



Full Length Research Paper

Difficulties facing tenth grade students at Irbid 1st directorate of education in learning English writing skill from their teachers' perspectives

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This study aimed at investigating the difficulties facing tenth grade students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in learning writing skill from their teachers' perspectives; it aims also to investigate the effect of teachers' gender, academic qualification, and experience on their perspectives. The sample of the study was selected purposefully. It consisted of (94) teachers, (32) male and (92) female teachers at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education. This sample was used to measure the difficulties facing students in writing skill and a questionnaire was distributed among them. The findings of the study indicated that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in teachers' perspectives about the difficulties facing students in writing skill due to Gender variable. Results also showed that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in teachers' perspectives due to qualification variable in favor of Master Degree, there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) due to experience variable. To find out Multiple Comparisons differences post hoc test using Scheffe Method was conducted, results showed that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) between Less than 5 years and 10 years or above in favor of 10 years or above.

Key words: Writing skill, action pack, difficulties in writing skill

INTRODUCTION

Learning writing in a foreign language especially English is extremely difficult specifically for Arab learners of English, since Arabic and English languages are from different language families. Zamel(1983) points out that the process of writing in English is nonlinear, exploratory, and generative in nature, since writers try to discover and generate ideas as well as they attempt to approximate the appropriate meaning. This process also involves sub-processes such as drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. Writing is generally regarded as a difficult skill and a complex task (Graham, Harris and Mason, 2005). Some refer this to the complex nature of writing skill, Wall (1981) claimed that its complexity range from automated control to inspiration, with a good structure of course, information about the subject matter, awareness of technical settlements and numerous enigmatic factors in

between. It is through writing that writers discover ideas and thoughts, and make them observable and real. Writing skill is difficult for both native and non-native speakers, for writers should poise numerous matters such as content, purpose, organization, vocabulary, audience, spelling, punctuation, and procedure. Furthermore, it inspires intelligent thinking and education, and it encourages communication and makes thought accessible for reproduction. Ideas can be examined, added to, reconsidered, rearranged, and changed when thought is written down. Writing is challenging for non-native speakers because they are expected to create written products that confirm mastery of all the above-mentioned issues in a new language (Abu-Rass (2001).

Students need writing in all aspects of their life not only inside the classroom, but also outside in real life

situations. For example, they need to write essays to reflect what is happening in their lives and sometimes to write e-mail messages to their friends or to job institutions (Bowker, 2007). Writing is also important in business transaction especially writing business letters. Academic writing is not restricted for English language students, but it is also necessary for science students, since they have to write scientific reports or projects. The appropriate style of academic writing is the formal style where there are no sub-standard or colloquial expressions. It does not accept abbreviations or phrasal verbs, since it has a precise and compact style in expressing meaning.

Academic writing style has numerous features. The first feature is the use of passive structures because the important thing is on the action not the doer of the action, the second feature is the use of objective style where it does not allow the use of personal pronouns such as I, you, we, etc. Contraction or abbreviation is not accepted in the academic writing style; words must be written in full, this is referred to as a third feature. It is a role that students in their academic writing mustn't use daily language such as colloquial, dialectal, or slang language. The use of appropriate, concise and precise vocabulary is the last feature of academic writing, since the selection of inaccurate vocabularies is confusing to the readers. So, academic writing style is always defined as compressed and brief one.

It has been observed by educators and teachers alike that writing in a foreign language is problematic. Some researchers even go further in saying that it is difficult to write in the first language (Benson, 2002; Cedar, 2004; Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Jiang, 1995; Liu, 1998; Mori, 1998; Yu, 1996). Writing in a foreign language especially English presents a great challenge to foreign students, because English language has its idiosyncratic structure and organization.

