

ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LAW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**MAJOR CHALLENGES OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF GRADE 9 STUDENTS
AT GEDO HIGH SCHOOL**

BY: HULUAGERISH DESALEGN

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Major Challenges of High School Students in Paragraph Development: the Case of Grade 9
at Gedo High School

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By :Huluagerish Desalegn

Supervision/Advison

Dr. Abebe Gemechu

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BY: HULUAGERISH DESALEGN

APPROVAL OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD

NAME

Abebe Gemechu

SIGNATURE

[Signature]

DATE

30-08-17

ADVISOR

Biniam Atnafe (phd)

[Signature]

30th Sep, 2017

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Mengistu Zelalem (phd) [Signature] 30/09/2017

INTERNAL EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Major Challenges of High Students in Paragraphs Development: the case of Grade 9 at Gedo High School” has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Abebe Gemechu.

The thesis is original and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma to any university or institutions.

Researcher's Name

Date

Signature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ESL English as a Second Language

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

MOE Ministry of Education

Abstract

The objective of this study was to assess the major challenges of grade 9 students of Gedo high school in paragraph development. Thus, descriptive research method was used to meet the objective of the study. In order to obtain the desired data, the researcher randomly selected sixty-four (64) students from four sections of the eight sections available in the school. Three tools of data gathering, namely class room observation, questionnaire, and focus group discussion were employed. The classroom observations were preferred to clearly identify what the EFL teachers were doing during paragraph teaching lessons. Questionnaire was used since it offers the respondents enough times to think alone on the questions to express their idea free in one hand and since it permits the researcher to collect data from large number of respondents at one place in a given period of time in on other hand. Focus group discussion on the other hand, was preferred because, it creates discussions among the teachers to express their own ideas towards the questions based on their individualized experiences. The data obtained from these tools were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, mixed research method was employed for conducting the study. Accordingly, the result of the study stated that grade 9 students of Gedo high school face challenges in paragraph development. Among the major challenges identified inability to produce coherent united, and completed paragraph, failure to use appropriate tenses, punctuation marks, nouns, pronouns, subject-verb agreement, spelling, words, build enough vocabulary, and use techniques of effective paragraph writing were the major ones. These problems were rooted from human and non- human factors. Lack of knowledge on using effective strategies in teaching paragraph writing skills, the students' lack of making enough practice on writing paragraph outside the classroom, teachers' lack of making sufficient assistance for the students, and teachers' less emphasis on writing lessons were human related factors. While, insufficient writing tasks in the students' text books, students' low living condition, teachers' lack of enough training on writing, lack of enough writing materials, and free promotion policy of Ethiopian Education are among the major non-human factors for the students' major challenges in writing paragraph. Finally, the necessary recommendations were drawn by the researcher depending on the result of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and significance in the study

1.1 Background of the study

Paragraph writing is not a simple skill for inhabitant speakers and nonnative speakers. Because much of paragraph writers must balance multiple issues in their paragraph writing such as content, organization, reason, words and mechanics which means using the right punctuation, spelling and capitalization (Ruwaida AbuRass,2015). Paragraph writing in a second language is yet more challenging because it is “a complex, challenging, and difficult process” (Alsamadani, 2010) because many paragraph writers are estimated to produce written samples that are syntactically accurate, semantically acceptable and culturally appropriate.

Academic paragraph writing plays a critical role in socializing students into the discourse of subjects and disciplines in both high school and universities (Ernest A Pineteh, 2013). In the traditional approaches to language teaching and learning, writing is considered as secondary skill. Because of this, it received relatively little attention compared to speaking, reading, and listening (Mohammedamin Hussein, 2015).Even though, the demand for academic development programmers as a viable strategy to enhance the academic writing skills and other soft skills required by students (Jacobs, 2007; Layer, 2006) however many students in higher at school level has faced challenges of paragraph development.

Silva. T (1997) claims that the dominant teaching method during the 1950s put an undue focus on oral rather than written proficiency, especially writing skills were neglected during Audio-lingual period. Raimes (1983), states that during audio-lingual period, speaking was seen as the central element of language teaching, while writing was not given similar position in language teaching-learning. As students attain their secondary level education, they are required to generate further written materials such as paragraph,

composition etc. According to the syllabus of grade nine (9), grade nine students need to write compositions on a wide range of topics (MOE, 2001 ii).

This study has explained the challenges of high School student in paragraph development: In the case of grade 9 students at Gedo High School within highlights the major challenges of student in paragraph development like: lack of a mastery of writing conventions, analysis of writing topics, using writing to construct social identities, skill to conduct research and be relevant knowledge across different context and poor sentence skills. It also examines the implications for students' academic development and the strategies for addressing these challenges.

The study by Ruwaida Abu Rass,(2015) focused on students language problems in paragraph development that has concentrated only in word and sentence levels . However, this study included the structural approach of paragraph development. The studies by Silva T (1997) focused on the syntactic level such as the excessive use of the definite article “the” or the omission of the copula, the verb to be. But this study focuses not only on the error at sentence level, but also the paragraph development in terms of including a topic sentence, supporting & concluding details with excessive use of cohesive. So cohesiveness will be also addressed in this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The writing skill of students is very essential for paragraph development. So the paragraph development capacity of students in high school plays a great role in both academic and future careers (Mohammedamin Hussen, 2015). According to Weigle (2002), the key role of English language ability in writing has an important and encouraging impact on the academic achievement of students. This is because the ability to write various genres of writing effectively through English is becoming increasingly important in our global community. In addition, paragraph writing is an essential part for the student in academic development as well as essential component of thinking and learning in both low level and higher-level context, and writing tasks are crucial tool for intellectual and social development (Bruning and Horn, 2000).

However, researches conducted by different local researchers' state that majority of high school students are facing challenges in paragraph writing. For instance, the study by Mohammedamin Hussein(2015) on paragraph writing problems of grade 10 students of Bedeno secondary school show that the majority of the students face writing problems such as wrong usage of capitalization, spelling, punctuation marks, vocabulary, tenses, subject verb agreement, nouns, pronouns, plural, and singular subjects .In the same way, the study by Geremew Lemma (1999) on the requirements in writing for academic purpose at Addis Ababa university with this reference to four departments also revealed that the students face paragraph writing problems as lack of cohesion, coherence, wrong usage of tenses, shortage of basic vocabularies. In line with idea, Kebede (2013, cited in Mohammedamin

Hussein, 2015) again assessed cohesion and coherence problems and difficulties of grade 11 students with cohesion and coherence in EFL paragraph writing using document analysis, class observation , semi structured interview and pointed out that the students strongly face problems such logical arrangement of sentences and the usage of cohesive devices in their paragraph writing .But , no research has been conducted at Gedo secondary school regarding this problem though Gedo high school students ,specially grade 9 students are highly facing difficulties in expressing their ideas in the English writing performances. This was manifested from the students' writing activities during class work home work, quizzes, tests, and other writing exams currently. These difficulties directly or indirectly affected the students' performance in other subjects since English is a medium of instruction in Ethiopian high schools. Therefore, the researcher was initiated to conduct this study to assess the major challenges of these students in paragraph development. The study also inspires to decide whether the challenges found by the above indicated researchers are also true of the students under this study or not.

