



Investigation into Teaching-learning Strategies of Paragraph Writing in English as Foreign Language Classrooms: The case of Selected Preparatory Schools in West Guji Zone, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract

Writing is a process of communicating with others in which a writer sends his/her ideas and thoughts in written forms to readers. Paragraph writing is made of a few sentences that talk about one single topic under each body paragraph. Paragraph Writing teaching Strategy includes different teaching techniques like outlining, brainstorming, planning, drafting, organizing, sequencing etc. to enhance Writing Skill for Students. Therefore, having the knowledge of academic writing is very important in the academic world. However, it is the skills which usually get little attention. As a result, the study aimed to investigate teaching strategies of paragraph writing being used with reference to the selected preparatory schools in west Guji zone. To attain the objectives of the study, descriptive research design and mixed research approaches were used to analyze the data taken from participants and documents. Besides, primary data were collected using questionnaire, classroom observation and focus group discussion. Furthermore, document analysis and literature review were used as secondary sources. In addition, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The results of this study revealed that teachers gave less emphasis to paragraph writing lesson specifically. Also, the teachers didn't present paragraph writing lessons in line with the procedures prescribed in the students' English text book and Teacher's Guide manual. Similarly, the finding confirmed that the teachers hardly encourage students to use different paragraph writing strategies such as brainstorming, planning, developing supporting sentences, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing the paragraph. As a result, students showed less performance in paragraph writing skills.

Key Words: Strategies, paragraph, EFL

1. Introduction

As one of the major language skills, writing has always occupied a place in most English language courses. Writing is a process of communicating with others in which a writer sends his/her ideas and thoughts in written forms to readers. It is a process of thinking which the writers realize, organize, and transfer their thoughts to the reader (Wingersky, 1999). Moreover, it includes choosing of words to convey anticipated meaning, putting them together in written or printed form (Farbrain & Whinch, 1996). For instance, one can write emails or letters to friends, or use writing for academic purposes. In school, writing is a way of life with which learners pass most of the courses; lacking some ability to express your thought in writing, a student cannot pass the course (Brown, 2000). Writing is also the skill which is mostly used in evaluating students' performance in almost all levels of education (Afrin, 2016). In short, writing is a tool of communication in written form, especially in the world of education.

Additionally, as Wirantaka (2016) stated in his finding about the importance of an academic writing, knowledge of developing a paragraph is very essential for learners especially in academic writing. They need to make sure that the language used in developing the paragraph has to be correct, formal, systematic, and suitable with academic nature. In order to make progress, learners need good teaching that includes the modeling of writing, regular opportunities to develop their skills, and effective assessment practices with constructive feedback that leads them to understand how best to improve their composition. This means effective teaching strategy has to be used to teach paragraph writing in a classroom. Moreover, sentences should be arranged in such a way so that it results in good comprehension to the readers.

To transfer complete written message to the readers, the role of writing a good paragraph is not counted easy. Therefore, as Fauziati(2010) stated that students have to focus on the procedures of writing such as topic of paragraph, body of paragraph, conclusions of paragraph and transitional words and sentences in paragraph writing. Besides this, in constructing sentence, there are sets of structural rules that help the students to develop complete sentences that make sense and are in acceptable English. Also, vocabulary has something to do with the English words, learners choose to express their ideas in their writing. Moreover, organization is learners' ability to

arrange their ideas into logical, coherent and cohesion to make a unified paragraph (Hartfiel, Hughey, Wormuth,& Jacobs, 1985).

In the school setting, writing plays two distinct but complementary roles. First, Writing Strategies (planning, revising, and editing compositions) found to be effective for helping adolescent students to write well and to use writing as a tool for learning. Second, writing is a means of extending and deepening students' knowledge; it acts as a tool for learning subject matter. The ultimate goal is to teach students to use these strategies independently (Graham, 2006). As Persaud (2018), instructional learning strategies motivate students by improving their engagement, capturing their attention and encouraging them to focus on not only remembering course material, but truly understanding it.

Furthermore, different scholars recommend using writing strategies which help learners in their writing success. For example, De La Paz & Graham (2002) suggested that Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) is approaches for helping students learn specific strategies for the processes of planning, drafting, and revising text through developing background knowledge, describing, modeling, memorizing, supporting, and using independently. In addition, Hussen (2015) proposed some procedures of paragraph writing such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, and editing that the learners need to follow the steps. To this end, teachers` dedication, commitment, relationship with individual students, motivation and classroom management become decisively important (Muluneh, 2018).

Based on literature reviews taken from different studies described in the introduction and personal observation through teaching experience, the researchers were initiated to study on the teaching strategies of paragraph writing in EFL classrooms in selected preparatory schools of West Guji Zone.