Teachers of English composition or writing classes in public and private schools in Jordan have noticed that their students had already memorized a large number of English vocabulary and grammatical rules, but they are unable to express themselves coherently in writing. The majority of the students follow the technique of translating from their first language (Arabic) into their foreign language (English). The result of the production (the outcome) is neither English nor Arabic. The teachers task is daunting one, since they try to teach their students to follows the appropriate academic writing style. In fact, the job of the teacher is to find the suitable techniques that may help in enhancing their language skill. Richards and Renandya (2002) claimed that writing skill is very difficult for L2 learners to learn and master. He claimed that its difficulty lies not only in producing and forming ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. So, teachers must focus on the dynamics of writing and try to find the suitable means of teaching them. Teachers of writing should also emphasis on the mechanic of writing such as punctuation and spelling.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties facing students at Irbis 1st Directorate of Education at Irbid governorate, Jordan in learning writing skill from their teachers' perspectives. It also aims at investigating the effects of teachers' gender, academic qualification, and experience on the teacher's point of view.

Statement of the Problem

Writing skill is difficult for students even in their native language. When they learn a foreign language, it is expected that they will have to face difficulties. Teachers always face challenge in trying to enhance or improve their students' writing skill in order to write effective essays. Sometimes, they are frustrated by the poor achievement of their students. Thus, they always want to find the difficulties facing their students writing skill, and they try to find solutions for them.

Questions of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following questions were formulated:

- 1- What are the difficulties facing tenth grade students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill from their teachers' perspective?
- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the teachers due to their gender (Male, Female)?
- 3- Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of teachers due to their qualification (Bachelor degree or master degree)?
- 4- Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of teachers due to their experience (less than five years, 5 – to less than ten years, ten years or above)?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study appeared because writing skill is the most important skill for second language students. The major goal of every student should be Effective writing. The student's success can only be determined by their teachers through their academic articles. Furthermore, this study differs from other studies in that most of the studies in the area of writing problems were conducted using quantitative approaches. In fact, only a limited number of researchers used qualitative approaches that examined students' weakness in writing. This study is significant because it aims at investigating students weaknesses from their teachers' perspectives. Most of the findings of other studies in this area were based on researchers' perspectives. The results of this study may improve students writing skills especially EFL students at public schools in Jordan.

Operational Definition of Terms

Writing skill is defined operationally as one of the four skills that are included in Action pack series (used by the ministry of Education, Jordan) It is taught to students by their teachers through using cassettes and CD's, and students study this skill by some exercises included in the text book and activity book.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to investigate students' weakness in writing skill from their teachers' perspective at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education, Irbid governorate, Jordan. It is also limited to the academic year 2014 – 2015

Theoretical Framework

Montgomery and Baker (2007) suggest that teachers should focus on various techniques of developing academic writing. They also point out that teacher should explain fully the difficulties that their students may encounter in their writing. It is expected from teachers to modify their methods of teaching academic writing based on students' responses and according to their students needs. Li (2007) advocates that, it is the sole responsibility of the teachers to identify the problems that their students may encounter in writing academic essays. Li also points out that teachers should focus on improving students' perception towards academic writing.

It was pointed out by Daoud and Al-Hazmi (2002) that Non-native speakers of English when learning English explore new techniques of academic writing through assessing self-integration of learning as well as finding and using the chance of thinking critically with the purpose of expressing themselves. That means making an intellectual commitment which may result in the generation of significant and meaningful thoughts in writing. The accuracy of non-native speakers regarding academic writing can be developed through participating in different programs suitable for teaching writing in contexts. Daoud and Al Hazmi suggest that learners should improving specific features of cultural elements including expansive communication, high regards toward the cultural environment of the language and participation in relevant and interactive tasks that can help the students to achieve their academic objectives. This can be attained through encouraging students to deal with language skills that are used in the classroom.

Furthermore, corrective writing courses for those students who have difficulties in their writing skills are not accepted and supported by some theories. For instance, Karliner (1974) who was an English writing teacher asserted that putting students' in particular corrective writing courses cannot be considered as the proper and good solution. He further added that if the student has never written before and if he is not required to write again in his college career, it is impossible to imagine that

he will become a good writer because writing skill needs repeated corroboration.

It is ill-thought to expect undergraduate students to develop and advance their skills in writing if their university instructors have little or no writing experience in writing academic papers in order to provide them with constructive feedback in case of poor and unsatisfactory product. University instructors probably expect their students to progress in those skills that are based on writing course that learners were taught in writing courses.