1.3 Research Questions

- ✓ What are the major challenges faced by grade 9 students in paragraph development?
- ✓ What are the causes for these challenges?
- ✓ What do the teachers do to overcome these challenges?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess major challenges of grade 9 students in paragraph development at Gedo high School.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

In line with the above general objective this study specifically aims

- ✓ To assess the major challenges faced by grade 9 students in paragraph development.
- ✓ Identify the causes for students' challenges in writing paragraph.
- ✓ Find out how teachers attempt to help students in overcoming the challenges.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to assess major challenges of grade 9 students of Gedo high school in paragraph development. Therefore, the researcher believes that the results of the study have the following significances: First, it can point out the major challenges students may face in paragraph development. Second, it might encourage the school teachers to do their

best to alleviate the problem. Third, it could be used as input for curriculum developers to

consider what challenges students may encounter with in writing paragraph. Fourth, it could serve as source of data for other researchers who will make further study in this area. Fifth, it could alleviate the major challenges of the students under this study in recommending them

what to do and all the concerned bodies to take their roles in different professional activities.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

This study was delimited only to assess grade 9 students' major challenges in paragraph development in Gedo high school. The researcher delimited this study in such way to effectively and successfully manage it within the time schedule.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

In order to obtain more sufficient, reliable, and creditable data for this study, the researcher ought to use document analysis as one tools of data gathering by collecting each sample respondent's performance in paragraph writing. But, it is too difficult for the researcher to read and identify the existing errors from many of the students' paragraphs ,because, what they write is not readable as the researcher observed from their paragraph writing skill during classroom observation; in their classroom activity, for instance, class work and home work instead of data analysis. In addition, the researcher took only four sections out of the eight sections of grade 9 students in the school as the respondents even though it is important to include the remaining sections to obtain additional data regarding the problem. Moreover, the researcher confined her study only to major challenges of grade 9 students of the school though grade 10, 11, and 12 students of the school may face these challenges. Therefore, these can be some limitations of this study.

1.8 Organizational Structure of the Paper

This study was organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals with Introduction, background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study. Chapter two deals with theoretical and empirical review of the literature from studies conducted in Ethiopia and other countries, Chapter three is devoted to research methodology that includes description of the study area, sample size and method of sampling, data types and sources and methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis, summary ,conclusion and recommendation .

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter is a review of related literature about the topic. It provides a theoretical background on the concept of assessing major challenges of high school students in paragraph development. Accordingly, this chapter contains the following headings: the definition of paragraph, theories of paragraph development, major challenges in paragraph development, causes and difficulties in paragraph development, how to overcome the challenges are presented in this chapter.

2.1 Importance of Learning Writing Skills

Writing skill is more and more important nowadays. Santos (2000) explains that there are three reasons making writing increasingly essential which are 1) more international linguists are promoting writing as their field of specialization, 2) more articles and journals are being published in English, and 3) more international students are pursuing their degrees in English speaking countries. Besides, Chen (2007) states that owing to the age of globalization; the world seems to be smaller because of the perception of unlimited communication. For this reason, all members of global institutions, for their own benefits in terms of education and business cooperation, have to stay connected with one another. In order to comprehensibly express thoughts and opinions, apart from oral interaction, writing is considered crucial. In terms of ESL or EFL instruction, writing helps students learn. First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that they taught to students. Second, when students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eyes, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. As students struggle with what to put down next or how to put it down on paper, they often discover something new to write. In addition, EFL/ESL Writing has always been considered an important skill in teaching and learning. As commented by Rao (2007) EFL writing is useful in two respects: First, it motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, developing their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. Second, it strengthens

students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. Another important aspect of writing for the targeted learners is writing for the sake of writing

(Harmer,2004). In other words, there are some other aspects of language such as punctuation and capitalization that they are essential in writing. So, through writing, learners can know more about the use of punctuation and capitalization.

In general, writing is very important for communication. It creates a communication channel between the writer and the reader. It is needed to transfer messages, letters, and knowledge, to take exams and to maintain learning. Because of the importance noted above, English writing is included in all the syllabuses of Ethiopian preparatory and secondary schools. Since English is not the mother tongue of the targeted learners, the expectations of having many challenges associated with writing paragraphs are high.

2.2 Definition of Paragraph

As to Melakneh (2004: 185) as paragraph is a group of related sentence that tells about a single idea, description or action. A paragraph is also defined as a group of sentences that deal with the same subject or topic. Sentences in most well written paragraphs may be analyzed into general functions. Similarly, Alice Oshima and Ann Hosuen (1997:26, 27) stated that a paragraph is a group of related sentences which a writer develops about a subject. The starting sentence explains the certain idea while the other sentences are stated to support it. They also said that it is emphasized by identifying the first word from the left hand margin. So, a paragraph is made up of three sorts of sentences , the topic sentence is around about sentence or the opening sentence which is due to naming the door of the action and the controlling idea . In addition, it tells the reader what the paragraph is talking about and can be in the beginning or at the end of a paragraph. But, they thought it must be written in the start in order to give the reader an idea of what he is going to say and it will enhance him to be on the same subject without being off point. They added that to determine the subject of the topic sentence .so, the topic sentence can help summarizing the idea from general to specific.

2.3 The Concept of Paragraph Writing

Paragraph is an important convention of written English. It has developed as a visual way of helping the reader to follow an extended piece of writing. Paragraph helps us to understand how the sentences are grouped together. Omisha and Ann Hogue (2006:65) say that “paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing a group of related sentences develops one main idea and consists of two kinds of sentences: atopic sentence and a number of supportive statements. Number of sentence within a single paragraph is an important, but it should belong enough to develop the main idea clearly.” Though sometimes for emphasis, or in dialog or transition, paragraph may have only one or two sentences. The paragraph starts with an indentation which means a blank space at the beginning indicating that a new subject or a different point of the same subject is being considered with. The sentences with in a paragraph link up so that readers are not conscious of gaps. Elements of paragraph should be combined to form one complete meaning in the paragraph.

2.4 Approaches in Teaching Paragraph Writing

Sengupta (2000), notes that methods teachers used in writing instruction have measurable effects on the quality of the students’ written products. Archibald (2001), also observes that teaching has an effect on the students’ ability to reflect on their writing and to produce more effective and appropriate texts in L2 language. Again, he asserts that teaching writing skills to L2 students is a challenging task for teachers because developing this skill takes a long time to realize the improvement.

2.4.1. Product Approach

The product approach of writing focuses on the finished products of the writing work rather than the process. According to Getnet (1994), the product approach is an orientation whose primary focus is the end result of what students produce. Formal accuracy and correctness in grammar, spelling, use of vocabulary, convention of layout etc are given the utmost priority. According to Byrne (1988), the product approach of writing is an accuracy oriented approach that focuses on the control of mistakes in order to eliminate them from

written works. The writing teacher who uses the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on. In addition, Pincas (1982a) sees writing as being primarily about linguistic knowledge, with attention focused on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices. In short, product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher.

According to Silva (1990), the product approach to teaching writing skills highlights form and syntax and it emphasizes rhetorical drills. The product approach mainly focuses on the written product rather than the process the learner should undergo to produce a good written text. In this approach, writing concerns the knowledge about the structure of a language, and writing development is a result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher (Badger and White, 2000). In addition, Jordan (1997) indicates that the students are required to focus on a model, form, and duplication. In other words, the students study model texts and attempt various exercises that enable them to draw attention to relevant features of a text, and then rewrite them in their own writing.

However, there are also weaknesses associated with the use of the product-based writing. Badger and White (2000) point out that this approach gives little attention to audience and the writing purpose since learners and instructors tend to overemphasize on the importance of grammar, syntax, and mechanics. Process skills such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising are given relatively minimal role, and the knowledge and skills that learners bring to the classroom are undervalued. Thus, students may lack motivation in learning and have high pressure in creating their writing tasks, as their instructors mostly focus on the accuracy of the language structures. It is against this background that the study sought to investigate challenges students face in learning paragraph writing skills.

2.4.2 Process approach

The process approach of writing focuses on the composing process of writing instead of on the written final products. Tribble (1996) suggests that process approaches stress writing

activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through the ‘publication’ of a finished text . Encouraging students to have a sense of purpose and audience, while writing about a certain topic, is the major task of teachers who teach in line with the process approach. There are different views on the stages that students go through in producing a piece of writing, but a typical model identifies four stages: prewriting; composing/drafting; revising; and editing .Additionally this is a cyclical process in which

writers may return to pre-writing activities, for example, after doing some editing or revising. In addition, Hedge (1988:9) says that “good writers appear to go through certain processes which lead to successful pieces of written work”. He has proposed the following steps that good writers should follow in the process approach of writing. These steps are thinking, planning, drafting, and editing.