Learning to write either in the first or second language is one of difficult tasks a learner encounters (Richard, 1990). Studying English is difficult for native speakers similarly with foreign or second language learners (Esmeralda, 2013). Since a good writing has to consider some aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, content, and organization (Hartfiel et al.,1985). EFL students possibly face more challenges than first language (L1) learners in writing a paragraph (Hussen, 2015). Additionally, Yakhontova (2003) supported that EFL students face more difficulties in composing academic text than L1 students. Moreover, EFL students are likely to have more difficulties in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

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Although a paragraph only consists of one main idea, the development of a paragraph is sometimes difficult to achieve (Wirantaka, 2016). The author also argues that writers should consider some aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, cohesion, and coherence in building a good paragraph.

As well, the word choice used in paragraph should be correct and suitable to represent the idea. Also Richards and Renandya (2002) concluded that if L2 learners' language proficiency is weak, they will encounter greater difficulty in writing. Additionally, Paragraph writing is a complex work since it requires passing through some processing and organizing ideas into a written form. Regarding this idea, Raimes (1991) argues that the teaching of writing must be undertaken with recognitions of the complexity of composing, students' diversity, learners' procedures, pedagogical implementation, and the value of practice.

On the other hand, writing strategy is also the other factor that contributes to the writing performance of students. Regarding this, many scholars (Beare, 2000; Raimes, 1985 and Zamel, 1982) claim that writing strategy is the variable that differentiates effective writers from less effective writers. Furthermore, as Maarof & Murat (2013) found that secondary school EFL students were average users of writing strategies in which the finding showed EFL students should be encouraged to use a range of strategies to improve their paragraph writing skills. Therefore, using various writing strategies has a great impact on the quality of one's paragraph writing performance, and it is vital to guide students to develop their academic writing and its effect on their future writing performance.

Some researchers also pinpointed as students' poor writing skills results from the teachers' reluctance to teach writing. For instance, Harris (1977), reports that some teachers do not teach composition at school level. Furthermore, Wingate 2006 indicated that there are few writing activities done in schools in which students' writing is underestimated. Also, the author confirmed that students are required no longer to write essays at secondary schools and that could be why students have problems with academic writing.

In Ethiopian school context, some studies showed that most Ethiopian students have been facing problems in acquiring writing skills (Meseret, 2012). The author also found that one of the problems is that teachers do not give as much support as their students need in the writing classes. In addition,

as Haregewain (2008) described that the students are incapable to express their idea in organized ways during paragraph writing. Also, Muluneh (2018) concluded that writing skills is taught and practiced in secondary and tertiary levels, but many students often face difficulty towards expressing their ideas, opinions and feelings appropriately in written forms. Similarly, Mesfin (2004) stated in his research as teachers do not encourage students to write even though there are writing activities in the English textbooks of Grade 11.

The thoughts of above researchers indicate that there is less practice of paragraph writing at school. Also, the researchers have experienced that the deficiency of students in paragraph writing is vividly exposed even when freshman basic writing skills was delivered at university level. The researchers believe that there exists inadequate students' writing skills practice as the process of discovering and making meaning in English class room. Hence, it is with this regard that this study attempts to investigate whether the teaching of the paragraph writing strategies in teaching materials is effective or not. If the teachers of preparatory schools did not use effective strategies while teaching paragraph writing, students could not practice and learn well; they might face difficulties in paragraph writing; this would make them poor to communicate in their academic writing; and they unable to organize their ideas in written form. This becomes the most challenging for students in their academic success. Therefore, the study focused on the strategies of teaching paragraph writing at preparatory level. The general objective of the study was to assess the strategies of teaching paragraph writing used during English lesson in the preparatory schools of West Guji Zone. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- ✚ identify what strategies of teaching paragraph writing being used in the English classrooms
- ✚ state how do the teachers employ paragraph writing in the preparatory schools' classrooms
- ✚ interpret why students are not proficient in paragraph writing lessons
- ✚ explore effective strategies that have to be used during the writing lessons of English classrooms

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design, Setting, Population, and Sampling Techniques

Research Design: in this study, a descriptive research design was employed to describe the strategies of teaching paragraph writing skills in English classroom. Moreover, this research tried to describe the teaching-learning process how students practice paragraph writing, the proficiency of students in

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paragraph writing lesson and how teachers employ writing skills. Finally, qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used to analyze the collected data from the participants.

Research Setting: the research was carried out in three selected preparatory schools of west Guji zone, specifically Malka Sodda, Karcha, and Fincha preparatory schools. The study areas locate in the Oromia region, in the southern part of Ethiopia.