Some research were conducted in the Arab countries that proposed different approaches toward writing skill such as using corrective programs to overcome the problems facing EFL essay writing skills. Some of them are Khalil (1985), Sa'adeddin (1989), and El-Hibir & Al-Taha, (1992). Yamato and Bray (2002) point out that there are factors that influence the development of students' education in general and their writing in particular. One of these factors that affect student's education is socio-politics. Another factor that affects the development of ESL/EFL is cultural factors such as the rhetorical patterns of the student first language. Moreover, the incomplete comprehension of socio-cultural background of the target language (Al-Khatib, 2001; Lee, 2003; Fernsten, 2008 and Uysal 2008; and Hinkel, 2009). Uysal (2008) examined the writing pattern of 18 Turkish participants texts in order to come up with the factors that affect the identity of writers together with their writing pattern. Based on his findings, some rhetorical choices were transferred bidirectional from L1. These patterns and their transfer were mainly because of educational context, topic, L2 level and audience. Hinkel (2009) suggest that high topic accessibility indicates dependency on the personal experience of the writer as well as socio-cultural background knowledge that can result in greater topic-influence on L2 writing. Some scholars supported the idea that comprehending the socio-cultural feature of the target language is very significant in language learning especially in developing writing skill. For instance, Al-Khatib (2001) asserted that incomplete comprehension regarding socio-cultural background of the target language can lead to specific peculiarities, often regarded as errors, which is due to the disagreement between English and Arabic culture. Moreover, different factors such as rhetorical, cultural and linguistic background of Arabic learners of English may have an effect on their writing performance and their ability to write coherent English essays (Qaddumi, 1995 and Mohamed and Omer, 2000).

Lee (2003) analyzed qualitatively two of the pedagogic practices used by teachers in the context of Korean EFL. He investigated the effects of personal, social and pedagogical complexities on EFL classroom processes. Lee points out that effective management of EFL writing classrooms, objectives and beliefs of both students and teachers regarding the process of learning and teaching EFL writing should be considered. Castro (2004)

conducted an investigation on the effects of socio-cultural backgrounds on the employment of textual resources by students in meaning construction. Castro (2004) claims that Filipino college freshmen writers who have similar socio-cultural backgrounds use similar textual and linguistic feature in their writings. This indicates, and proves to a degree that the socio-cognitive nature of writing practices. That is to say, besides being a cognitive process where the mind engages in the production of a piece of writing, writing practices are formed by cultural as well as social factors.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Shahzadi; Zahabia; Rehman; and Zahra (2014) conducted a study on writing difficulties facing University's students the Sargodha University. The researchers used a questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents. The sample of the study consisted of 30 students. After ensuring the reliability and validity of the research instrument it was administered to 300 randomly selected students of department of English and many others departments. The results of the study showed that general university students need additional help in improving their English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The researchers, conclusion base on of Noam Chomsky (1957) theory about Language Acquisition that language is the best understood as a system that occurs distinctly from experience. The researchers also point out that draw a conclusion, it is human psyche that human beings learn through repetition.

Abdulkareem (2013) conducted a study aimed at investigation the academic writing problems encountered by Arab speaking postgraduate students at University of Technology at Malaysia (UTM). There are two research questions of this study. The first question involved the identification of mistakes that Arab speaking postgraduate students commit in academic writing at UTM. The second question dealt with the problems Arab speaking VWXGHQWV perceived in their academic writing. The data for the study were collected through distributing a set of questionnaires and writing task. The respondents of this study were 85 Arab speaking postgraduate students who come from different Arabic countries like Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Palestine, and Syria who enrolled for the academic session of 2011/2012. A snowballing technique was used to determine the samples of this study. A set of the questionnaires were distributed to 80 of the respondents to reveal their opinions towards the causes of academic writing problems. Another 5 students were given a writing task which was to write two short paragraphs regarding their fields of works. The VWXGHQWV writing was sent to an expert of English language to identify the mistakes made by the students. The findings of the study nevertheless could be used to recommend effective

teaching approaches to teach academic writing that are currently used by English language teachers and specialists.

