



# Reasons Behind University Students' Vulnerability to Write a Well-organized Paragraph in Arabic Language

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## Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the reason behind Tafila Technical University (TTU) students' inability to write a well-organized paragraph in Arabic. The researcher followed analytical descriptive approach in the study, through pursuing the students while doing their writing assignments inside the classroom. The subject of the study was six sections of the students who study "Study Skills" course with a total number of 485 students. The study lasted three semesters. It started in the second term 2016-2017 and ended in the second term 2017-2018. The sample of the study was 30 male-female students chosen randomly to represent the subject of the study. Students were asked to write Arabic paragraphs based on general and personal nature related to their own life. After correcting the students' writing tasks and discussing their mistakes inside the class, the researcher reached to some reasons which he believed stand against the students to write properly in Arabic. These reasons could be summed up in the following points: lack of desire, lack of motivation, lack of reading, lack of writing, inability to find and organize ideas, spelling mistakes, structural mistakes, misusing of punctuation marks and weak handwriting.

**Keywords:** Paragraph, Writing Skill, Arabic Language, Vulnerability, TTU.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is actually one of main language skills which normally neglected by some of the language teachers while presenting teaching activities. Most of them feel that students are weaker in writing than in other skills, and that more practice is crucially needed than is found simply by following the course book. They have to think about some of the reasons why students find it difficult to write accurately. However, a picture or plan can be useful stimulus for writing tasks. It provides a common experience for the whole class, and is a basis from which a variety of language activities of different levels can be generated (Qomoul, 2007).

Writing is a complicated process which requires transferring ideas into words or sentences structurally correct. It needs various methods to tackle ideas and presenting them clearly to the targeted readers by applying more of control and pursuing (Asr, 1994).

Ibn-khaldoon in his "Introduction" said "tracing or writing is one of the human skills. Its shapes, letters and symbols reflect uttered words and reveal what a person hides. Writing is one of the noble humanitarian professions that distinguish them from other creatures. It reveals what a person keeps in his conscience and helps to carry objects to far a way sites. Writing fulfils human being needs and support them to collect information and heritage of others previous knowledge. It leads new generation to benefit from experiences of their ancestors. In this way, writing is definitely a means which transfers other's experiences for generation to come" (Almandoreh, 1994, p. 87).

Writing is actually a mental process, through which a writer attempts to create ideas, organize them and then put them on papers to be read. It is a constructed, substantial skill which is highly needed by all learners to transfer their thoughts to others in different methods such as: formal and informal letters, reports, telegraphs, invitations, articles and researches. Besides, it supports learners to improve their cognitive and language abilities to understand what is going around (Abu Jalil, 2001). Writing takes different stages: before writing, drafting, revising, editing and finally publication. These stages are normally interrelated and complicated, writers move freely forward and backward till they finish the writing task successfully (Ferris, 2005). Concentration on writing skill comes from its necessity to all writers in the academic and professional fields. MacDonough (2003) assured on the fact that when a writer is able to write properly, he is actually able to master the objectives of the courses he studies, and consequently, satisfies his needs, interests and targeted goals.

During my work as supervisor of English language for almost more than ten years, I noticed that a number of language teachers complain of the students' low achievement in writing skill. When I ask those teachers about the percent of the students who can write effectively and accurately, some of them say only 5% of the students can write satisfactorily, and some others say that the percent doesn't exceed 10% by all means. Mukattash (1983) indicated that most of the students are unable to write a good paragraph without making noticeable language mistakes. Karal (1986) pointed out that the performance of the students in the writing skill was extremely weak and full of inexcusable mistakes.

The aim of the present study is to guide students to write a well-organized paragraph, a paragraph which is normally found in the articles and researches that present a certain issue clearly and in a detailed way. This type of writing always appears in different university textbooks that dealt with scientific, social or language subjects. The only type which could be excluded here is the novelistic type which could be seen in novels and short stories that needs special talent and special training and aimed at finding creative novelists and short story tellers who is specialized in this type of literature.