Population of the Study: The targeted populations of the study were English language teachers and their respective students of the selected preparatory schools in the West Guji Zone. The total target population of the study from the three sampled preparatory schools in West Guji Zone consisted 328 students and 8 English Language teachers as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Population of the study area taken from West Guji Education Office, 2019 G.C.

| No Strata | Number of population. |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 Preparatory Students of the sample schools | 328 |
| 2 English Language Teachers of the sample schools | 8 |
| Total | 336 |

Sampling Techniques: there are seven preparatory schools in West Guji zone. Among these, the researchers randomly selected three schools namely Malka Sodda, Karcha, and Fincha. A number of English language teachers in the sampled schools were 8. The teachers were selected based on available sampling techniques. On the other hand, systematic random sampling techniques were used to get the targeted sample of students through applying $n+3$, where n is an interval between the numbers of the students to be selected. The number of students from all of the schools was determined by the ratio of 33% to the total number of the students (Kothari, 2004).

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods: in this study, interview, questionnaire, and observation were utilized as a primary type of data sources. Questionnaire and focus group discussion were used to collect data from both students and teachers respectively. Both close and open ended items of questionnaire were developed to examine the teaching strategies of paragraph writing. Sharma (2000) suggested that a questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large groups of

individuals within a short period of time; and it is also easy to administer to a number of participants in one place at a time. The questionnaire was developed based on five point Likert scale (never, rarely true, sometimes, usually, and always) to state the practices students and teachers carry on during paragraph writing lesson.

On the other hand, Classroom observations were conducted by the researchers using a checklist to assess how English language teachers of the schools teach paragraph writing, and implement strategies during paragraph writing lesson. During this time, the information is sought by way of investigator's own direct observation while the lesson is on progress (Doughty and Long, 2005). Observation gives the first -hand account of situations under study through combining with other data collecting tools since it allows for a holistic interpretation of the situations which are being studied (Best and Kahan, 1989).

Additionally, focus group discussion was held in presence of English language teachers. It can be stated that focus groups involve people possessing certain characteristics and have focused discussion to produce qualitative data providing insights into the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants as a data collection procedure (Maynard-Trucker, 2000). As well, the focus-group moderator should spend a large portion of the discussion time probing participants' experiences, asking them to share and compare experiences (Breen, 2006).

Finally, document analyses were used to analyze students' paragraphs from their exercise book as a practical work and identify how much they write a paragraph effectively. This helps to back up the data which were collected with other tools.

Methods of Data Analysis: The data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods of data. Data from all of the tools were categorized, analyzed and interpreted. The findings of the study were enriched and strengthened by extensive literature review.

3. Result and Discussion

The findings were presented and analyzed by descriptive statistics of percentage, and numerical expression to describe demographic variables. Out of the total questionnaires distributed, an adequate amount of questionnaires were obtained from the respondent with complete answer. The collected data were presented and analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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As can be seen from item one of table 1, it is indicated that 82.4% of the respondents confirmed that home work is rarely given for the students regarding paragraph writing practice. However, different scholars suggest on the importance of home work for more practice; for instance, Jones (2013) encourages as homework helps to develop learners' knowledge and allow them more choice in how they learn individually by their own. Therefore, teachers need to give home work for students because the students require more practice. In the same way the respondents replied for item number two as they rarely practice paragraph writing individually inside or outside of the classroom; 63% of the respondents indicated as their individual practice of paragraph writing were rare whether inside or outside of the classroom.

Regarding to facilitating group writing in the classroom, 68.5% of the respondents negatively described that group writing is never facilitated in the classroom by the teacher as the result on item 3 reveals. But learners are expected to learn from each other in group work as the teacher needs to encourage learners to work in group. For example, Bruce (2002) supports that collaborative writing, as a premier method of active learning, requires teachers to view students as collaborators and the classroom as a site for active learning.

On the other hand, the students were requested either their teachers facilitate brainstorm on the topic before students begin writing task. As it can be seen from item number 4, 50% of the respondents confirmed that their teacher sometimes give the opportunity for the students to brainstorm on the task before they begin first draft though the opportunity of practicing writing tasks were very rare. In opposite, Alnufaie & Grenfell (2012) found that brainstorming (e.g. thinking about the purpose of what they write, thinking about the reader of their writing, relating ideas together and getting more new ideas, etc.) is one of the most frequently used strategies with their students.

Similarly, students need to pass through a process of brainstorming, planning, revising, and editing while practicing paragraph writing. On item number 5, 78.7% of the respondents responded that the teachers never encourage them to follow the process of brainstorming, planning, revising, and editing steps. However, scholars supported how much brainstorming can help students' writing skills development. For example, Al-Kalbani (2018) stated in his study that students started to value the effectiveness of having a very good plan before writing. Also, Nabhan (2016) argues that there is a substantial influence of process writing approach to the improvement of students' writing skills.