Adas and Bakir (2013) wrote a research paper that describes the teaching and learning context, and how the writing activities were integrated as part of the blended learning outcome. It discusses the extent to which students were able to achieve from the intended outcomes and the processes involved in achieving those outcomes. This paper reports findings from research into the benefits of integrating blended learning into traditional methods in developing writing abilities for second and third year undergraduates at a conventional university in Palestine.

Farooq; Hassan & Waleed (2012) conducted a study which aimed at exploring writing difficulties in the English language faced by second language learners. A survey was conducted for this purpose. Data were collected from four boys and girls public sector colleges. Two hundred and forty five 12th graders studying English as a compulsory subject were randomly selected out of five hundred and twenty. Results of the study indicated that students were facing a lot of difficulties in writing English language due to lack of vocabulary, poor spelling, L1 interference and a poor understanding of grammatical structure. The girls face more writing difficulties than the male students in English language. The method based on identification, investigation, and solutions to language related real life problems should be used for teaching of English from primary school level to higher levels of education.

Bilal; Tariq; Din; Latif and Anjum (2013) conducted a study entitled "investigating the problems faced by the teachers in developing English writing skills" the study seeks to focus on the problems which face the teachers in developing English writing skills. Government sector institutes of district Sargodha are the focus of this study. These institutes contain students from both rural and urban areas. The Population of this study comprises 9 English language teachers. The data has been collected through the tool of structured interviews. The collected data has been analyzed descriptively. This study is not only to point out the problematic factors but also suggest some remedial measures to improve the situation. The research findings and suggestions would facilitate the teachers and the concerning authorities to improve the ELT situation in public sector institutes.

Ghabool; Mariadass ; & Kashef (2012) conducted a study entitled "Investigating Malaysian ESL Students' Writing Problems on Conventions, Punctuation, and Language Use at Secondary School Level" which aimed at investigating the challenges in three aspects of writing development process, namely conventions, punctuation, and language use (proper use of grammar) in secondary school level from students and teachers experiences. The data was collected from 30 ESL students as the student participants of this research, from the upper and lower secondary school, Form 1 to Form 5, and 10

teacher participants teaching English language for upper and lower secondary levels with different teaching experiences. A questionnaire and an essay examination were utilized as the instruments of the study. The findings revealed that Malaysian ESL students have problems in writing tasks, especially in language use (grammar) and punctuation. The first language interference was also very tangible in their writings. The study suggests some practical methods in order to cope with writing difficulties. Kanwal & Khurshid (2012) conducted a study entitled "University Students' Difficulties in Learning English Language Skills" aimed to explore the university students' difficulties in learning English language skills. In order to highlight the language difficulties a 27 items questionnaire was developed through standardized procedure and the psychometric of this questionnaire was determined through statistical analysis on a sample of 30 students.

After ensuring the reliability and validity of research instrument it was administered to 200 randomly selected students of department of English. Collected data was analyzed and percentages. Results showed that overall university students require extra help in improving their English listening, reading and writing skills. Moreover university students are not fully satisfied with their present course contents of English language and teaching methodologies.

Zawaherh (2012) investigated the writing errors committed by tenth-grade students who were studying at Ajloun governorate schools-Jordan. The sample of the study consisted of 350 students selected randomly from a group of schools in Ajloun. They were asked to write an essay about "a journey to the ancient city of Jerash in Jordan" in an ordinary English-language exercise in the class. The results of the study showed that the most dominant error among tenth-grade students in Ajloun schools was lack of agreement between the subject and the main verb. Also, the results of the study suggested that the cause of students' writing errors might be attributed to Arabic interference.

Ismail (2011) conducted a study entitled "Exploring Students' Perceptions of ESL Writing" which aimed to investigate students' insights about writing in general and an academic writing course in particular. A total of 64 female students from an ESP program shared in the study. The study was quantitative and qualitative in nature as a questionnaire and a focus-group interview were employed for data collection. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques was employed to analyze the data collected through the questionnaire and the focus group interview correspondingly. The general results confirmed the students' positive perspectives towards the Academic Writing Course (AWC) in particular and ESL writing in general. The main findings confirmed students' consciousness of their needs and ESL writing necessities. The study concluded with commendations for future investigation.