Hyland (2002) indicates that the process approach focuses on how a text is written instead of the final outcome. He adds that the process approach has a major influence on understanding the nature of writing and the way writing is taught. Therefore, the process approach emphasizes on the importance of certain procedures such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising. He points out that the process approach involves introducing techniques that help the students identify and engage in a topic. Students are required to produce multiple drafts of a work. After discussion and feedback from evaluators, the students would revise the drafts. Rewriting, revision and editing are essential parts to writing in this approach.

Furthermore he explains that when using the process-based approach to teaching academic writing, students should first brainstorm in small groups the topic to be discussed in writing; this helps them to generate ideas before starting to write. This is followed by making an outline of the essay. At this stage students also revise their first drafts and give them to other students for pre-reviewing and commenting on. The final stage is editing the essay by the writer himself or herself to eliminate any language errors. Thus, this approach focuses on process rather than product. Boughey (1997), points out that process approach is one of the best methods for teachers to use in teaching L2 writing skills. He notes that

students are able to improve their writing abilities step by step since teachers will guide them through the whole process of their writing tasks by giving them feedback and enough time and opportunity through peer and teacher review. It also helps students develop their critical thinking and learn not to depend only on teacher's feedback. Although, there are many benefits of using this method in teaching writing skills, the process-based approach has been criticized on various grounds. Badger and White (2000) argue that learners have to spend quite a long time to complete one particular piece of writing in the classroom. They also point out that this may decrease students' learning motivation and impede them from learning other types of writing. In critiquing the process approach to teaching writing, Freeman (2004) argues that it is time consuming when dealing with large classes. This is so because teachers may not have enough time to schedule individual writing conferences in large classes.

In order to alleviate the weaknesses associated with this approach, Badger and White (2000) suggest that teachers should provide learners with some examples of the text type that they have to write so as to allow them have a clear understanding about the aim and framework of a particular writing type. In addition, teachers should not spend too much time on one piece of writing in the class and should train students to develop a concept of audience by taking turns giving comments on their classmates' writing. In order to alleviate the weaknesses associated with this approach, Badger and White (2000) suggest that teachers should provide learners with some examples of the text type that they have to write so as to allow them have a clear understanding about the aim and framework of a particular writing type. In addition, teachers should not spend too much time on one piece of writing in the class and should train students to develop a concept of audience by taking turns giving comments on their classmates' writing. Therefore, it is important that language teachers should adopt this method to improve students' writing abilities.

2.5 Structure of paragraph

A paragraph is a series of sentences developing one topic. The topic of paragraph is stated in one sentence. Atopic sentence can be developed by giving detail examples and by telling an incident.

Meyers (2006a:25) & Khoury (2007:29) point out that the structure of a paragraph consists of three important elements, they are as follows:

1. The introduction: contains atopic sentence which outlines the main idea of the paragraph to which the rest of the paragraph should be focused. It must clarify ones' precise attitude towards the subject. The usual position of the topic sentence is at the beginning of the paragraph but it can sometimes occur anywhere in such unit.
2. The body: contains supporting sentences which support, explain, and develop the main idea expressed in the topic sentence by giving details, explanations, and examples. The body must be unified via relating the whole sentences to the topic sentence and to each other as well.
3. The conclusion: occurs at the end of the paragraph leaving the reader with important points to remember. It summarizes the main point of the paragraph and gives the sense of finality.

2.6 How to Organize a Paragraph

Byrne (1991) suggest the following steps of writing that teachers need to give emphasis and follow while allowing students to conduct a writing task. Writing a paragraph is one of the initial steps of the writing process that contains some procedures, so that the learners can follow these to produce a good piece of writing in various contents such as at high school.

1. **Brainstorming:** when students think carefully and organize their ideas for their paragraph

before they begin writing. It is an idea-collecting or idea-generating technique which mainly functions as an organizer of thinking and an idea collector as well as a developer. This is pre-writing activity. Richard (1992) pointed out that the more time students spend on pre- writing activities, the more successful their writing will be.

2. **Planning:** when students outline their ideas or students exchange ideas in to note form. It functions as an organizer, a planner and a classifier of the ideas gathered in the brainstorming exercise, is a very useful summarizing technique that students would love to facilitate receiving the information flow in the EFL classroom be it in the form of a long paragraph, essay, article or a long paper. It also helps establish paragraph unity (the relevance of the paragraph ideas to the main idea topic sentence), which gives the reader an introductory idea about the main topic of the paragraph.
3. **Drafting:** when students write own their ideas on paper focusing on content not mechanics. Gaber (2003) pointed out that when writing their first draft, students should not expect perfection or even work towards it. The first draft should be considered as a further means of discovering ideas and what one wants to do.
4. **Revising:** when students look at organization, main points support for main ideas, examples, and connections between ideas. Manzo and Manzo(1995) argued that revising should be viewed as a thinking process that helps students refine ideas, discover new connections and explore them more deeply in an attempt to best communicate their ideas with an audience.
5. **Editing:** when students check their paragraphs form is takes and correct them. Once students have revised their writing, they move to the editing stage so as to come up with the final version. Editing could be viewed as the process of correcting sentence structure, word choice, spelling punctuation, grammar and capitalization in a piece of writing. The confidence in them as occurs after their vision process has been completed and just prior to the publishing phase.
6. **Publishing:** when students produce a final copy of their paragraphs to hand in. This is the final stage of the writing process. In this stage, the writings that are revised and edited carefully may be published. Since writing is communication, Students should read their writings aloud to the class. This is one way of publishing students' writing.

2.7 Characteristics of paragraph

In general, in order for a paragraph to be effective, it must have three characteristics: Unity, coherency and adequate development of ideas.

2.7.1 Unity

Unity in the paragraph means oneness of idea. A paragraph must have unity; that is, its sentences must stick to the dominant ideas of the paragraph. A good paragraph possesses unity when all the sentences develop the main idea. Unity in the paragraph is achieved by the use of (1) a topic sentence with its controlling idea (2) supporting details, and (3) a clinching sentence.

2.7.2. Coherence

Unity in a paragraph is not enough, for even if all sentences relate to the topic sentence, the way in which they are related may be muddled. Sentences must cohere; that is, the thought contained in one sentence should be clearly related to the thought of the following sentence. Coherence can be regarded as a connection between utterances with discourse structure, meaning, and action being combined (Schiffrin, 1987).

Key Terms or Parallelism: Primarily, coherence rests on clear logical progression of thought from one sentence to the next. There are many ways to make a paragraph coherent. One way is to use linking words. There are many kinds of linking words: coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, prepositions, and the transitions are common types of linking words. They are words or phrases that help to link sentences to one another (Boardman and Freedenberg, 2002 in Mohammedamin Hussien). Consequently, to have a coherent paragraph, students keep unity of the paragraph, the paragraph which is expressed by the relationship between sentences in the paragraph and use different cohesive devices that are used to fix sentences together for the signal of flow of ideas in the text. Generally, producing a paragraph is combining different sentences using different cohesive devices to build the central idea which is anticipated to be delivered and summarized using concluding sentences.

2.7.3. Adequate Development

Effective paragraphs are not only unified, they are fully developed, which means that they don't leave any significant questions in readers' minds. When students are writing a paragraph, they must be sure to trace the full development of their ideas for readers so they will understand the assumptions, evidence and reasoning students used. There are three ways to ensure paragraph developed: by providing the right level of supporting detail, choosing the right kind of evidence and choosing the right pattern of development for your purpose. The controlling idea and any other subordinate ideas within a paragraph should be sufficiently explained or illustrated; Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea. Thus, an assigned topic may require certain method of development and this method of development will require the use of certain patterns. Certain methods of development require certain structures (Raimes,1983). Students should be guided in using those patterns that to be practiced.