Writers of serious columns, paragraphs, and articles in the magazines or newspapers are habitually adopted modern method of writing, which focused on readers to grasp ideas and objectives of those writers. Sometimes, it is difficult for readers to explain or translate the main ideas in these writings, which may lead to misunderstanding among individuals, societies or states, because of its vague writing style. We live in a small world, so we need to communicate with all communities using definite means, which is easy for all to understand. Nowadays, it is the time, to write clear paragraphs or articles that are well-organized and accurate, based on one clear framework known to all people. Since the paragraph is the corner stone for an article or a

text, the first step is to train learners how to write well-built paragraphs. However, it is difficult to find a text consisted only of one separate paragraph, so it is actually something crucial for all those who need to write reports, articles or researches or a like to start first to learn how to write a paragraph. They have to learn about paragraph construction, how to find an idea and how to develop it, following the known steps in this regard (Khurma et al., 2018).

The organization of a text and dividing it into paragraphs is a matter which is agreed upon by all contemporary scholars, so as to achieve a legible contact between a reader and a writer. This organization was assured in the printing process. They emphasize on the fact that a change from one idea to another is actually a type of shifting between one paragraph and another. However, the paragraph as it is known today was not existed in the old Arabic literature, since it is a modern piece of writing, appeared with the invention of printing machine in the western world. It could be defined as “group of sentences connected together to explain a fact or one main idea” (Chalabi, 2008, p. 10).

### **Study Problem**

Writing is an acquired skill for all learners. Students often complain that writing is one of the most difficult skills to be obtained, especially when they need to use it in composition assignments or during answering questions which required writing activity. EFL teachers often do not pay much attention to writing classes. It is something noticeable that students are not able to write effectively or efficiently unless they practice writing continuously. As we learn to read by reading, we also learn to write by practicing more writing. If we take listening, reading or speaking skills, we'll find that the performance of the student in these skills is normally reasonable, but when it comes to writing we find them quite poor. So, the question that could be raised here is why are the students quite humble at writing? What are the reasons that prevent them to write properly? Most of the students can listen and understand and they can read and speak in a satisfactorily way, but when it comes to writing, a good listener or a good speaker is not definitely a good writer. Even native speakers, they are not good when they need to write using their own language. Here, the role of the teacher is crucial; he must pay more attention to writing skill and provide the students with adequate opportunity to practice writing all the time.

### **Study Objectives**

The study attempts to achieve the following:

- Defining the problems which face the students while practicing writing in general and writing a paragraph in particular.
- Finding appropriate solutions to these problems will help students to write well and appropriately.

### **Study Questions**

The study attempts to answer the following two questions:

- What are the reasons that prevent the students in Tafila Technical University to write a well-organized paragraph in Arabic? And

- What are the solutions that may help the students to overcome their writing troubles?

### **Study Significance**

The importance of the present study is implied in the fact that it attempts to shed light on the difficulties which may face learners when practicing writing generally and when writing a paragraph in particular. Writing a paragraph requires finding ideas and elaborating them together using suitable punctuation marks. This could not be gained unless the students practice writing through objected exercises which help them to form a well-organized paragraph. Besides, the study attempts to help learners recognize the troubles that face them when they write and try to avoid them. The study is also important for the language teachers in general and teachers of Arabic language in particular to meet the challenges that may face the students while practicing writing skill. It attempts to help the language teachers to overcome these troubles when presenting writing classes and find solutions for students to become good writers, writers who can share their views with other readers far away from them.

### **Study Limitations**

- Spatial Limit: This study was limited to the reasons facing the students of Tafila Technical University while writing a paragraph in Arabic.
- Time limit: This study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018.
- Human Limit: This study was limited to a sample chosen from the students of Tafileh Technical University who study the subject of "Study Skills" which is an optional university requirement.