Stapa and Izahar (2010) examined the errors in subject-verb agreement made by postgraduate teacher trainees of a college in Malaysia. The focus of the analyses was on five types of error in subject-verb agreement: (a) person, (b) number, (c) coordinated subject, (d) indefinite expression of amount, and (e) notional agreement and proximity. The results showed that the majority of the students committed errors in subject-verb agreement, especially in subject-verb agreement of numbers followed by subject-verb agreement of the person.

Hourani, T. (2008) conducted a study entitled "An Analysis of the Common Grammatical Errors in the English Writing made by 3rd Secondary Male Students in the Eastern Coast of the UAE" his study seeks to explore the common kinds of grammatical errors made by Emirati secondary male students in their English essay writing. The study was conducted in five top schools on the Eastern Coast of the UAE. The most common and noticeable grammatical errors which were found in the students essays included: verb tense and form, passivization, word order, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, articles, auxiliaries and plurality. These errors were classified and arranged according to their sum of frequency in the students' papers. 105 students and 20 teachers shared in finishing two separate questionnaires reflecting their attitudes and opinion towards the English writing skill. To deepen understanding and interpretation of the results, follow up interviews with 5 supervisors were conducted. The data revealed that the Emirati students commit different kinds of grammatical errors, and maximum of these errors were due to intra-lingual transfer. In this study, intra-lingual transfer errors were more frequent than inter-lingual ones. Furthermore, the results of this study also showed that the English writing skill of the secondary male students in the UAE state schools needs more strengthening and improvement.

Based on the findings, recommendations and some implications which are of significance to instructors and legislators as well as to EFL teachers are provided. At last, it is wished that the results of this study could be of much benefit for developing the English writing skill among secondary students in the UAE schools.

Sawir (2005) conducted a study entitled "Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of prior learning experience" this paper reports on data gathered in interviews with students from five Asian nations, which suggest that these learning difficulties are grounded in weaknesses in students' prior learning experiences – focused on grammar and reading skills in teacher-centered classrooms, not conversational skills – and in beliefs about language learning instilled during schooling. The paper proposes strategies for overcoming these problems.

Salebi (2004) investigated Saudi college students' perception of their errors in written English. The participants of the study were 32 Saudi females aged 22–24 years old who were in the fourth level at the Department of Foreign Languages at King Faisal University.

They had attended an error analysis course where they were taught how to identify, classify, and describe errors in English committed by second-language learners. The research used two instruments: a test and students' comments on their errors. The results of this study revealed that the percentage of subject-verb agreement was 44.03%. Also, it showed that the percentage of errors caused during translation from Arabic was 18.75%. Further, it showed that the main reason for errors was the difficulty of the target language, which resulted in generalization of rules. In the first composition, 31, 58% (omission = 5 times and misinformation = 21 times) in the second composition, and 40, 62% (omission = 3 and misinformation = 16 times) in the third composition.

Another study by Myles (2002) showed that another difficulty faced by the students when writing texts in English is that they tend to translate from their native languages, or they may try out what they assume is a legitimate structure of the target language, although hindered by insufficient knowledge of the correct usage. Thinking in the first language and direct translation of their thoughts into the target language may lead to awkward and disorganized sentence structures in the target language.

Besides, for students who are "less familiar and less confident with structural elements of a new language, rhetorical and cultural conventions and even new uses of writing, writing in an L2 can have errors and be less effective than writing in L1" (Myles, 2002).

A study conducted by Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) showed that the lack of cohesion and coherence in students' written texts is caused by the lack of logical connectors of sequence, consequence, contrast, addition and illustration. They also showed another problem identified in the texts written by the students is a lack of appropriate logical linking of ideas. This showed that the students had problems in organizing ideas in their writing. The organization of ideas into paragraphs was not clear in their writing. Several main ideas were found in one paragraph written by some of the students.