Moreover, states that the other problem of organization in student' writing is the difficulty of differentiating a topic and supporting ideas or generalizations and specific details. Pincas (1982) has also showed that learners have the problems of writing united paragraphs because of their failure to use cohesive devices appropriately.

2.8 Causes for Students' Challenges in Paragraph Development

The writing tasks are challenging because many practical and theoretical issues are included. Writing process is a form of problem-solving which involves generating ideas, planning, goal setting, monitoring, and evaluating what has been composed (White&Arndt,1991). In fact writing is still deemed to be an arduous task for most first and foreign language learners (Ingels, 2006). Hailemariam (2011) found that students (L2writers) conform several challenges such as vocabulary selection, punctuation errors, idea generating and organizing problems, spelling errors and appropriate grammar usage in writing activities. In general term, shortage of vocabulary, idea generating and organizing problem, use of punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors with poor grammar usage are some of the problems students commonly face in developing independent and readable

texts of any type (Hailemariam 2011). From the above, it is possible to deduce that L2 students face difficulties to use appropriately all the essential features of any different genres of writings/ unless they are deliberately taught about where students can commit errors. Thus, similarly paragraph writing is a type of writing activity those learners may face the same problem it for academic purpose in developing.

2.9 Major challenges in paragraph development

2.9.1 The influence of the Mother Tongue

At Atkins et.al. (1996:50) points ; the influence of the mother tongues is one cause for writing – in general denotes: when students want to write something unknowingly they use grammatical structure and other elements of their first language in English writing. This creates misunderstanding of the newly writing and hinders the smooth flow of the idea that the writer want to convey.

2.9.2 Lack of practices

Weiner (1984) Argued “... writing is learned through practices” if students do not practice different activities in English, they may face difficult in writing. But when students accomplish different tasks in English, they develop their vocabulary which helps them to express and describe their idea and interest in different way by using English freely.

Writing is a complex process because it requires the mastery of grammatical devices, conceptual thinking and judgmental (have purpose and activating) elements (Byrne 1988). In addition he classifies the writing complexities into psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems. Grabe and Kaplan (1996:6) think that since writing does not come naturally but rather gained through continuous effort and much practice, it becomes a complex skill. Norish (1993) states the following about the complexity of writing.

“ In written medium, information has to be transmitted without any aid from sources other than the language itself. It seems to follow from this that more attention is needed to be paid to the language as a code in short to the grammatical and lexical system than is the case with speech. (p. 65). ”

Bell and Burnaby (1984) cited in Nunan (1989: 36) write the following concerning the difficulty of writing:

“ Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and letter for action. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.”

Time / state of the students /

This means while students tired, hurrying out just not concentrating well they make many problems. So, time of the state their writing has cause on paragraph writing. Because of this teacher should give enough time to write and rewrite for their students when they write in English. Hedge (1988: 11) states that the idea of time needs to be given attention because writing activities by nature have different stages which need ample time. Learners need time for gathering ideas, organizing their ideas, writing drafts, proof reading and re-writing.

Similarly, Raimes (1983: 25) thinks that time is a crucial element in the writing process and an element that distinguishes writing from speaking. Time may also be a key factor in producing a text with full of control over organization and coherence. In addition, many students and teachers feel that writing under time pressure is a very unnatural situation and perhaps cannot lead them to produce compositions that are truly representative of their capabilities .

Pervious learning- teaching styles

Abu Rass (2001:30) Notes”, writing has been taught for many years as a product rather than process. Therefore, teacher emphasizes grammar and punctuation rather than decisions about the context and organization of ideas.” This autorotation show s traditional learning- teaching styles of witting ignores process of writing which help us to overcome the difficulty in writing.

The causes of the problems are not only the one which decreased above but also the following may be the causes. For example, interest of the learner in writing and carelessness may be the causes of these problems.

2.9.3. Problem of Writing Apprehension

Apprehension is the feeling of being worry about something. With regard to writing, it can be defined as the fear of writing process that out weights the projected gain from ability to write MacIntyre (1989). Learners could be affected with the understanding of the fact that writing anxiety clearly and negatively affects their writing performance Pajares (1994). This is to mean that when students are given a writing activity they begin worrying about writing a paragraph as psychological rather than assuming it as logistical. This indicates that writing anxiety is distinctive to productive language particularly of writing Horwitz et.al(1986). From the above context Scholars have become more sensitive to writing anxiety and target language relation has recently captured more attention.

2.9.4 Carelessness

Because of a variety of reason, EFL/ESL learners may sometimes become careless in writing or speaking in target language (Norrish,1983 and Edge,1989) .According to Norrish ,carelessness may happen as a result of lack of motivation. This lack of motivation, on its part, may occur when the materials to be taught and the way these materials are presented do not suit the learners

2.9.5 Lack of Appropriate Feedback

Students gain benefits from sufficient writing practice and revisions on their drafts to produce a final piece of writing. In these processes, students often rely on feedback either from a teacher, peer or self. Feedback that students receive from a source or a combination of sources provides them within formation about what is good and what needs to be improved so that they can in corporate and use the feedback in their revisions and in the final product of their writing. Most EFL/ESL writing teachers would strongly agree with the statement that teacher correction feedback is a necessary part of any writing activity .Feedback on student writing can make learning more effective, as noted by Cordelle and

Corno(1981), the more feedback students receive of their performance the better they understand what they need to do to correct their mistakes. Accordingly, the method of feedback provision could also be other factor that affects their achievement in writing good paragraph. A feedback provided for students is not creative because it doesn't inform them what they are expected to improve and how to formulate these improvement William, (2007).Black and William (1998) elucidate that students can make gains in their learning when a given feedback is focused on the specific problems of the students' work and demonstrate at them the errors with its way of correction. Similarly, Zamel (1985: 79) states that teacher's feedback can be effective if teachers respond to students writing as genuine and interested readers rather than as judges and evaluators. Similarly, Byrne (1988:29) thinks that if we are to be truly readers rather than judges, we should perhaps look not so much at what the learners have failed to achieve but rather at what they actually succeeded in doing. This might help students writers to appreciate receiving comments and use them in their revisions. Ferris (1995:49) thinks that teachers should not abandon constructive criticisms but should place it side by side with comments of encouragements.

2.9.6 Inadequate Exposure to the Target Language

The target language is admitted that many students do not have good access or conducive environment to practice their English outside the classroom, especially both in writing and speaking. Therefore, there are no opportunities for students to practice and develop English. Because of this very weak student come to the high schools, with most of them are not anywhere hear to do anything with English at all level (Alemu,2004 and Awol,1999).When students have limited exposure to the language learnt, there will be a big possibility for them to commit errors in their language.

2.9.7 Lack of Vocabulary

In order to write quality paragraphs (essays), students' lexical knowledge or vocabulary is also, vitally important. Words carry meanings and help students communicate with their readers effectively. Lack of words usually creates a breakdown in communication. Researcher like Putra (2009) asserted that students' vocabulary knowledge and writing

performance correlate significantly. As he agrees, vocabulary knowledge alone, however, cannot end in accurate and effective writing. Communication demands the use of words in sentences; that is, the need for grammatical knowledge is also unquestionable

A good paragraph or composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabularies used along with proper grammar and varied range of sentence structures (Norish, 1983). when the writer practices the choice of vocabulary that would reflect a concern for the reader and the purpose of writing, the composition written by the student would become sensible to his/her reader. However, writing in a second language using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students

2.10 Ways of Minimizing Problems Students face in writing paragraph

As try to mention above, writing is a process. To improve their writing students should practice writing always by applying process of writing. Minimization of problems students face in writing paragraph requires both teachers and students endeavor. (Atknis et. al, 1996) explains teachers develop student effectiveness by giving planned activities which focus on developing writing and reinforce grammar and vocabulary. The activities should be interesting motivating to do, contextualized clearly, purpose full and help students to express their own ideas meaningfully. In this case we observe that teachers have responsibility to identify the types and the importance of the texts that they bring for students by considering the ability of the students and motivate, and encourage them to write in a different way. (Atkins et.al., 1996) pointed out that in a piece of writing: communication of ideas must be primarily. From this question, we understand in writing more emphasis should be given to the message that the writer wants to convey rather than grammatical.