### **Definition of Terms**

- Paragraph: A text which tackles one idea. Or that it is part of a text, consists of several sentences dealing with one main idea, and may contain several secondary or partial ideas (Almujam Alwaseet, p. 14).
- Writing skill: Al-qalgashandi, (2004, p. 51) defined it as the stem of the word write, writing books, library, writers, those who write, he said people wrote means they collected together. Ibn al-Arabi said: The writing may be launched on science and the meaning of the verse (or they foresee the invisible world, they are writing, At-tur, phase: 41), which means they know.
- Tafila Technical University: The first technical university in the Kingdom, and ninth public university in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, located in the province of Tafila, 187 km south of the capital Amman. It was founded on the seventeenth of January, 2005.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Students' Weakness in writing skills**

In our schools and universities, there is a noticeable weakness among students in Arabic language, both scientific and functional, in reading, writing, expression, comprehension and communication, and in the acquisition of Arabic language sciences in general and the desire to learn it. The problem of the weakness of students in Arabic has increased and become a disturbing phenomenon of the cultural and scientific deterioration of our Arab nation from the ocean to the Gulf. The best proof of this is the fact that graduates of universities in institutions and departments after graduating, in the field of education at various levels, and in the media through its various means, making the situation worse day by day, and the need to address this phenomenon is increasing at various levels (Abdul Razzaq, 2010).

With these great efforts by the applicants to save the deteriorating situation of the Arabic language among the people, the complaint about the low level of language performance among students in public education is increasing day after day. One of those who turned to this weakness in the thirties of the last century, Dr. Taha Hussein in his book "Pre-Islamic Literature" in which he saw that our Arabic language is not taught well in our schools, but is studying something strange and unrelated to life, and has nothing to do with the student's mind and feeling and his passion. It seems that the problem of the weakness of students in the Arabic language in general and their serious weakness in writing skill in particular was common in the past and still in our time. In his book "The General Principles of Curriculum for Arabic Language Teaching", Tuaima (2017, p. 134) says: "The daily newspapers covered the subject of the weakness of the students in the Arabic language for a region that the readers of this uproar could not get out of, but their weakness in what I hear or see, is in terms of their use of what they study in reading, writing, and speaking. They are not good at giving late words their right vowels, and applying these rules in reading, writing and speaking."

After this description of the Arabic language in the 1930s, one of the most jealous of the Arabic language continued to complain about the weakness of students in Arabic. Bent Al-Shati, (1969, p. 191) describes the situation of the learners in her time saying: "The serious phenomenon of our language problem is that, as learners take a step in learning Arabic language, ignorance has increased of it and even the denial of it. They may go on the educational path to the end, graduated from the university and can not even write a simple speech in the language of their people, but may specialize in the study of Arabic to get the highest degrees, and can not own this language which represents their nationality and field of specialization."

Complaints continued in the 1970s, when (Nahr, 1978, p. 122) describes the situation saying: "Our language is now a minaret wrapped in dust, where the speakers narrow it, and escape from its bases and structures, but that some Arab learners do not know the composition of a sound Arabic settlements and movements, and the more so, we see some university students in the departments of Arabic language and literature do not realize the fluency of saying, their tongues utter ungrammatical words, and their linguistic knowledge at all levels does not match their university degrees ."

Today, the cries are still being heard throughout the Arab world, complaining of many linguistic errors committed by schoolchildren and university students in their various daily activities. Graduates of public and private universities, in the educational field at various levels, and in the media and its various means, are committed huge errors. However, the need to address this phenomenon at various levels is increasing. Amarah (1415, p. 50) pointed out that "the error in the language became a shock to the eyelids of the interested, teachers, parents, university professors, and other members of the nation, and the noise of complaining about this weakness in

many Arab countries. Newspapers, symposiums, conferences and councils appealed that this weakness has become a threat to the present and future of the nation". Tuaima (2017, p. 99) confirms the weakness of students in the Arabic language and says: "Our complaint is the weakness of our children in the language in general, and from the weakness of our students in the Arabic language. Their inability to write and express in particular does not require a proof". Kabawa (1999, p. 72) says: "I do not exaggerate if I say what I have seen in various Arab countries from universities and educational institutions that the scientific thesis produced by specialists in the Arabic language, as well as non-specialists in Arabic science, and grammar in particular, in which the images of incorrectness and reference in the expression are spread, and say that what you find is pure and healthy from affliction".