Therefore, the absence of following process steps of pre writing, planning, drafting, reflecting, peer or tutor reviewing, revising, and editing/proofreading were affected students' performance in paragraph writing. In support of this, the data from observation confirmed that it was not seen while the teacher encourages passing through the process of such practices during paragraph writing tasks in the classroom

Additionally, the response given for item number 6 shows 85.2% of the students replied as there is no feedback given from their teacher immediately. But it is generally agreed that correction is part of teaching and learning process. Lightbown and Spada (1990) claimed corrective feedback is useful and suggested that treatment of errors helps students learn better, whether the feedback is explicit or implicit. The teacher corrected students' paragraphs and indicated the place and the kind of mistakes so that learners could distinguish between one kind and another. Students also valued the importance of editing and peer feedback. The editing tasks help students to identify their own mistakes and they able to rectify using collaborative learning in which peer feedback was conducive, (Al-Kalbani, 2018). As well, no immediate correction is given for students' error during writing lesson as the classroom observation data reveals.

Likewise on item 7 ,with regard to the students' opportunity to comment each other's paragraph, 96.3 % of the students responded that their teacher never give opportunity to comment on each other's paragraph while learning about paragraph writing.

Table 2 summarizes the students' response to the questions regarding how the teachers employ while teaching paragraph writing in the classroom. The result from item number 1 of the above table showed that English language teachers didn't give focus to the paragraph writing practices as 72.2% of the respondents confirmed that they rarely learn writing. Also item number two requested whether the teachers allowed the students to practice paragraph writing, but the response revealed that the teachers did these rarely.

On item number four, 84.3% of the respondents responded that the teachers leave some writing activities without teaching the students; this shows that attention was not given to the writing lesson from the teacher. On the other hand, scholars argue as students should get much practicing time to develop their paragraph writing skill. For instance, (Faraj, 2015) said that students are provided with teacher scaffolding from the beginning until the end of writing process. Therefore, students need to have time to practice paragraph writing to master as skill.

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Item number 3 of the table requested if the teacher gives feedback toward the students' paragraph writing when they do, but the result showed as majority (61.1%) of the respondents answered as the teacher never gave them feedback whether in written or oral. Contrary, researchers suggests the importance of giving feedback for students. For example: As Alvira (2016) cited in his study, giving feedback helps student to understand their own composing process, to build repertoires of strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting steps; it also gives students time to write and rewrite, highlights their error through the process of revision and allows them to ascertain what they want to write.

As the response for item number 5 reveals that 95.3% of the respondents suggested that English language teachers never bring additional topics to the class for students practice. However, Wallace T, et al. (2004) recommends that practicing variety of writing activities in classroom can help learners acquire the skills they need to be successful; the writing strategies involved in each form of writing usually require explicit teaching, frequent practice and information given to students about their progress. For this reason, teachers should bring additional topics to the classroom that a student cares deeply about, as a consequence of their interest and background, may lead to write effectively and even lead to a life devoted to writing in their academic career.

In addition, the document analysis result indicated that preparatory students' English text book composed few writing tasks for students practice; which is not enough to develop students' paragraph writing skills. But the writing tasks included in students' text book is not beyond the knowledge level of students. In addition, some strategies are given for students to follow in completing tasks; this gives clue to make clear for the students as it leads them from introduction to conclusion. However, the teacher sometimes tells the students to practice the given writing activities in the textbook; this could be concluded based on the result from item number 7 as 46.2% of the respondents supported accordingly.

As item number 8 requests, majority (49% and 47.2%) of the respondents confirmed that the teachers rise about the topic sentence rarely and sometimes respectively. This shows that English language teachers didn't clearly explain and tell the students to write the topic sentences even when they taught paragraph writing lessons rarely. In support of this, the teachers rarely supported the students to generate ideas to develop the paragraph by supporting the topic sentences as majority of the students (54.6%) replied to item number 9; the teachers rarely did this. Also, 61.1% of the respondents

supported that the teachers rarely guided the students to keep the coherence of sentence in the paragraph. As the data from observation supported that the teachers simply give the writing topic for the students to complete a paragraph within the given time; otherwise no guidance, support, and feedback given for the students in the classroom. These showed that the strategies the teachers used in teaching paragraph writing were very poor.

The above table- 3 comprises questions as regards the students' performance in paragraph writing skills. According to the students' response toward item number 1, which requested whether they can write a complete topic sentence at sentence level or controlling idea in which most of the students(47.2%) replied to as they disagreed with the item. This means that they couldn't develop topic sentence with good controlling idea. Additionally, the document analysis data showed that the students faced difficulty in separating the topic sentences from supporting sentences in a paragraph.

Additionally, majority of the students (52.7%) replied to item number 2 as they couldn't generate related supportive sentences to the topic sentence when they practice paragraph writing. In the same way, 66.6% of the students responded to item number 3 as they didn't support and develop their paragraph writing logically. Furthermore, more than half of the students (54.6%) replied to item number 4, as they couldn't use a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, and compound complex). However, students replied to item number 5, as they were good in using appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation accurately during writing activities. Contrary to this idea, some studies showed that grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling are challenges to learners when they are writing a paragraph (Muhammed, 2015)

Although Majority of the students (68.5%) have no idea regarding writing accurate summary of information that they have read in English,24.1% of them showed disagreement toward writing accurate summary of information from what they read. But some scholars suggested in summary writing, there are essential summarizing strategies to produce adequate summaries; students are required to use strategies such as note taking, extensive reading, and writing efficiently to achieve good summaries because it is a vital skill required by students in developing their writing skills (Kirkland and Saunders, 1991).