CHAPTER THREE

3 .RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods, research designs, the participants of the study, instruments of data gathering, and procedures of data collection and analysis that were used in the research. These contents were further discussed one by one in the next section using simple and clear languages as much as possible.

3.1 Design of the Study

Descriptive survey design was used in this study. Because, according to Kumar (1996), descriptive method attempts to describe a situation and phenomena under a study systematically. The researcher of this study also aims to study and systematically describe the major challenges of the students in the aforementioned school.

3.2. Research Method

In order to successfully achieve the objective of the study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Because Angell and Townsend(2011), state that using mixed research method provides more evidence for studying a problem than using either quantitative or qualitative method alone. This means, the researcher preferred to use this method since it is a better procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data (S.Fischer. Nod, 2008).

3.3 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Gedo high School (grade 9), which is found in Oromia Region, west shwoa zone, chelia district in academic year 2017. Chelia District is located at 67km distance of the District capital (Gedo) from zonal capital (Ambo). The District capital from regional capital (Finfine) is 192km south of Finfine. The District bounded by Liban Jawi District in east , Midakegn District in north, Ilugalan District in west and Dano District in south. Gedo town has two kebeles, 01 and 02. Gedo high school is found in 01 Kebele. .

3.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The subjects of the study were grade 9 students. There are 318 males and 322 females, totally 640 students of grade 9 in eight sections of the school. From these students, the researcher took only 64(10%) only from four sections as the sample of the study using simple random sampling. Accordingly, 14, 15, 17 and 18 students were selected from section A, B, C, and D which have 78, 79, 80, and 81 number of students respectively. These sections were also selected randomly.

3.5. Data Gathering Instruments

To obtain adequate data for this study, the researcher used the following data gathering instruments: questionnaire, classroom observation and focus group discussion. These tools have been separately as follows.

3.5.1. Class Observation

The data gathering tool used in this study was class observation. Morrison (2000, p.33) says that observations are useful tools for providing direct data about language and language learning, and it is the best data collecting technique for gaining insight into the subject in a natural environment. The researcher observed 6(six) writing lessons using the checklist which was adapted from Mohammedamin Hussein (2015). This was to observe the way English teachers encouraged their students when they teach paragraph writing lessons or how students were helped while they were practicing paragraph writing so as to overcome paragraph writing problems. In addition, what were the teachers' focus areas in teaching paragraph writing and giving feedback on other writing tasks. During the classroom observations, the researcher used quantitative data in the form of observation check list made by the researcher herself.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is one of the tools the researcher used to collect data from sixty-four (64) students selected as respondents. The researcher used this tool because as Best and Kahan (1989), a questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large groups of individuals

within a short period of time and is easy to administer it to a large number of subjects in one place at one time. Likewise, it is free from bias as the respondents respond to the questions using his/her own. They were prepared in English and were piloted before being administered to the students in the main study.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion

According Morgan (1988:9) Focus groups are a form of group interview through not in the sense of aback wards and for Wards between interviewers of group Rather, the reliance is on the interaction within the group who discuss topic supplied by the researcher, focus groups are Contrived setting, bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular given theme or topic, where the interaction with the group leads to data and Outcome. Focus group might be useful to triangulate with more traditional forms for interviewing questionnaires and observation. In the school, the English teachers were asked to attend structured focus group meeting. The teachers were co-operative enough to spend their time with me as a result, of which considerably important data was gathered. The results of the discussion are significant to maintain their reliability of the findings.

3.6 Method of Analysis

The data obtained through the questionnaires were organized under similar category and analyzed quantitatively. The study employed a mixed method design which includes both qualitative and quantitative research method. According to Creswell (2007) mixed method is an approach to inquiry that combines or associate both qualitative and quantitative forms. This means, the data obtained through classroom observation and questionnaire were and analyzed quantitatively by using tabular method and frequency. But the data gained through focus group discussion analyzed qualitatively.

3.7 Procedure of Data Collection

In this study, data were collected through classroom observation, close-ended questionnaire for students, and focus group discussion for English teachers. All sample subjects of Grade 9 students and English teachers were identified. The researchers did not administer all data gathering tools at the same time. First classroom observation was made and English teachers and observation students were observed during paragraph writing lessons. Administering questionnaire as the second phase took place right after gathering data through classroom observation. The researcher distributed close-ended questionnaires to sample grade 9 students. Finally, focus group discussion engaged for five teachers as a group. Moreover, the problems which were presented using these tools were identified and results were collected.

3.8 procedure of Data Analysis

The necessary data for the research and analyzed in the following procedures. The subjects were grouped in to two based on their role in a language teaching and learning classes. Then, brief orientation was given about the given title, ‘challenges of paragraph development’ and about the purpose of the research was explined. Besides, the researcher availed herself to clarify any possible inquiry the students might raise. After all the necessary data were collected from the research subjects, the data generated from the classroom observation and the questionnaires were tallied and frequency and percentage were calculated. But the data obtained from focus group discussion was analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

This chapter presents presentation and discussion of data obtained from class observation, teachers' questionnaire and focus group discussion. Accordingly, questions which have similar purposes were grouped under the same theme in the following tables.

Table 4. 1: Checklist Class room Observation on Writing Lessons

No	Items	Alternatives					
		Yes		No		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Paragraph lessons are presented well in the class	2	33.33%	4	66.66%	6	100%
2	Students actively practice paragraph writing given to them by their teacher.	2	33.33%	4	66.66%	6	100%
3	Teachers strongly encourage students exercise developing paragraph.	1	16.67%	5	83.33%	6	100%
4	Students participate actively in all writing tasks provided by their teachers.	1	16.67%	5	83.33%	6	100%
5	Students finish writing paragraph before the completion of the period?	0	0%	0	100%	6	100%
6	Majority of the students feel confident in writing paragraph given to them.	2	33.33%	4	66.67%	6	100%
7	The students produce effective paragraph.	0	0%	6	100%	6	100%
8	Majority of the students have interest to practice writing paragraph.	1	16.67%	5	83.33%	6	100%
9	Teachers give feedback to every aspect of the students' writing.	2	33.33%	4	66.67%	6	100

This table shows varieties of things related to challenges of grade 9 students of Gedo high school in paragraph writing. Thus, the researcher discusses the data obtained from English classroom observations done for six different periods.

Accordingly, 66.67% of the class observation reveals that paragraph lessons are not presented well in English class. Similarly, the same percent of the observation classes 66.67% shows that the students did not actively practice paragraph writing given to them by their English teachers. On the other hand, 83.33% Of these observations indicate grade 9 English teachers of the school do not strongly encourage their students to exercise developing paragraph. This implies that the teachers' activities are not initiative. In the same way, 83.33% of the observed class depicts that the students do not actively in writing

tasks. This is likely related to teachers' ways of presenting paragraph lessons and activities. 100% of the observations show that none of the students finish their paragraph writing tasks before the completion of the period. This in other hand reflects that the students have difficulties in paragraph writing. If they hadn't difficulties, they could complete it in the given time. The observation also indicates that majority of the students do not feel confident when they practice writing paragraph. This is confirmed from 66.67% of the observation classes. 100% of the class observations also show that none of the students can produce effective paragraph. 83.33% of the observations in other hand reveal majority of the students do not have interest to practice writing paragraph. This is probably due to their fear of the challenges in writing paragraph. Moreover, 66.67% of the observed classes show EFL teachers of the school do not give feedback to every aspect of the students' paragraph writing.