As seen from the previous studies, many researchers focused on different types of challenges that face students while learning the writing skill. Some of them tackle the subject-verb agreement, writing problems on conventions, punctuation, and language use, common grammatical errors, cohesion and coherence, and other areas. All these studies reach the result that EFL students face problems while learning writing skill. All the previous studies agree that EFL students from different populations (schools or universities) and from different countries they all face difficulties when learning writing skill.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Methodology of the Study

This study is considered one of the descriptive survey studies in the light of the nature of the study questions

and the objectives it seek to achieve, where the study is based on the descriptive survey method, which aims to describe and analyze difficulties in learning writing skill in English language from the point of view of teachers

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all male and female teachers of English language at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education, who are (94) teachers during the first semester 2014/2015.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was selected purposefully. It consisted of (94) teachers: (32) male and (62) female teachers at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education. This sample was used to measure the difficulties facing students in writing skill and a questionnaire was distributed among them.

The instrument of the study:

A questionnaire was distributed among the teachers in all schools at Irbid 1st Directorate of education and this questionnaire was designed by the researcher herself, it consisted of 24 items. Many variables were included such as the gender of the teacher, experience and academic qualification.

Statistical Criterion

Likert scale was used to correct the study tool, by giving each item one grade of the five grades:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | (Strongly agree) | represents (5 grades) |
| 2. | (Agree) | represents (4 grades) |
| 3. | (Neutral) | represents (3 grades) |
| 4. | (Disagree) | represents (2 grades) |
| 5. | (Strongly disagree) | represents (1 grade) |

Validity of the Instrument

The researcher designed a questionnaire about teachers' perspectives about difficulties facing students in writing skills. The researcher validated the instrument by submitting it to a jury of supervisors and professors of English. Then the researcher followed the recommendations of the referees and made modifications in view of that.

Correlation coefficients of the items of the questionnaire with the total score were extracted in the pilot sample outside the study sample comprised of 15 teachers in order to extract the construct validity, as the correlation coefficient here is a sign of validity for each item in the form of correlation coefficient between each paragraph and the total score, Correlation coefficients of the tool with the items as a whole ranged between (0.32-0.63), and [Table 1](#) shows that.

Table 1: Correlation coefficient between items and total score

Item	The correlation coefficient with the tool	Item	The correlation coefficient with the tool
1	.59**	14	.40**
2	.48**	15	.56**
3	.48**	16	.38*
4	.35*	17	.45**
5	.44**	18	.59**
6	.45**	19	.32*
7	.48**	20	.48**
8	.51**	21	.49**
9	.32*	22	.41**
10	.48**	23	.55**
11	.43**	24	.46**
12	.48**		
13	.43**		

* Statistically significant at the significance level (0.05)

** Statistically significant at the significance level (0.01)

It should be noted that all correlation coefficients were accepted and statistically significant, and therefore, none of these paragraphs were deleted.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher used (test-retest) technique by applying the test, and re-applied it after two weeks on a pilot sample outside the study sample consisting of (15)

teachers in order to ensure the questionnaire reliability, then Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between their estimates on both times. Reliability was also calculated using internal consistency by Cronbach's alpha equation, and [Table 2](#) shows the internal consistency according to Cronbach's alpha coefficient and repetition reliability and this was considered appropriate values for the purposes of this study.

Table 2: Internal consistency coefficient Cronbach's alpha and repetition reliability

Rank	Repetition reliability	Internal consistency
Effect of training on performance	0.091	0.089

[Table 3](#) shows that the internal consistency coefficient was (0.89) and repetition reliability was (0.91) and these values are considered appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Procedures of the Study

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following procedures were used:

A questionnaire about teachers' perspectives about the difficulties facing tenth grade students in writing was given to (94) teachers (32 males, and 62 females). After that the researcher collected the questionnaires and the collected data, and then this data was analyzed statistically.

Statistical analyses:

The results were analyzed for the items in the questionnaire using means and standard deviations. The researcher used the following statistical methods:

- Pearson correlation, was used to show the correlation coefficient between each paragraph and the total score
- Cronbach's alpha. Reliability was calculated using internal consistency by Cronbach's alpha equation.
- Means and standard deviation, used to show the teachers' responses on questionnaire items.
- Independent sample t-test, was to find out whether there are statistical significant differences in views of the teachers due to, gender and qualification variables.
- One-way ANOVA, one way ANOVA was conducted to find out whether there are statistical significant differences in the means according to experience variable.
- Post hoc comparison using scheffe method, was used to show if there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in the teachers' perspectives towards the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill due to experience variable

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education at Irbid governorate, Jordan in learning writing skill from their teachers' perspectives. It also aims at investigating the effects of teachers' gender, academic qualification, and experience on their perspectives.