The weakness of the Arab students in Arabic language has been confirmed by the researchers who submitted several scientific studies published in refereed scientific journals or other specialized conferences, including the phenomenon of linguistic weakness at the university level, which was held at the Imam Mohammad bin Saud Islamic University in (1416). The university president at the time, Dr. Abdullah Al-Shibl, stated the reason for the symposium: "When the university and Arabic specialists consider that there is an abnormal phenomenon in the language of some students, which were characterized by poor performance and difficulty in applying some rules and spreading of common mistakes. The university attempts to hold a symposium to study this phenomenon and find solutions to it, participating in it linguists and specialists in Arabic branches and university professors and those involved in educational institutions from inside the country and abroad" (p. 11).

### **Students' Weakness in Arabic**

Since writing is the final focus of Arabic language skills, it is a vast field in which students learn what they have learned through other language arts: listening, reading, speaking, and through their various branches. Despite the importance of writing, especially for university students, many studies revealed the low level of students in the possession of writing skills due to lack of mastery of its skills. These studies include the study of Al.qaisi (1988), the study of Al.yacoub (1990), and the study of Zahrani (2000) ... and others. These studies confirmed the existence of real problems of students as: committing grammatical, morphological, spelling and punctuation errors; in terms of lack use of punctuation in writing. There is also the students' inability to identify the ideas and elements of the subject, and their inability to arrange ideas, in addition to weak style of writing. Students also lacking to form correct syntax for the sentence, using of colloquial words in writing, poor handwriting, mismanagement of the form of writing, and the problem of choosing the subject of writing. Students are also not aware of the current events and follow them up, as well as the familiarity of students to the teacher's role inside the classroom. However, the manifestations of the weakness of students are multiple; many of them can be summed up in the formal and organizational aspects, in the areas of ideas, words and phrases of writing.

There are those who believe that the reasons for the weakness of students in the Arabic language in general and writing in particular is due to the prevalence of colloquialism in the Arab society, the poor design of the curricula, the methods used by the teacher in providing the educational material for the students and the lack of interest of students in understanding the basic skills required to learn Arabic. In addition to the decline of the Arab cultural scene in

general, the change in the current material life, and the intellectual conflict of Arab society in all cultural movements witnessed by the Arab world (Nassar, 2012).

## **Paragraph Writing**

A paragraph is a set of sentences that are connected together with one word or more in letter and spirit, and based on the development of one idea. The paragraph may be an independent text with an independent title, or it may be a part of an article consisting of several paragraphs or part of a research or a book. When writing any paragraph you must have a clear idea of its subject. This is because the paragraph is essentially a set of sentences with one main theme. The lack of a clear and specific idea about the subject of your paragraph will make it lacking focus and unity. In order to determine the subject of your paragraph you have to ask yourself some questions such as: What subject to talk about? What are the main ideas or topics that need to be addressed? Whom I should write? If your paragraph is part of a larger article, writing an article outline can help you define the main ideas and goal of each paragraph. Once you have a clearer idea of what you want to get out of your paragraph, you can start organizing your thoughts by writing down your thoughts in a single notebook or file. No need to write complete sentences now, just short key words or short phrases. When you see everything written in front of you, you can have a clearer idea and be able to distinguish between what is essential and must be included in the paragraph and what is unnecessary and therefore need not be mentioned (Subeih et al., 1997).