4.2. Presentation and Discussion of Data obtained from Students'

Table 4. 2: Questionnaire on their Major Challenges in writing Paragraph

No	Statements	Alternatives									
		Strongly Agree =5		Agree=4		Undecided =3		Disagree =2		Strong disagree=1	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	There are some difficulties in developing paragraph that are related to lack of techniques of writing and others.	30	46.88 %	21	38.81 %	0	0%	5	7.81 %	8	12.50 %
2	Some challenges like inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building may hinder writing well organized paragraph.	28	43.75 %	27	42.19 %	0	0%	3	4.68 %	6	9.34%
3	Incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places may affect your organizing ability in paragraph writing activities.	29	45.31 %	25	39.06 %	0	0%	5	7.81%	5	7.81%
5	Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling and Capitalization are some of the problem areas in writing a paragraph.	40	62.5%	24	37.5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

6	Using inappropriate English language features are possible factors that hinders (impedes) the writing of well-developed paragraph.	30	46.88 %	26	40.62 %	1	1.56 %	4	6.25%	3	4.69%
7	The teachers' emphasis inspiration to sort out the problems and guide the students in constructive sense is crucial while correcting/assessing their paragraph.	31	48.43 %	20	31.25 %	2	3.12 %	5	7.81%	6	9.34%
8	Teachers and students should some strategies to overcome paragraph development problems in English language.	22	34.38 %	21	32.81 %	5	7.81 %	7	10.94 %	9	14.10 %
9	Teachers do not play a decisive role in helping students develop paragraph writing skill.	33	51.57 %	22	34.38 %	2	3.13 %	4	6.25%	3	4.69%

The above table contains major challenges that grade 9 students of Gedo high school may face in writing paragraph. The researcher presented the result of the data obtained from the students' questionnaire as follows. Accordingly, 46.88% of the students strongly agree that there are some difficulties in developing paragraph that are related to lack of techniques of writing and others. In other hand, 38.81% of the students agree that these difficulties exist in paragraph writing. On the other hand, majority of the students (43.75%) strongly said inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building are some of the major challenges that may hinder them to write well organized paragraph.

42.19% also agree these challenges are common to them in writing effective paragraph. Only 10.93% of these students disagree saying that these are not problems which affect their paragraph writing. Similarly, 9.34% of the students strongly disagree as these problems do not affect their paragraph writing. From this, it is likely to say that the students face the above 10.93% mentioned problems in their writing paragraph. In the same way, majority of the students (45.31%) strongly stated that incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places may affect their organizing ability in paragraph writing activities. Likewise, 39.06% also agree that this problem is the major factor affecting their paragraph writing. In other hand, 7.81% of the respondents strongly disagree that the above indicated factors do not affect their paragraph writing. In the same way, 6.25% disagree saying these problems have no effect on their paragraph development. None of them replied saying “undecided.” This means, they are able to decide whether these factors affect their writing paragraph or not.

This table also shows that 62.5% the students strongly argue wrong usage of grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization are some of the problem areas in writing a paragraph. 37.5% of them also agree up on what is said by the above 62.5% of the students. In other hand, 1.56% of them fail to decide whether these problems really affect their paragraph writing or not. None of them disagree or strongly disagree by saying these factors do not have negative impact on their paragraph development. The same table shows that 46.88% of the students strongly said using inappropriate English language features are also factors that hinders (impedes) the writing of well-developed paragraph. 37.5% of them on the other hand, agree that these problems actually impede their paragraph writing. There is no student who strongly or normally agrees as the problems are potential factors to their paragraph development.

Teachers’ emphasis inspiration to sort out the problems and guide the students in constructive sense is crucial while correcting/assessing their paragraph. But, 48.43% of the students strongly said that their teachers do not make it. 31.25 also agreed on this problem in the same way. In other hand, 34.38% and 32.81% of the students strongly agree and agree that teachers and students should some strategies to overcome paragraph development problems in English language. But, 7.81% of them said it is undecided

whether English teachers and grade 9 students of Gedo high school should some strategies to overcome paragraph development problems in English language. 10.94% of them disagree that them should not bother to do it. In other hand, 51.57% of them strongly replied as the teachers do not play a decisive role in helping students develop paragraph writing skill. 34.38% of the students also agree up on this problem in the same way 51.57% of the students said above. Teachers are expected to play decisive role in helping students develop effective paragraph. However, English teachers of Gedo high school contribute less in students' effective paragraph production. As indicated in the table above, 51.57% of the students strongly said the teachers do not play significant role in helping the students to produce correct paragraph in English. 34.38% of them in other hand also agree that these teachers actually commit this problem. Only less number of the students accounted for 6.25% and 4.69% strongly and normally disagree saying the teachers are free from this problem. Since majority of the students strongly agreed that the problem really refers to the teachers, it is likely to say that the teacher's less effort in helping their students while developing paragraph is one of the major challenge of grade 9 students of Gedo high school students in paragraph writing.

4.3. Presentation and Discussion of Data obtained from Students'

Table 4. 3: Questionnaire on their Teachers' Mechanism of Paragraph Writing

	Items	Alternatives					
		Yes		No		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
10	Does your teacher teach you how to write effective paragraph?	15	23.43%	49	76.56%	64	100%
11	Can you identify common mistakes when writing sentences in paragraph?	10	15.63%	54	84.34%	64	100%
12	Do the writing tasks in the text book give you enough experience to improve your paragraph writing?	21	32.81%	43	67.19%	64	100%
13	Can you write effective paragraph which is clear and readable to readers?	16	25%	48	75%	64	100%
14	Does your English teacher usually give you paragraph writing assignments?	12	18.75%	52	81.25%	64	100%
15	In your school do you have English club that motivate you to express your idea or feeling in writing?	0	0%	64	100%	64	100%
16	Does your English teacher help you while you write a paragraph?	15	23.43%	49	76.56%	64	100%
17	Do you practice writing on your own outside the classroom?	14	21.87%	50	78.12%	64	100%
18	Are you interested in writing lesson?	16	25%	48	75%	64	100%

The above table presents presentation and discussion of data obtained from students' questionnaire on their teachers' mechanism of paragraph writing. Thus, the researcher provided the results of these data as follows. In teaching language, it is better to teach students how to learn or perform something rather than teaching them the contents. Accordingly, most of the students, 76.56% of them replied that their teacher does not teach them how to write effective paragraph. As to the respondents, their EFL simply teaches the contents of writing to them by themselves. As the result of this, 84.34% of these students stated as they cannot identify common mistakes when writing sentences in paragraph. 67.19% of them said the writing tasks in the text book of the students do not give them enough experience to improve their paragraph writing. Furthermore, 75% of them replied as they cannot write effective paragraph which is clear and readable to their readers. Only 25% of them said they can write effective paragraph.

Giving usual writing tasks to students is another possible mechanism practiced by an effective teacher. But, 81.25% of the students stated that their EFL teacher does not usually give them writing assignments to his students. This means that there is no regular paragraph writing exercises habits in grade nine in the school. 100% of the students in other hand said there is no English club that motivate them to express their idea or feeling in writing in their school. Thus, this is another considerable factor that affects the students' paragraph development in their school. Students' practice of writing outside of the class is also one the ways students can overcome the problems in paragraph writing. However, most of grade 9 students in Gedo high school, which are about 78.12%, said they do not practice writing paragraph outside the school. So, this is another problem that challenges the students not to develop their paragraph writing in depth. If they regularly practice it both in the school and outside the school, the students are likely to improve their paragraph writing as expected. Further, students' interest towards practicing writing plays central role in the students' paragraph development. But, majority of the students, 75% of them do not have interest towards practicing writing paragraph. Thus, it one of the potential factors grade 9 students of the school faces in paragraph writing.