On the other hand, As students were requested on item number 7 if they pass through different steps (planning, drafting, revising, and editing) to develop effective paragraph, but their response totally revealed that they didn't follow the process approach to pass through the steps of planning,

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drafting, revising, and editing when they write composition. 99.1% of them indicated that they simply write a paragraph when their teacher asks without any steps. But 50.9% of them replied that they only brainstorm to gather ideas before they begin their composition as their response to on item no. 8. However, some studies shows that process writing approach like brainstorming, having a very good plan before writing, drafting, revising, and editing plays vital role in the upgrading of students' writing achievement (Al-Kalbani, 2018; Nabhan, 2016).

With regard to using some scholarly recommended strategies like taking notes, revising, identifying problems appear in paragraph and editing, students were not effective as students' response confirmed to item numbers 9, 10, 11, and 12 respectively.

Additionally, the students' response to open ended questions confirmed that they faced some problems which hinder them in developing their paragraph writing. These problems are like lack of opportunities for practicing paragraph writing, lack of awareness in use of some strategies to fix any problem in their paragraph. This shows that almost all of the students had not been editing/revising their paragraph writing even if their paragraph has problems or deficiencies that require improvement and it reduces the quality of their paragraph.

As MoE (2009) states that after students finish general education, most of them will continue to use English, either in preparatory grades, at college, in 'TVET' or in the world of work. For this reason, there is a focus on communication and, through the development of learning strategies, independent learning. Since the majority of students in Grades 11 and 12 will be aiming for higher education where English continues to be the medium of instruction, the focus of language teaching is slightly different. Firstly, students need to have a wider range of grammatical and lexical competence to cope with future studies. Secondly, in Grade 11 and especially Grade 12, there is more focus on language skills reading, writing, speaking and listening to prepare students for higher education. Discussions and debates are often around topical issues related to other academic subjects for students' speaking and listening skills development. Finally, as it has already been demonstrated that there is an increasing focus on students' independence in their academic success. There is more work on learning strategies.

On the other hand, the data from text book analysis confirmed that the writing tasks given in the students' text book did not allow the students to pass through the steps of planning, drafting, editing, revising, and writing the final draft independently. However, different scholars on language teaching methodology viewed differently to the above observation. For example, Atkinson(2003) describes that when students attempt to produce written texts such as paragraphs or essays, writing instructors need to encourage them to go through the phases of planning, organizing, composing, reviewing, revising and editing recursively. Additionally, the writing exercises in the students' text book encourage peer/group work among students to a great extent, but ample written sample paragraphs that lead students to learn writing in different structure hasn't provided and teachers didn't support group writing. Also, Students' textbook do not provide paragraph writing tasks with topic sentence and allow students to complete in their own way.

As well, the data from observation confirmed that some of the observed teachers did not introduce interesting writing activities, and did not simplify for the students to complete briefly. The teachers are expected to bring attractive topics to the class and encourage the students to complete the task. Also there is a problem in creating awareness on the purpose of each writing activities and directing the students to promote in their paragraph writing skills with clear instruction.

With regard to assigning adequate time there was a problem as few teachers were observed while they were interrupting before the students finished and proceeded to another lesson. But enough time must be assigned for each writing activities. The reality the researchers observed was that the paragraph writing activities given for the students were relevant to students' knowledge level. However, the teacher did not give direction on paragraph writing structure from introducing topic sentence, supporting details and then writing conclusion. But as McLean (2002) suggested that teacher should be sure that the students included a topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence and to use transitional words and phrases to link ideas together in paragraph writing.

During classroom observation, researchers observed that the teachers almost did not organize pair work and group work including good and weaker learners. However, different researchers supported the importance of group work in different situation. For example, Rebecca (2018) described that the importance of group activity in school should be considered. He also stated that the most engaged classrooms incorporate group work; the more benefits for group members not only increasing

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engagement, but also a number of other benefits such as increased comprehension of subject matter in the form of learning from each other.

Additionally, few of the teachers gave appropriate feedback and correction for learners' during their paragraph writing whether mistakes had been made. However, most teachers were not seen while they were giving feedback for the students' paragraph though corrective feedback is more important so that students feel more confident to correct their errors/mistakes for further paragraph writing. In addition to this, none of the observed teachers did not elicits vocabulary (word map) before starting to write the paragraph and give learners chances to prepare and allows time for preparation, thus students were led to develop poor composition.