Results of the first Question

Question one: What are the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill from their teachers' perspective?

To answer the first question of the study, means and standard deviations of the teachers' responses on questionnaire items were computed as presented in **Tables 3.**

Table 3: Means and standard deviations for items in the questionnaire, ranked in a descending order

Rank	N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	12	Students face difficulty when writing tasks that require creativity and/or critical thinking.	4.12	.812
2	2	Students spell phonetically according to their pronunciation.	4.05	.748
3	10	Students have obstacle reading what they have written.	4.04	.734
4	7	Students use awkward phrases because they translate verbatim from Arabic language	4.03	.852
5	6	Students chronic problem in sentence structure because of the influence of first language	3.99	.890
6	8	Students do not memorize sufficient number of vocabulary to help them in their writing.	3.97	.942
7	24	Some students have difficulty in correct spelling.	3.95	.864
8	15	Most students have not acquire subject-verb agreement	3.93	.834
9	14	Students write fragments not sentence	3.91	.845
10	3	Students confuse letters which are pronounced differently according to their position in the words	3.90	.884
11	5	Students do not have all parts of a well-organized paragraph (Topic sentence and Supporting sentences).	3.90	.850
12	17	Students commit grammatical mistakes	3.89	.852
13	20	Students are unable to form compound sentences.	3.89	.855
14	23	Students face difficulty developing and organizing ideas.	3.89	.745
15	9	Students sometimes mix between formal and colloquial in their writing	3.86	.893
16	21	Students do not use different types of sentences.	3.86	.835
17	22	Students face problems in paragraph focus	3.86	.867
18	18	Students use incorrect Punctuation marks	3.85	.877
19	11	Students have difficulty differentiating between sound and meaning	3.83	.855
20	1	Students confuse with capital and small letters .	3.82	1.013
21	13	Students face problem in using the suitable words (word choice).	3.82	.911
22	4	Students face difficulty in completing fill-in blank worksheets.	3.78	.903
23	16	Students have difficulty distinguishing between singular and plural.	3.72	1.008
24	19	Students face problems in capitalization.	3.70	.991
		Total	3.90	.428

Table 3 shows that the means and standard deviations of the whole answers were 3.90,428. it also shows that Item 12 "Students face difficulty when writing tasks that require

creativity and/or critical thinking" receives the highest mean (4.12) regarding the degree of agreement with a standard deviation of (0.812), then the second item 2

comes next (Students spell phonetically according to their pronunciation) with a mean of (4.05) and standard deviation of (0.748). This result may be due to teaching strategies students are exposed to, because most teachers are not well trained and the use traditional way of teaching. Teachers never help their students to use creative thinking and critical thinking; they usually concentrate on the lower levels of Bloom taxonomy.

Meanwhile, the lowest was item number 19 "Students face problems in capitalization" with a mean of (3.70) and standard deviation of (0.428), then item number 16 "Students have difficulty distinguishing between singular and plural" with a mean of (3.72) and standard deviation of (0.991).

In fact, these two items got the lowest mean because singular and plural are rules that students learn and practice from the early stages in learning English language, so they may have sufficient practice on them and don't face difficulty with them.

Results of the Second question

Question two: Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the teachers due to their gender (Male, Female)?

To find out whether there are statistical significant differences in views of the teachers due to Gender variables, t-test analysis was conducted and the results are shown in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: T-test results of teachers' response related to their gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	32	3.90	.417	-.021	186	.983
Female	62	3.90	.436			

[Table 4](#) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in teachers' perspectives about the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill due to Gender variable. This is because all male and female teachers receive same instruction in similar conditions in universities.

In addition, since the majority of the teachers (whether male or female) possess similar experience and they teach under the same environment, it is expected to find no significance differences in their opinions.

Results of the Third Question

Question three: Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of teachers due to their qualification (Bachelor degree, or master degree)?