4.4 Presentation and Discussion of Data obtained from Students'

Table 4. 4: Questionnaire on the problems of paragraph writing

No	Items	Alternatives	Responses	
			F	%
19	What are the major challenges you face in paragraph writing?	Inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building	3	4.69%
		Incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places	2	3.13%
		Using inappropriate grammar	3	4.69%
		Using inappropriate Punctuation mark	5	7.81%
		Using inappropriate Spelling	5	7.81%
		Using inappropriate Capitalization	4	6.25%
		All	42	65.62%
		None	0	0%
20	What do you think the causes of your difficulties in paragraph writing?	Lack of guidance from teacher	6	9.34%
		Lack of enough practice	8	12.5%
		Background knowledge	5	7.81%
		All	45	70.31%
		None	0	0%
21	What does the teacher emphasize more in teaching and learning process in the classes?	Vocabulary	10	15.62%
		Grammar	14	21.88%
		Listening	9	14.06%
		Speaking	10	15.62%
		Reading	13	20.31%
		Writing	8	12%

From the table above, 4.69% and 3.13% of the students respectively said that inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places are the major challenges in their paragraph writing. Another, 4.69% of them said using inappropriate grammar is one of the problems in writing paragraph. Likewise, 7.81% of the respondents using inappropriate punctuation mark is also another problem. In addition, another 7.81% and 6.25% respectively said that using inappropriate spelling and capitalization are in the same way the core problems in paragraph writing. Lastly, majority of the students (65.62%) said that all of the problems mentioned above are the common potential factors affecting their paragraph writing in English class.

In other hand, table 4.4 above shows the students used as sample respondents were asked what do they think the causes of their difficulties in paragraph writing. Then, they replied to the question differently. Accordingly, 9.34% of the students replied that lack of guidance from teachers is the causes of difficulties in their paragraph writing. Similarly, 12.5% of them said lack of making enough practice is another potential cause of these problems. 7.81% of them in other hand responded that their background knowledge is also another cause. Moreover, majority of the students (70.31%) replied to the question saying “All.” This means, lack of guidance from the teachers, lack of making enough practice, and back ground Knowledge are the major challenges grade 9 students of Gedo high school face in paragraph writing.

4.5. Presentation and Discussions of Data Obtained from Teachers’ Focus Group Discussions

- What is your overall assessment about your students’ major challenge in paragraph development?
- What types problems they have in developing paragraph?
- How about the students’ are organizing ability in their paragraph writing activities? Can they organize their ideas using appropriate cohesive devices at appropriate place?

-What sort of difficulties your students face in writing unified and well developed paragraph?

-What do you think are causes for the students' paragraph developing problems in English? Can you list out the possible factors that may impede them to use appropriate English language features to develop paragraph?

To respond to question number one above, "What is your overall assessment about your students' major challenge in paragraph development?" three of the respondents said students are not willing to engage themselves in writing. As they writing takes place when students have strong desire to practice to write correct sentences to develop effective paragraph with their components. Three of these respondents explained this problem as follows:

Majority of our school students have serious grammatical problems in paragraph writing. They commonly commit grammatical errors such as wrong usage of tenses, using comma in place of full stop, wrong usage of pronoun, using active voice with intention of using active voice, wrong usage of punctuation marks, capitalization and the like. In other hand, these students learn grammar only as end process than productive process. This on other hand can affect them in their paragraph development skills.

From the above discussion, the researcher could say that the students' paragraph loses the quality of paragraph development such as unity, organization, and coherence due to the above indicated problems. In addition, the teachers' ways of giving feedback to the students' written work is ineffective as implied from their discussion. They thought as teaching is a matter of delivering the lesson of a day to students rather than evaluating and giving appropriate feed back to the students' work. Regarding this issue, Harmer(2006b)says "correcting is important and decisive activity of teacher in teaching learning process, but it can be time consuming..."Similarly ,Mi(2009) outlines that students experience through peer review gives valuable opportunities to improve their reading and

writing ability as they discuss issues as writing contents ,organizational patters, grammatical structures and appropriate word choice.

Finally, the feedback provided for the students focused on sentence structure and sometimes on spelling. In this way, teachers' ways of giving feedback can affect their students' paragraph development. All of the discussants said free writing takes place in a real-life situation and teachers expected to consider it in teaching writing to their students and train them to write freely coming through different stages of it. But, data obtained from this part of discussion confirms that all teachers teach writing paragraph without giving excess amount time to their students for sufficient practices even though writing is the most complex skill of language which requires enough time to practice.

In short, these respondents suggested that their students' problems in paragraph writing arise from the following potential sources:

Students' Living Condition

As to the respondents, this problem is less or more related to low economic status of most of their students. Accordingly, two of the respondents said:

Majority of our students are from the families of lowest economic background. So, most of the students have no excess time after school to repeatedly practice to write varieties of paragraph except in their writing lessons. Because, majority of them help their parents in field work as their families make their life from farming. Others of them on the other hand, run their life by themselves as they do have someone to help them. Therefore, they use their afterschool time for extra works by which they lead their life.

In support of these suggestions, other respondents also said that there are students who even do not afford to eat lunch

Students' Background and the Free Promotion

This is related to the students' prior knowledge on writing English as Foreign Language. This means, majority of the primary school students come to high school level education without having matured skills of English writing. Accordingly, four of the respondents said that assessing writing is very difficult for them because of students' poor back ground knowledge and lack of interest towards writing skills. As to these respondents, the students usually commit grammatical problems such as adding irrelevant ideas, omitting of the important points, using passive voice in place of using active voice, using wrong punctuation marks, using wrong spelling and the others. Due to these problems, the students cannot produce meaningful sentences which lead to producing meaningful paragraph. In other hand, the current Ethiopian General Secondary School Leaving Certificate does not include writing activities as part of the exam. Thus, both grade 10 and 12 students of the country simply take only choice part. As the result, the rate for their passing to the next class or level of education is high. In addition, now a day, Ethiopian Ministry of Education follows free promotion policy. Therefore, having known this the students do not want to waste their time on practicing writing.

Teachers Lack of Training

Teachers' training on writing skills also matters in students' paragraph development skills. It is obvious that every writing comes through three stages of writing: Pre-writing, while-writing, and Post-writing. Accordingly, the respondents as EFL teachers said they do not have any other writing training than what they have already in their degree programmed writing courses. No another writing was ever given to them either by govern organizations or NGO'S. Therefore, this can also affect the students' effective paragraph development since teachers can better teach their students if they update themselves through repetitive training.

Lack of writing materials

Preparing extra materials are important for teaching English writing skills to the students. However, there is no specially prepared material to writing to the students at the school as all of the teachers said. They said they teach writing from the usual students 'text book. So, this is one of the causes for the students' poor paragraph writing. With regard to the comment on the text book, two of the respondents raised an important Point which all others also agreed up on that the book should have given them instruction to perform different activities. If the book has an instructional part to let students write freely and developing paragraph they would have made students do so even though they don't have that sort of training. As to the sample teachers for this discussion text book has its central role in writing paragraph effectively in guiding them what and how teach writing skills to their students.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMERY, CONCLUSUON, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents summery, conclusion, and recommendations of the study using simple and clear languages as much as possible. Accordingly, these elements were orderly put and presented as follow:

5.1. Summery

The main objective of the study is to assess the major challenges of 9th grade students of Gedo high school in paragraph writing. In order to achieve the objective of this study the researcher employed a descriptive research method, because, it is better for describing a phenomenon under a study in a systematic way (Kumar, 1996). Furthermore, the researcher used classroom observation, questionnaire, and focus group discussion for collecting the desired data for the study.