Finally, few of the teachers were seen while teaching students eliciting some paragraph writing strategies (e.g. identifying the topic, brainstorming on the topic with keywords, taking notes and discussing with peers). This showed that the teacher hardly encouraged students to follow process approach of paragraph writing such as developing plan before drafting, developing supporting sentences, drafting the first paragraph, editing the paragraph, Revising, publishing).

Students were made to write a paragraph by having topics from their teacher. The researchers took three sample paragraphs from students' exercise book by taking photo from students' exercise book after they had written. This was done to analyze students' writing performance in paragraph writing whether they were good enough or not.

Accordingly, some problems were observed from sample paragraph 1; firstly, there is a problem of unity and coherence in developing supportive ideas because the expression '*The driver should have driving card when he pass its exam*' was not related to the topic sentence (A new driver needs many skills to drive a car). As well, the expression '*it is good in building well*' is irrelevant idea. Secondly, the antecedent expression (... *its exam*.) was expressed inappropriately. Thirdly, there is a grammatical error like repetition of same form of verbs consecutively and subject-verb agreement error. Fourthly, there are spelling and punctuation problems in the paragraph. Finally, the paragraph lacks concluding sentence.

As it can be seen from sample paragraph 2, some paragraph writing problems were existed. These are the supporting details are not logically organized, the necessary conjunctions are not appropriately sticking the sentences together, the involvement of irrelevant sentences (e.g. *I feel play with my friends, I will get much money after my lesson, and I may also have a dream of having a job in the future*), subject-verb agreement error (*I selling my father shop*), and inappropriate use of state verbs (e.g. *feel play*). Eventually, at the end of the paragraph there is spelling error (*event Hugh*) and faulty sentence i.e., the dependent word fragment was included in the paragraph.

As it was referred from sample paragraph 3, there are a grammatical error in the sentence, faulty parallelism, spelling error, lack of coherence, lack of organization, punctuation error, capitalization and incomplete ideas.

In general, it was observed that the students lack much practice of writing composition because they couldn't organize their ideas in paragraph writing. The sample paragraphs the students developed have lots of errors/and mistakes. They didn't use different paragraph writing strategies and follow necessary steps of prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and editing while they practice paragraph writing rather they once try to develop the final draft. As Al-Kalbani (2018) suggested, it had better if the writer revise, edit, choose appropriate word, and write the final draft.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to assess the teaching strategies of paragraph writing being used with reference to selected preparatory schools of west Guji zone. For this study, the descriptive research was designed to obtain the required data. Different data gathering tools (questionnaire, classroom observation and document analysis) were employed. The collected data from different sources were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Based on the research question and finding of the analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Teachers gave less emphasis to writing lessons, and they didn't teach the students to use different strategies of paragraph writing. They rarely allowed the students to brainstorm on the topic, and simply inform them to write the paragraph as much they can. They didn't give feedback for the students whether they made mistakes/errors while they practice paragraph writing, i.e. students' deficiency continues with them as much as they encounter it by themselves.

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- The students rarely practiced paragraph writing in the classrooms. So, this could be a challenge for the students to develop their paragraph writing skills. When they got an opportunity, the students were practicing paragraph writing following the product approach, which is not advised to follow at the present time because writing requires revising and editing.
- Students ignored and gave less value to paragraph writing because of lacking practice, awareness in paragraph components, feedback, motivation, and more time for their practice. Finally, it was identified that students haven't played more roles in order to improve their paragraph writing skill.

Generally, the study revealed that students performed less in paragraph writing.

5. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Students should have more time to practice paragraph writing in addition to the exercises given in their text book.
2. The process based approach which allows the students for revising; correcting errors/mistake, adding ideas, restructuring, re-organizing, replacing, etc. ought to be implemented while practicing paragraph writing.
3. Teachers should encourage and give awareness for the students on how to use different strategies like selecting interesting topic, brainstorming, taking notes, planning, reading and rereading in practicing paragraph writing.
4. Teachers should inspire students to use writing strategies of planning, drafting, and revising text through developing background knowledge, describing, modeling, memorizing, supporting, and using independently, which help learners in their writing success.
5. Teachers should consider constructive corrective feedback for the students' error made in their paragraph writing through coding, locating errors, and indicating the number of errors to improve the students' paragraph writing skills.
6. More paragraph writing activities which encourage the students should be incorporated in the students' text book syllabus.