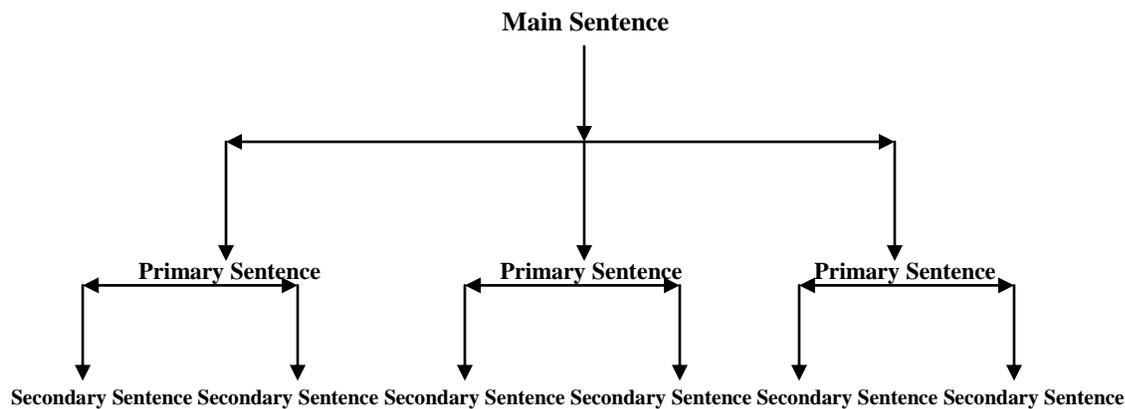
Now that all of your ideas, opinions and information are clearly laid out, you can start thinking about how your paragraph will work. Think of every point you want to make and try to sort them out logically, making your paragraph more coherent and easy to read. This system may be based on chronological order, or may put important ideas at first or maybe just make the paragraph easier and more interesting for the reader; it all depends on the quality of the subject and the way you want to write your paragraph. Once you determine the object you want to write to, you can rewrite points according to this new organization. This will help make the writing process faster, more organized, and clearer (Freih, 2002).

When starting the process of writing, the paragraph writer should improve the selection of the correct vocabulary, and write it in good writing, especially spelling, because the vocabulary item is the smallest unit which is important for writing a paragraph. Following the choice of correct word, the sentence should be sound in its direction, its structure and its meaning, which can not be tolerated. Through the interconnectedness of these sentences and their cohesion of word and meaning to form one single idea, which in turn forms one paragraph. The neck dot is a clear example of paragraph writing, because it is an independent idea or a very short piece of prose, which occurs in the mind of its owner accidentally, so it is instantaneous, intense, that is, rising out of the writer's intelligence, his power of observation and alertness. The speed of reading it, and its shortness call the reader' attention and interest to read it, since it deals with tiny issues that have great importance in real life (Manasrah, 2018).

## **Paragraph Construction**

To write a good article we must write a good paragraph first, and to write a good paragraph you must know the composition of the good paragraph. The paragraph is usually composed of the following (Khuli, 2016, p: 178):

- **Main sentence:** This sentence is usually located at the beginning of the paragraph, but sometimes it may be at the end or in the middle. It is actually the most prominent sentence in the paragraph, it is the center or the core of the paragraph, and it contains the main idea in the paragraph.
- **Preliminary supporting sentences:** These sentences support or interpret the main sentence directly, the number of sentences may be two or more, and come after the main sentence directly, but not usually consecutive but scattered in the parts of the paragraph.
- **Secondary supporting sentences:** Sentences that support the initial supporting sentences directly, thus supporting the main sentence indirectly. If the paragraph is to be represented by a general organizational structure, the paragraph shall be as follows:



Thus, the above paragraph structure consists of one main sentence, three primary supporting sentences, and six secondary supporting sentences with a total of ten sentences. It is very important when composing a paragraph to use associative expressions that link each sentence to the other before or after it. Without these associative expressions, it is difficult for a reader to understand the relationships that the writer intends between sentences in a single paragraph.

**Paragraph Function:** The subject of the paragraph is usually presented through a sentence called ‘Topic Sentence’ but there are other functions for the main sentence, in addition to the introduction of the subject of the paragraph, it presents a major idea about the subject, this idea called ‘controlled idea’. The paragraph is also used to divide the text into units that help both readers and writers deal with one concept of the general idea and explain it (Abu Sherifa, 2014, p. 17).

**How to write a paragraph:** Training to write a paragraph is considered to be a key to good writing. Paragraphs can help shorten large parts of the text and make the content easy to understand by readers, it guides the reader to focus only on main idea. Knowing how to write a well-organized paragraph is fairly difficult, but it can be easy and affordable for those who are ready to train and practice writing (Motawakil, 2015).

