common things (Gowere et al. 1995).

### **Grammatical problems**

People who are learning a second language often have trouble with spelling when they are writing. Tyner and Kharma's study from 1987 shows that people who are learning a second language have more trouble with subject-verb agreements, tenses, pronoun references, and linking words.

### **Organizational problems**

Kharma (1986) says that students have trouble coming up with ideas and putting together lines that make sense. According to a study by West and coworkers in 1966, students make the most common mistakes in their writing when they don't come up with a clear topic or when they write lines that don't have any dialogue related to the topic. Raimes (1983) says that some students couldn't tell the difference between main ideas and supporting ideas. Pincas (1982) says that students can't write lines that make sense because they don't know how to use linking words.

### **Cognitive Challenges**

Language, punctuation, capitalization, subject matter, and layout are all areas of thought that students often have trouble with. According to Byrne (1988), Carroll (1995), and Wilson (1995), punctuation has not traditionally been seen as an important part of writing work. They say that "the lack of universally applicable punctuation rules results in punctuation problems in student writing."

### **Content problems**

People who are trying to learn a language may find it hard to talk to other people in that language (Clifford, 1987). Leki (1991) also made a link between this and the use of traditional training methods. It was said by Clifford (1987) that teachers shouldn't stress language, punctuation, and spelling too much. Instead, they should help students focus on the ideas and words they want to get across.

### **Reasons for Learners' Writing problems**

Students may have trouble with their writing for a number of reasons, such as not having enough writing experience, not being motivated or having enough time, getting negative feedback from teachers, or the way the writing process is structured.

### **Lack of practice**

Davies (1998) says that writing is an art form in which the author must clearly organize his or her thoughts to keep the reader's attention. It takes a lot of work to do this well. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) say that the only way to improve your writing skills is to keep doing it. If students want their education to work, they have to take responsibility for it. He also stresses that learning a skill over and over is the best way to get good at it. Also, writing often is the best way to improve your writing.

### **Insufficient Time**

Hedge (1988) says that writing tasks are made up of several steps, and each one needs enough time. Students need time to gather their ideas, write rough

drafts, go over them, and then write the final forms. Colions and Gethen (1980) say that for something to have a big effect on writing, a lot of different factors must be met on different levels. These include the writing, the choice of words, and the way the lines and paragraphs are put together. They said that getting all of these things in order takes time and work. Arndt (1991) and White (1991) both agree that moving from one stage to the next takes time for thoughts. Another example is Raimes (1983), who says that time is an important part of writing and sets it apart from speaking. Time is another important factor in writing that makes sense, is well-organized, and makes sense. In addition, a lot of teachers and students think that writing well in a short amount of time is impossible and not normal (Kroll, 1990).

#### **Insufficient Motivation**

Zamel (1997) also says that kids should be able to write about things that interest them, and the writing they do should have a purpose. According to Davies (1998), it is also a good idea to have students write about things that interest them. There is evidence from Leki (1991) that students find it much easier to write about things that interest them. Furthermore, Silva (1997) says that students' writing skills can be improved when they are allowed to choose their own classes. Comparable results were reported by Hudelson in 1989, who found that students who were allowed to choose their own topics produced excellent writing. Pincas (1982) says that inspiration is important for students of all ages and stages of education. This is made worse when teachers connect writing tasks to things that happen in real life. Byrne's research from 1988 showed that students write less when they are given topics that don't really interest them.

#### **Teachers' Comments**

Zamel (1985) says that teachers shouldn't score and comment on their students' writing. Instead, they should give helpful feedback and act more like people who are interested. According to Byrne (1988), teachers should stress the pros of writing instead of its cons. After that, teachers may give students notes on their writing, which they can use to get better on writing. This idea is supported by Edge's (1989) argument that teachers should give their students helpful comments. According to Ferris (1995), teachers should always say nice things about their students in addition to giving them constructive comments. Ellis's research from 1994 shows how important it is for students to be motivated when

they are learning a language. Instructors are expected to write nice things about their students after getting feedback from those students. But students won't get better at writing if their teacher gives them unclear and unfair feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanatic, 1990: 155).