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TABLE 1: Students' response to the teaching strategies of paragraph writing

| No | Teaching strategies Related Questions | N | | R | | S | | U | | A | |
|----|---|-----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|---|---|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | Home work is given for the students to practice paragraph writing. | 8 | 7.4 | 89 | 82.4 | 7 | 6.5 | 4 | 3.7 | - | - |
| 2 | Students practice paragraph writing individually inside and outside of the classroom. | 8 | 7.4 | 68 | 63 | 28 | 25.9 | 4 | 3.7 | - | - |
| 3 | Group writing is facilitated in the classroom. | 74 | 68.5 | 31 | 28.7 | 3 | 2.8 | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | The students brainstorm on the topic before they begin writing first draft. | 12 | 11.1 | 39 | 36.1 | 54 | 50 | 3 | 2.8 | - | - |
| 5 | During learning paragraph writing the students are encouraged to follow the process of brain storming, planning, revising, and editing steps. | 85 | 78.7 | 17 | 15.7 | 6 | 5.5 | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Immediate correction is given for students' error during writing lesson. | 92 | 85.2 | 11 | 10.2 | 5 | 4.6 | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | The students are given opportunity to comment each other's paragraph. | 104 | 96.3 | 3 | 2.7 | 1 | 0.9 | - | - | - | - |

TABLE 2: Students' Response to Questionnaire on the Way Teachers Employ While Teaching Paragraph Writing in the Classroom

| No | Teacher Related Questions | N | | R | | S | | U | | A | |
|----|--|-----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | The teacher gives focus on the writing lesson. | 9 | 8.3 | 78 | 72.2 | 21 | 19.4 | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | The teacher allows students to practice the paragraph writing effectively. | 8 | 7.4 | 76 | 70.4 | 24 | 22.2 | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | The teacher gives feedback (oral and written) for the students' paragraph writing. | 66 | 61.1 | 30 | 27.7 | 9 | 8.3 | 3 | 2.7 | - | - |
| 4 | The teacher leaves some writing lesson without teaching. | - | - | 4 | 3.7 | 9 | 8.3 | 91 | 84.3 | 4 | 3.7 |
| 5 | The teacher brings additional writing topics to make students practice. | 103 | 95.3 | 2 | 1.9 | 2 | 1.9 | 1 | 0.9 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|
| 6 | The teacher adds the writing questions in students' exam. | 10 | 9.3 | 60 | 55.6 | 38 | 35.1 | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | The teacher simply tells the students to practice the writing activities in the text book but doesn't follow whether they write. | 1 | 0.9 | 15 | 13.9 | 50 | 46.2 | 41 | 37.9 | 1 | 0.9 |
| 8 | The teacher asks the students to write the topic sentence that clearly indicate the idea of the whole paragraph. | 4 | 3.7 | 53 | 49 | 51 | 47.3 | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | The teacher supports the students to generate ideas of supporting sentences. | 5 | 4.6 | 59 | 54.6 | 31 | 28.7 | 13 | 12 | - | - |
| 10 | The teacher guides the students to keep the coherence of the paragraph from introduction to conclusion. | 15 | 13.8 | 66 | 61.1 | 23 | 21.3 | 4 | 3.7 | - | - |

TABLE 3: Students' Response to their Performance in Paragraph Writing

| N o. | Students' performance related Items | SD | | D | | N | | A | | SA | |
|---------|---|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|-----|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | I can write a clear topic sentence that identifies the topic with a good controlling idea. | 1 | 0.9 | 51 | 47.2 | 50 | 46.3 | 4 | 3.7 | 2 | 1.8 |
| 2 | I can generate related supportive ideas to the topic sentence when I write a paragraph. | 2 | 1.8 | 57 | 52.7 | 33 | 30.5 | 13 | 12 | 3 | 2.7 |
| 3 | I can logically support and develop my main point when I write a paragraph. | 1 | 0.9 | 71 | 65.7 | 25 | 23.1 | 9 | 8.3 | 2 | 1.8 |
| 4 | I can use a variety of sentence structures. | 20 | 18.5 | 59 | 54.6 | 26 | 24.1 | 3 | 2.7 | - | - |
| 5 | I can use appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation accurately. | - | - | - | - | 39 | 36.1 | 65 | 60.2 | 4 | 3.7 |
| 6 | I can write an accurate summary of information that I have read in English. | - | - | 26 | 24.1 | 74 | 68.5 | 8 | 7.4 | - | - |
| 7 | When I write composition, I use various steps of paragraph writing using planning, revising, and editing. | 81 | 75 | 26 | 24.1 | 1 | 0.9 | - | - | - | - |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|
| 8 | I always effectively brainstorm to gather ideas before writing. | - | - | 24 | 22.2 | 28 | 25.9 | 55 | 50.9 | 1 | 0.9 |
| 9 | I take notes on readings and then use them to support my ideas in my writing. | 11 | 10.2 | 77 | 71.3 | 3 | 2.7 | 17 | 15.8 | - | - |
| 10 | I revise my own paragraph to improve its development and organization. | 68 | 63 | 24 | 22.2 | 8 | 7.4 | 8 | 7.4 | - | - |
| 11 | I easily identify problems in my paragraph and see what should be improved. | 6 | 5.5 | 71 | 65.7 | 23 | 21.3 | 6 | 5.5 | 2 | 1.8 |
| 12 | I edit my own paragraph to improve its wording, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. | 3 | 2.7 | 69 | 63.9 | 22 | 20.4 | 7 | 6.5 | 7 | 6.5 |