**Paragraph length:** There is no specified length of the paragraph, but usually the number of sentences in a paragraph is between 5 to 12 sentences. A paragraph is distinguished by leaving a simple space of five characters or 2.5 cm at the beginning, and stop writing at the end, and move to a new line to make another paragraph. Writing a paragraph is the best way to learn to write full pieces of texts and articles, because the writing of the paragraph goes through the same stages of writing full texts. At the same time, the paragraph is the unit of text construction, texts

and complete pieces of writing are a set of paragraphs related to one particular subject (Motawakil, 2015).

### **Related Studies**

Abu Laban (2010) finds that the reasons behind the weakness of students in writing skill is related to the characteristics of written language, including its system of syntax; which is putting grammatical tools on the letters and words, this is the first source of difficulty. Spelling rules is another difficulty; which means the difference between the letter and its voice. In some languages, what is spoken should be written and what is silent shouldn't, but this does not go with Arabic language. The complexity of the rules of spelling and its many exceptions, the difference in the character of the letter according to its location in the word, similar letters, connecting and separating letters, rules of expression and ignorance of grammar and syntax, all these are added to the troubles facing the students when writing in Arabic. He added that there are other reasons such as: lack of linkage between reading and writing, lack of diversity in the reading material, lack of practice of writing and training, poor selection of subjects by some teachers, lack of linking the learning skills of writing to the other branches of language. The method of teaching the writing skills for some teachers doesn't exceed writing a title on the board and leaving the students to write alone without follow-up or discussion of their mistakes.

Ashbail study (2017) attempted to discover the problems, troubles and difficulties of writing in Arabic. The study concluded the following reasons: structure system; meaning the placement of grammatical tools on the letters, the difference between the drawing of word and its voice, the correlation between spelling and grammar rules, and the difficulty of the rules. The difference between the linguists in the drawing of some words due to the difference in the spelling rules, the difference in the drawing of the letter according to its position in the word, the connection and separation of the letters, grammar system, the difference between the Holy Koran spelling and contemporary spelling, and the variety of punctuation marks.

Arafah study (2014) concluded that the reasons for the students' weakness in Arabic were attributed to the focus on learning foreign languages, especially English, and open the door for foreign institutions to open bilingual or multilingual schools, which negatively affected the learning of the Arabic language. Besides, the availability of distinction and model schools for excellent students that attract students of higher mental abilities killed the spirit of competition in other public schools. Privatization of education and linking it to meet the needs of the labor market reduced the interest in Arabic language which represents the identity of the Arab nation. Transitional migration; this factor, encouraged the minds and capabilities to migrate out of the Arab countries. Cross-border education, where students migrate to study in economically and culturally advanced countries, and when they finish their studies they often remain at the expense of their motherland. The fears of some low economy countries led them to rely on the transfer of branches of foreign universities to contribute in the educational process and expenditure. But these branches are often weak and do not seek to develop the host countries. Another problem is the growing dependence on foreign language in general and English in particular as a main intermediary of teaching, and thus education has become a means of fragmentation of teaching systems in the Arab world.

Wahhabi study (2016) in which she summarized that the factors of family and school are the most influential factors in the decline of the Arabic language of the university student. She stressed that the question of language weakness is not only the undergraduate stage, but from the

first stages in which the student receives language acquisition. Both institutions play a major role in the development of language skills, or they could be a cause of their weakness, unless each of them teaches Arabic language in a proper way.

Nacira (2010) summarized the reasons for poor writing among third year students in the absence of appropriate methods and techniques to teach written expression in the English language department at the University of Banta. The study also found that the third year students face great problems in writing ability. In addition, both teachers and students bear responsibility for not wanting to write, lack of reading practice, lack of effective methods of teaching reading skills, the influence of mother tongue on writing in English, and lack of motivation. Based on these findings, the researcher introduces some suggestions to improve students' ability in writing such as: encouraging them to read, increasing their motivation to practice writing, using collaborative methods when writing, and applying more appropriate assessment methods.

Hodge (1993) showed in his study that the weakness of students in the skill of writing may be due to lack of practice and experience in the skills of reading and writing, and their weakness in selecting or finding suitable vocabulary items and the difficulty of finding satisfying ideas and presenting them convincingly. Even if they find ideas, most students are not able to organize or sequence them logically.