Accordingly, the result of the study indicates that grade 9 students of Gedo high school face different major challenges in paragraph writing due to different reasons. Among them inability to use appropriate techniques of writing, inability to construct correct English sentences, insufficient vocabulary building, inability to use appropriate cohesive devise, fail to use correct grammar, punctuation marks, spelling, tenses, active and passive voice, and capitalization, are the major ones. Besides, the result of the study show that teachers' fail to help their students in paragraph writing, the text books' insufficiency to provide the students with enough writing tasks, teachers' reluctance in giving regular writing assignments to the students, students' lack of practice on writing paragraph outside of the classroom, students' background problem, teachers 'giving less emphasis on paragraph writing lessons, students' poor living condition, free promotion policy of Ethiopian education, teachers' lack of training on writing skills, and shortages of writing materials are some of the major causes for the students' challenges in paragraph writing in Gedo high school.

5.2. Conclusion

The study aims to point out the major challenges of grade 9 students of Gedo high school in paragraph writing. Depending on the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

- ✓ Majority of grade 9 students of the school are extremely poor in writing well cohered, united, and completed paragraph due to different reasons.
- ✓ Majority of them fail to produce correct English sentences as they can't sufficiently use appropriate tense, words, voices, spellings, techniques of writing, nouns, pronouns, subject- verb agreement, cohesive devices, punctuation marks, and etc.
- ✓ The students' lack of making enough practice on writing paragraph outside the classroom, teachers' lack of making sufficient assistance for the students, teachers' less emphasis on writing lessons, insufficient writing tasks in the students' text books, students' low living condition, teachers' lack of enough training on writing, lack of enough writing materials, and free promotion policy of Ethiopian Education are among the major causes of the students' major challenges in writing paragraph.
- ✓ The factors for the students' challenges in paragraph development in the Gedo high school are both human and non-human. Human factors include: teachers, students, and non-human factors include text book, students' living condition, writing materials, Policy of education, etc.

5.3 Recommendation

Based up on the finding of the study the researcher made to forward the following recommendations:

- ✓ The target teachers should encourage and support the students to write effective paragraph.
- ✓ The teachers should give special attention to teach how to write quality paragraph to the students.
- ✓ Teachers should give enough writing activities supported by related guidelines and regularly give appropriate feedback to the students.

- ✓ Teachers should give enough guidance for the students on how to overcome the challenges in paragraph writing.
- ✓ Teachers should give enough times for the students to practice writing paragraph and give them feedback.
- ✓ Teachers should motivate their students to actively engage in writing paragraph by creating their own mechanisms.
- ✓ The students should make regular enough practice on writing paragraph to overcome their current challenge.
- ✓ The school should make special support for economically poor students in searching special fund either from government or NGOS or both,
- ✓ Government should minimize the free promotion policy which may contribute in students' carelessness in working hard specially on writing tasks. Now day students know that they can easily pass to the next grade level with little effort due to the free promotion policy of Ethiopian Ministry of Education.
- ✓ The target teachers should be given timely enough training on better ways of teaching writing skill to their students.
- ✓ The English teachers in cooperation with the school should prepare extra writing materials in line with their text book. Because, the way the contents of writing presented in the students' text book may not be clear enough as there may be mismatch between the students' current understanding and curriculum designing.

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Appendices

APPENDIX- A

Classroom Observations Checklist to be filled by the researcher

The purpose of this study is collect data on the major challenges that grade 9 students of Gedo high school may face in paragraph writing. Therefore, the researcher made four class observations using the following checklist to gather the desired data for the study according to the following.

I Class room Observation on Paragraph Lessons

No	Items	Class observed	Alternative	
			Yes	No
1	Paragraph lessons are presented well in the class.	First Observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth Observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
2	Students actively practice paragraph writing give to them by their teacher.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
3	Teachers strongly encourage students exercise developing paragraph.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
4	Students participate actively in all writing tasks provided by their teachers.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		

5	Students finish writing paragraph before the completion of the period?	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
6	Majority of the students feel confident in writing paragraph given to them.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
7	The students produce effective paragraph.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
8	Majority of the students have interest to practice writing paragraph.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		
9	Teachers give feedback to every aspect of the students' writing.	First observation		
		Second observation		
		Third observation		
		Fourth observation		
		Fifth observation		
		Sixth observation		

APPENDIX-B

Adama Science and Technology University

School Of Graduate Studies

Department of English

Dear Students,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather the relevant on the major challenges you may face in writing paragraph. Your response to each and every question plays central roles in the successful completion of the study. Therefore, please, read all the questions and give your own genuine responses to them to validate the result of the study. Be sure that these questions are never used for any other purposes than for academic. Thus, feel free regarding your responses to the questions.

Direction: Please, make tick mark ($\sqrt{\quad}$) under the appropriate alternatives:

Strongly agree

Agree

Undecided

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Thank you for your corporation!

II. Questionnaire for Students on the Major Challenges they may face in paragraph writing

No	Statements	Alternatives				
		Strongly Agree =5	Agree=4	Undecided =3	Disagree =2	Strongly disagree=1
1	There are some difficulties in developing paragraph that are related to lack of techniques of writing and others.					
2	Some challenges like inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building may hinder writing well organized paragraph.					
3	Incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places may affect your organizing ability in paragraph writing activities.					
5	Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling and Capitalization are some of the problem areas in writing a paragraph.					

6	Using inappropriate English language features are possible factors that hinders (impedes) the writing of well-developed paragraph.					
7	The teachers' emphasis inspiration to sort out the problems and guide the students in constructive sense is crucial while correcting/assessing their paragraph.					
8	Teachers and students should some strategies to overcome paragraph development problems in English language.					
9	Teachers do not play a decisive role in helping students develop paragraph writing skill.					

III. English Teachers' Mechanism of Paragraph Writing

Direction: Choose the items that you think are correct by circling to the letter containing the item for the following questions.

10. Does your teacher teach you how to write effective paragraph?

Yes

No

11. Can you identify common mistakes when writing sentences in paragraph?

Yes

No

12. Do the writing tasks in the text book give you enough experience to improve your paragraph writing?

Yes

No

13. Can you write effective paragraph which is clear and readable to readers?

Yes

No

14. Does your English teacher usually give you paragraph writing assignments

Yes

No

15. In your school do you have English club that motivate you to express your idea or feeling in writing?

Yes

No

16. Does your English teacher help you while you write a paragraph?

Yes

No

17. Do you practice writing on your own outside the classroom?

Yes

No

18. Are you interested in writing lessons?

Yes

No

IV. Major problems of students in paragraph writing

Direction: The followings are statements related to major challenges of students in paragraph development. Thus, choose the item you think is right for each of the question by circling the letter of the item.

19. What are the major challenges you face in paragraph writing?

- A. Inability of constructing sentences and insufficient vocabulary building
- B. Using inappropriate Punctuation mark
- C. Using inappropriate Spelling
- D. Incapability of using appropriate cohesive devices at their appropriate places
- E. Using inappropriate Capitalization
- Using inappropriate grammar
- G. All

20. What do you think the causes of your difficulties in paragraph writing?

- A. Lack of guidance from teacher
- B. Lack of enough practice
- C. Background knowledge
- D. All

21. What does the teacher emphasize more in teaching and learning process in the classes?

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| A. Vocabulary | B. Grammar | C. Listening | D. Speaking |
| E. Reading | F. Writing | G. All | |

V. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR TEACHERS

Focus group discussions are conducted with groups of five to seven individuals. With groups larger than this, it is unlikely that all will contribute to the discussion. The purpose of the focus group discussion is to get a quick understanding of the key issue.

22. what is your overall assessment about your students' major challenges in paragraph development?

23. What types of problems do they have in developing paragraph? Would you specify the nature their problems categorically?

24. What sort of difficulties your students face in writing unified and well developed paragraph?

25. What are causes for the students' paragraph developing problems in English? Can you list out the possible factors that may impede them to use appropriate English language features to develop paragraph?

26 .What strategies do you use to overcome the students' paragraph developing problem in English languages?