Appendix A

Bule Hora University

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

Questions for Focus Group Discussion

1. Do you invest much of your time in teaching writing skill as compared to other language skills?
If your answer is no, why you don't do?
2. What strategies you use while teaching paragraph writing in the classroom?
3. How do you teach students to elaborate their ideas before starting writing?
4. Have you ever tried to encourage your students to involve more in writing lesson? If your answer is yes, mention them.
5. What about the students' performance in writing paragraph? Give to your students' paragraph writing ability (Excellent, v/good, good, satisfactory, below average).
6. How do the students practice paragraph writing lessons in the classroom?
7. What are the problems that you face when you teach paragraph writing in the classroom?
8. What do you think is/are effective strategies to teach paragraph writing in the classroom?
9. What approach (Process/product) do the teachers follow while they teach in the classroom?

10. Which strategies do the teacher usually uses in the classroom (identifying the topic, brainstorming on the topic with keywords, taking notes, developing plan before drafting, developing supporting sentences, drafting the first paragraph, editing the paragraph, Revising, publishing, etc.)?

Appendix B

Bule Hora University

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

Observation Checklist

Name of the school _____

Section _____ Topic _____

Date _____ Time begins _____ Time ended _____

This observation checklist is designed for the teaching of paragraph writing in EFL classes. The practices were recorded in the category of Yes/No, as they happen in the classroom. Put a mark (✓) observing while teachers are using them.

| No | Items | Yes | No |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 1 | The teacher introduces the interesting writing activities briefly to start the class | | |
| 2 | The teacher sets purpose for each writing activities and train the students to promote their paragraph writing skills | | |
| 3 | The teacher gives students clear instruction for paragraph writing tasks | | |
| 4 | The teacher selects and organizes paragraph writing activities relevant to students' language level | | |
| 6 | The teacher makes writing tasks attractive by including hints on paragraph writing structure from topic, topic sentence, supporting details and conclusion | | |
| 7 | The teacher organizes pair work and group work including good and weaker learners | | |
| 8 | The teacher gives interesting topic and shows clear examples of sample written paragraph. | | |
| 9 | The teacher creates a supportive language atmosphere and varied writing activities session to encourage students to participate in paragraph writing. | | |
| 10 | The teacher gives appropriate feedback and correction for learners mistakes during their paragraph writing | | |
| 11 | The teacher selects and organizes paragraph writing activities relevant to students' language level | | |
| 12 | The teacher elicits vocabulary(word map) before starting to write the paragraph | | |
| 13 | The teacher gives learners chances to prepare and allow time for preparation | | |

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| | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| 14 | The teacher teaches students in some paragraph writing strategies (e.g. identifying the topic, brainstorming on the topic with keywords, taking notes and discussing with peers). | | |
| 15 | The teacher encourages students to follow process approach of paragraph writing such as developing plan before drafting, developing supporting sentences, drafting the first paragraph, editing the paragraph, Revising, publishing). | | |

If there is any additional thing you would like to

add.....

.....

 ...

Figure 1. Example of the first student’s Paragraph Taken from grade 12

Topic sentences: A new driver needs many skills to drive a car

A new driver needs skill to drive a car. The driver should have driving card when he pass its exam. He has to be know arriving into traffic light. He should good to identify the road signs on the way. Knowing the middle speed is important. it is good in building well. the driver should keep safe the people he drive. He should has the skill to drive on the right road. He should know to stop at end of the road slowly.

Figure 2. Example of the second student's Paragraph Taken from grade 12

Topic Sentence: There are many reasons a high school education is important.

There are many reasons a high school education is important. A high school is a time for young like us to get necessary skills from peers. I am getting knowledge from my teachers and during the break time out the class room I feel play with my friends. I will get much money after my lesson I selling my father shop. I may get informational activities for work. I have also a dream of having a job in the future. There are many reasons a high school education is important, even though it will take time to finish and I feel sense of pride in finishing high school and pass to preparatory school.

Figure 3. Example of the third student's Paragraph Taken from grade 11

Topic: There are different reasons why we involve in reading. Students read a book for two or more reason. The first one is pass the exam for general knowledge for successfulness to get the word and remembering. So one or another reason students must be read about like another student. I am read book from lower grade to I read magazine & fiction for entertainment some what & also text book and guide for the help or knowledge. I read text book by making plan. also I read another book. I am so tired so that makes me laugh & happy by that bc both of them are not equal but essential. the past reading way was not effective. I need to change the way of reading bc only read don't helped me to be successful. But to pass exam and entertain to get information from the book or the fiction.