Bryson and Scardamalia (1991) shown that the weakness of students in writing skill may be due to their weakness in the basic skills of writing such as spelling, grammar, language mechanics and handwriting. In addition, the students are weak in generating ideas and organizing them. At the end of their study, they suggested that the students should be provided with more opportunities to practice writing and dialogues. Besides, students could be provided with appropriate written models, and encouraging them to find their own personal goals and writing about them.

Lehr and Harris (1988) revealed that students' weakness in writing skill may be due to the lack of interest of teachers in this skill, the teacher himself may be unable to practice writing, and therefore unable to find an effective plan to help students practice writing. For this reason, teachers are required to enrich the learning environment that helps students to think, innovate, and encourage students to work collaboratively through small homogeneous groups, ask them to write on simple topics and then discuss their writings through groups, and pair-work should be stressed.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher used descriptive analytical method based on follow-up and recording notes on students' performances during their implementation of writing tasks in the classroom. The students were assigned to write paragraphs on general topics related to modern life such as: problems of environmental pollution, public health, unemployment, inflation and high prices of goods and services, or problems of the contemporary world; the difference between the present and past life, and the traffic jams in the Jordanian cities. Sometimes, students are assigned to write about personal topics of their own such as: What goals you are seeking to achieve in your life? Why do you choose your specialty? How do you see your university? How can you choose your friend? ...etc. Then, the researcher collects the written works of students, reviews them, identifying the repeated mistakes and discussing them with the students.

## **Study Subject**

The study subject consisted of six academic sections from different faculties of the university, namely, students who study "Study Skills", which is a general elective requirement. The number of students in each section was between 65-95 male and female students, with a total number of 485 students. The study spanned over three semesters, starting from the first semester 2016-2017 and ending in the second semester 2017-2018.

## **Study Sample**

The researcher extracted from the subject of the study a sample of 30 male and female students who were asked to write paragraphs on topics of general and specific nature. The researcher then, collected these works, reviewed them, corrected them and discussed them with the students. The researcher drew conclusions that enabled him to identify the problems that stand behind the weakness of students in writing in general and writing a well-organized paragraph in particular.

## **Study procedures**

To implement the study, the researcher follows these steps:

- Allocation of study time from the beginning of the first semester 2016-2017 till the end of the second semester 2017-2018.
- Defining the subject of the study which consisted of six sections with a total number of 485 students.
- Choosing a representative sample (30 male-female students) from the subject of the study.
- Assigning the students of the sample to write paragraphs in Arabic in subjects of a general and specific nature.
- Collecting the works of the students and correcting them, then discussing the students' common mistakes inside the classroom.
- Through revising and discussion of the students' works, the researcher concluded the troubles faced the students when writing a paragraph in Arabic.
- Based on the findings of the study, the researcher has developed some guidance points and suggestions that may help both teachers and learners to improve their abilities in teaching and learning writing skills.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

At the end of the study the researcher was able to identify some of the troubles that stand in the way of students in Tafila Technical University to write a good paragraph in Arabic. Some of these troubles are of a general nature related to the curricula and methods of instruction; others are of a special nature related to the learners themselves.

However, the troubles of students when writing a paragraph in Arabic can be summarized in the following points:

- Lack of writing practice: Students enter the university and graduate and rarely assigned any written tasks, even if they assigned any written works, they often go to the “Internet,” and practice the process of copy and paste without perplexing themselves to write anything from their own composition. The tests offered to students at the university is rarely included any essay questions which required them to write. Most tests offered to students are of multiple choice questions which do not require any writing. These types of questions naturally do not serve students to improve their written skills.
- Lack of reading practice: It is known that the good reader is often a good writer, but these days, students do not practice reading, and they absolutely do not have motivation to practice it. Nowadays, the printed books are only read by few people. Students are often busying themselves to follow their mobile phones and follow what is going on social means of communication of comments and remarks which are often written in colloquial language or spoken language which does not serve in improving their writing abilities.
- Lack of motivation to practice writing: University students have no motivation to practice writing, and often feel embarrassing to write since writing needs control and grammar, instead they tend to use the skill of talking which is easier and does not need any control or grammar, and errors that may occur during the talk are normally tolerated. Besides, students often use colloquial or spoken language which is not governed by any form or rule.
- Students are unable to generate ideas: Students often complain during the practice of writing in general and writing the paragraph in particular that they do not have specific ideas that could be used as a subject for writing. It is well known that the creation of ideas needs advanced mental abilities for composition and shaping.
- Students are unable to organize ideas: Some students, despite their ability to create ideas, they can not organize these ideas in a consistent and gradual way. So that these ideas serve each other, and thus easy to narrate and express clearly, which finally help the reader to grasp the writer’s intention.
- Students’ ignorance of the paragraph concept: There are a lot of students who can not give a clear interpretation of the concept of paragraph. Some of them do not understand what the word paragraph means, and therefore can not write a paragraph. And some others, even if they understand the concept of the paragraph, they can not write a well-organized paragraph, because they are ignorant of a good paragraph elements such as: unity, consistency, assertion, clarity, content validity, and paragraph level, which means the targeted readers of the paragraph.
- Students’ ignorance of using punctuation marks: a writer must punctuate his article by providing it with the necessary punctuation marks such as: commas, periods, semicolons, colons, exclamation marks and question marks when needed, so that a reader can understand his article. Without punctuation marks, a paragraph seems to be as one continuous sentence which is difficult to define its beginning or its end, and eventually it is difficult for readers to understand the idea of the paragraph.
- Students weak handwriting: so many students who prepare the material well and their understanding of it is also well, but they failed in the test because of their bad handwriting which couldn’t be read by anyone except the writers themselves. A student of this type is actually made of his handwriting a special language of his own, extremely difficult for others to read or understand it. So, there is no way for those students are only to develop their handwriting because the cost is heavy.

The results of the present study are consistent with most of the reviewed studies, for example but not exhaustively, the studies of (Bryson & Scardamalia, 1991; Hodge, 1993; Nacira, 2010; Abu Laban, 2011; Arafah, 2014; Wahhabi, 2016; Shibail, 2017; ... and others). All these studies confirm that writing skill is considered to be one of the most difficult language skills for many learners. It requires more effort and time to be mastered. It depends mainly on the ability of the learner to make appropriate content that includes his ideas and opinions. It also requires good language collection, recognition of language grammar, correct punctuation, and correct spelling for different words. Although this skill is difficult for some learners, but they can master it as they want if they increase their vocabulary, read more, master grammar, practiced more writing, review and correct what they write and applied the principles of social communication that might help them much to communicate with others using appropriate words and phrases.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results obtained from this study, the researcher concluded some of the main reasons that prevent students of Tafila Technical University from writing a good paragraph in Arabic, including: weak reading and writing skills, weakness in finding and organizing ideas, weakness in using punctuation marks, and finally weakness of students' handwriting.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Encouraging students to practice writing skills by assigning them writing tasks to be done either inside the class room or at home and following these assignments regularly and discussing the students' mistakes.
- Encouraging students to practice reading skills, because reading enriches writing, it is often known that a good reader is a good writer and vice versa.
- Motivating students to write by considering their writing works as an integral part of the evaluation process, not as is the case now, as writing is often ignored by teachers and students do not pay much attention to it.
- Supporting students to find ideas by encouraging them to draw up an outline of the ideas they want to write about before writing or helping them to use a symbol or an image that motivates them to write and express themselves.
- Helping students to organize ideas logically and sequentially.
- Explaining the concept of paragraph to students before writing, and providing them with clear models of paragraphs and asking them to write similar paragraphs.
- Training students on Arabic grammar through examples and texts suitable to address the various rules and structures of the Arabic language.
- Explaining the concepts of punctuation marks, and telling the students when and how to use each of them by introducing appropriate examples and texts.
- Submitting forms of calligraphy to students and ask them to re-copy them regularly in order to improve their handwriting.

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