To find out whether there are statistical significant differences in views of the teachers due to qualification variables, t-test analysis was conducted and the results are shown in [Table 5](#).

Table 5: T-test results of teachers' response related to their qualification

Academic Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Bachelor Degree	74	3.86	.423	-2.478	186	.014
Master Degree	20	4.04	.422			

[Table 5](#) shows that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in teachers' perspectives towards the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill due to qualification variable in favor of Master Degree. This is because teachers who hold Master degree are more qualified than those who hold Bachelor degree, that's why they are more aware of the problems students face. When teachers finish their higher education they are exposed to more information and strategies in teaching English language skills. They will analyze books and write proposals about educational issues; and this in turn affect their competency in the

language in general and in teaching skills especially writing in particular.

Results of the Fourth Question

Question four: Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of teachers due to their experience (Less than 5 years, 5-to less than ten years, ten years or above)?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of teachers' responses due to their experience were computed as presented in [Tables 6](#).

Table 6: Means and standard deviations of teachers' responses due to their experience

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Less than five years	24	3.75	.482
Five - to less than ten years	27	3.88	.339
Ten years or above	43	4.00	.427
Total	94	3.90	.428

Table 6 shows a slight variance in the means according to experience variable; experience proves to have a great role on teachers' perspectives because they interpret the surrounding environment and the whole educational process in a scientific way. The more time the teachers spend in teaching, the more educational situations they

experience and the more problems they face and solve, so experience is very important. To find out whether there are statistical significant differences in these means, one way ANOVA was conducted; results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: One way ANOVA results of teachers' views due to their experience.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.880	2	.940	5.865	.003
Within Groups	29.654	185	.160		
Total	31.534	187			

Table 7 shows There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in the teachers' perspectives towards the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill due to experience

variable, to find out Multiple Comparisons differences post hoc test using Scheffe Mehod was conducted as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Multiple Comparisons post hoc test using Scheffe Method due to experience

(I) Experience	(J) Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than five years	Five - to less than ten years	-0.13	.083	.318
	Ten years or above	-0.24(*)	.076	.006
Five - to less than ten years	Less than five years	0.13	.083	.318
	Ten years or above	-0.12	.072	.265
Ten years or above	Less than five years	0.24(*)	.076	.006
	Five - to less than ten years	0.12	.072	.265

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 8 shows There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in the teachers' perspectives towards the difficulties facing students at Irbid 1st Directorate of Education in writing skill between Less than 5 years and 10 years or above in favor of 10 years

or above. No one can deny the role of experience especially in the educational field. Teachers whose experience is more than 10 years definitely know all types of problems that face students in the writing skill, and most of them could reduce of completely overcome most of these problems.

CONCLUSION

As seen from the results, there are many reasons behind the difficulties facing students in writing skill in English language. The results agree with the results of some of the studies conducted by other researchers. For example: the result of the study conducted by Farooq; Hassan & Waleed (2012) showed that students were facing a lot of difficulties in writing English language due to lack of vocabulary, poor spelling, L1 interference and a poor understanding of grammatical structure. Other reasons such as grammar was also clear same as the study of Ghabool; Mariadass ; & Kashef (2012) in which the findings revealed that Malaysian ESL students have problems in writing tasks, especially in language use (grammar) and punctuation. The first language interference was also very tangible in their writings. Another difficulty may be lack of agreement between subject and main verb and this is congruent by the study of Zawaherh (2012), the results of his study showed that the most dominant error among tenth-grade students in Ajloun schools was lack of agreement between the subject and the main verb, and the study of Sabeli 2004 which focus on subject verb agreement also. Students may translate from their own native language; this was also showed by the study of Myles 2002 and the study of Stapa and Izahar (2010). Another difficulty which faces students is that learning difficulties are grounded in weaknesses in students' prior learning experiences which is compatible with the results of Sawir (2005) study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests the following recommendations based on the result of this investigation:

- 1- Students should be trained to spell phonetically according to the English language pronunciation not according to their own pronunciation.
- 2- Teachers should have additional training since the results indicate that some of them lack the necessary experience.
- 3- Increase the number of English classes.
- 4- Conduct more studies on the other skills and on different ages.

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