#### **The Writing Process' Nature**

A lot of studies say that writing is hard and needs a lot of different language skills. For example, Byrne (1988) says that problems with writing can be psychological, language, or cognitive. Additionally, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) say that improving your writing skills is a difficult task that needs constant work and dedication. In their 1984 work, Burnaby and Bell say that writing is a mentally demanding activity that needs showing many ideas within and beyond individual words. The writer is responsible for making sure that the language, punctuation, structure, and topic of each sentence are all the same. The author has to show that the paragraphs make sense on a level higher than the line level.

5248

Abu (2001) says that writing is hard for everyone, even people who speak English as their first language, because it takes putting together a lot of different parts—the audience, the content, the style, the purpose, the grammar, the punctuation, and the mechanics—into a whole that makes sense. Writing usually requires a much higher level of language skills than speaking, according to Ur (1996) (p. 163). This means putting more stress on composition, using a bigger vocabulary, and making sure that the language used is consistent. She also says that writing is a complicated process that needs many changes before it is great.

### **3.METHODOLOGY**

The study's research technique consists of the subject matter, the equipment used, the research paradigm, and the data analysis.

#### **Participants**

36 GFP students from A' Sharqiyah University participated in the study. These kids will almost probably begin their freshman year of college after successfully completing level 3. To determine the pupils, a random selection technique was used. Each subject is taught by a native Arabic speaker from a comparable social and cultural environment. Six English language professors were assigned to conduct the interviews and mark the student papers.

#### **Instrument**

Conducting content analysis and engaging in talks with educators to gain their perspectives on research

questions two and three is part of data analysis. A qualitative assessment of a material and its numerous components is known as material analysis. The study is based on a positivist perspective.

#### Procedure

The participants were asked to write a one-to-twelve-word paragraph about why studying abroad is superior to studying at home. Is one on the opposite team? The assignment was finished totally in class. Approximately 45 minutes had gone. Each student's text was reviewed twice by two different instructors. To ensure that everything is fair.

#### 4.RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The dataset is made up of student-written essays and comments offered by professors during discussions. The students were assigned to write 36 lines of writing, which were then delivered to the selected English language professors. The professors went over them once more. The professors offered detailed feedback and corrected any problems found in the assignments. The next collection of samples includes the instructor's comments as well as the lines of the students' paragraphs that were deemed incorrect.

Every person must comprehend. (has)

In our country, value for money is not a factor. (Punctual inferences)

Education is essential for our survival. (Noticed existence)

The pupils learn a lot of new terminology and language rules. (Excellent sentence choice)

Following the conclusion of an investigation, whichever... Regardless of this,

Each country does different forms of research. (Wherever you want to go to school)

When students move to a new residence, they may meet new people. What does the absence of paper imply?)

For example, they can communicate with these people. (For example, these)

I believe that studying abroad will help your education. (to get)

There are many facts about that country. (much)

For example, I could talk to my friends, teachers, students, and other acquaintances. (I'm having trouble understanding)

It would be beneficial to learn about the historical backdrop of the location being studied. (know)

To begin with, studying abroad provides students with a wealth of practical information.

Living in another country will also improve your command of the language. [more potent]

First and foremost, knowledge with a country's legislation is learned through schooling in one's home country. (Study in the present tense)

As previously said, studying abroad brings a variety of problems to students. As previously indicated, the first tense is:

Finally, learning and having practical experience in our home country will be more advantageous than studying overseas. (To sum up)

Studying abroad, in my opinion, is superior than studying at home. (as chosen above)

The sites of Sevelar-affiliated institutions and other organizations varies. (Word count: numerous)

Observation is another form of learning... (all uppercase letters)

The self-improvement process (Pronouns: themselves)

While speaking with strangers, I observe. (Insert your favorite motif hereaff).

I thought studying abroad was a fantastic idea. (I believed it.)

5249

Furthermore, the following conclusions were drawn from interviews with writing instructors at the level 3 level:

Participant 1 believed that the primary reason of children's writing difficulties was their native language (L1). A considerable percentage of students finish their writing tasks on their mobile devices, inputting their work in their native language and having it machine translated.

According to Participant 2, "many students believe that writing takes a long time." Some students find it exceedingly difficult to complete their writing tasks due to the enormous number of components that must be assembled. Some mental diseases, such as dyslexia and dysgraphia, provide the groundwork for others.

"Insufficient practice is one of the primary reasons students struggle with writing," agreed participant number three, echoing teacher number three.

Respondent #4 said, "Writing necessitates an assortment of auxiliary abilities." "Teachers should not assume that students can write well without dissecting and honing each of these sub-skills individually."

According to Participant 5, various points of view are regarded as the key causes of students' difficulties in writing paragraphs. Many students, for example, continue to assume that improving their English competence is tough. As a result, those who hold this viewpoint are more likely to make mistakes.



Individual 6 said that the proliferation of digital gadgets contributed to the reduction in students' writing ability. Students frequently swap texting for electronic correspondence and letter writing. Texting is a quick and handy way to communicate. Nonetheless, it adopts its own vernacular, which influences its students' writing style over time. Furthermore, the availability of written information and tools available online contributes to the fact that most students struggle to complete their writing tasks. Students have the mistaken impression that it is okay to copy the work of others rather than writing in their own distinct style.

## DISCUSSION

This investigation looked into the writing challenges of GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University. The study also looked into educators' thoughts on the causes of these problems and the most effective responses. The sample size for the study was 36 students, and six teachers were asked for their thoughts on the factors that lead to and resolve challenges in paragraph writing. The data show that students have a wide range of writing issues, including mechanical, linguistic, cognitive, and psychomotor difficulties. As a result, the participants created a number of solutions to the problems at hand (see the section on conclusions).

When compared to previous research on the subject, the conclusions of this study are broadly consistent.

### Implications to research and practice

The findings of this study might be viewed as an identification of writing challenges and a description of effective writing instruction practices. This study added to the conversation of how to teach and learn English, as well as how to educate writing skills.

Data were acquired and assessed using interviews and content analysis, which indicates an improvement over earlier procedures. As a result, other researchers may use the approaches outlined in this study to improve their own studies through the use of different instruments. Researchers may potentially use the findings of this study to develop more effective methods for teaching writing skills to academic administrators, administrators, and faculty members.

## 5.CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to look into the writing issues that GFP students have at A' Sharqiyah University. The goal is to identify these difficulties and suggest potential remedies. The sample contains 36 people in total. "Studying abroad is preferable to studying at home in terms of attitude," the professors

encouraged the students. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Six English professors assessed and scored the students' responses. According to the study, pupils typically had mechanical, linguistic, cognitive, and psychomotor challenges when writing. In light of this study, the findings of this study and prior studies in the same field have been validated.

The following recommendations are made based on the findings presented:

Writing instructors should offer tactics and practices to help students who struggle with paragraph creation.

Writing instructors are responsible for guiding students through the full writing process.

Students should cultivate a reading habit. Students who read on a regular basis increase their vocabulary, grammar, and overall knowledge, according to research.

It is the responsibility of writing teachers to guarantee that students finish their daily writing tasks. Students should cultivate the habit of writing every day. Writing is a skill that can be honed with persistent effort. If the writing instructor wanted to help the pupils, she should praise their efforts rather than point out their mistakes. Teachers should have the work of their students assessed by other educators. As a result, students' critical thinking abilities will improve.

The findings of this study are likely to have a significant impact on lesson plan developers, EFL students, and English instructors.

### Future research

To collect and analyze data for this study, qualitative description was used. As a result of the researcher's use of interview methods and a technique known as "content analysis," subsequent researchers may choose to use the study's findings in quantitative studies, which may yield more reliable results. Furthermore, because the sample size is small, the findings may only apply to a subset of the population. A larger sample size that includes students from several colleges may produce more precise results. Furthermore, an examination of receptive abilities may reveal useful strategies for improving writing proficiency.

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5251

