

# Exploration of Factors Causing Difficulties in Students' Writing Skills

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore factors causing difficulties in students' English writing skills. A descriptive research design was employed for the study. For this study, 110 students were selected through a random sampling technique. Questionnaires and classroom observation were employed as data-gathering tools. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26. The study identified four major factors causing difficulties in students' English writing skills. These are student-related, teacher-related, educational environment-related, and textbook-related factors. Besides, the study revealed that students' writing skills could be improved through sufficient practice, using appropriate approaches to teaching writing skills, reducing the number of students in the classrooms, giving frequent corrective feedback, motivating learners to change their attitude about writing skills, and revising activities in the course book.

**Keywords:** difficulty, educational environment, exploration, factor, school, writing skills

## 1. Introduction

In Ethiopia, students learn English as a foreign language beginning from grade one to grade twelve. Furthermore, at the secondary and tertiary levels, English is used as a medium of classroom instruction. English is utilised as the most important determinant factor for academic achievement across a variety of disciplines in the country's educational programme since all of the course books and instructional materials are published in English. It is believed that students will require a good command of language for academic purposes as well as general career communication.

The four major English language skills involve complex procedures, particularly writing skills. There is no denying that mastering writing is the most challenging ability for second language learners (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Similarly, Nunan (1989) claimed that writing is one of the most challenging aspects of learning a language. In both one's first and second languages, learning to speak is simpler than learning to write. Mastering language skills is the main emphasis of English instruction for Ethiopians. However, writing is crucial for communication; most students fail to write effective and error-free texts. This shows that writing is a complex process that requires writers to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible and real.

According to Giltrow (2014), the process of writing does not proceed straightforwardly from the writer's thoughts to the paper on which it is written. However, writing is rarely a straightforward process that can be completed in a single step. Writing is a process of discovery that takes place over several stages.

Lamessa et al. (2023) revealed that a smaller class size gives students more opportunities for personalized instruction and practice, enabling teachers to spend more time with each student and create a more personalized learning experience. According to Ling (2000), producing a piece of writing in a second language is an extremely difficult endeavour. A lack of feedback, writing anxiety, big class sizes, and other issues could all be contributing factors. Additionally, students in the writing classes do not receive the necessary amount of support from their teachers.

According to Italo (1999), "There seems to be a general inclination among Ethiopian language teachers to assign writing as homework out of concern that the amount of effort and time required to edit students' writing due to the enormous number of students in a class may be prohibitive" (p.9). According to Malini (2017, p. 1), "In outcome-based education (OBE), learners are at the centre of their learning with ownership to perform based on outcomes." Additionally, numerous studies conducted in Ethiopia (Geremew, 1999; Italo, 1999; Solomon, 2004; Meseret, 2012) have demonstrated that many Ethiopian students appear to find it difficult and demanding to learn how to write. As a

result, the students' writing ability seems low about what is expected of them. The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the major factors that affect students' writing skills.
- To identify areas of students' difficulty with writing skills.
- To find out effective solutions that can help students improve their writing skills.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate factors causing difficulties in grade 10 students' English writing skills at Sibru Sire Secondary School.

## 2. Review Literature

Writing is both a mental and a physical process. Writing requires finding ideas, considering how to convey them, and shaping those ideas into coherent sentences (Nunan, 2003). According to Al-Atabi (2020), writing is the process of communicating thoughts and ideas in a readable manner by employing symbols, letters of the alphabet, punctuation, and whitespace. Symbols are used to represent a language in this human communication medium.

Ly et al. (2021) argued that putting one's thoughts down on paper is a great way to gain insight into one's knowledge. Students face the challenge of writing effective text since they are not given enough opportunity to write freely in class, yet few teachers make this a regular part of their lesson plans (Alfaki, 2015). To enhance one's writing skills, writers need sufficient time and space to perform their writing tasks. All of the writing steps require time, and students need it so that they may edit, rewrite, collect their thoughts, properly organize their ideas, and develop their ideas. Sufficient time spent on writing assignments would help the students become proficient English writers. Because of time constraints, students' ability to express themselves creatively in writing suffers (Cohen & Carson, 2001).

Teaching writing and reading in English at the elementary and middle school levels does not need a lot of effort, yet most English teachers do not bother to use this tactic. Consequently, their students struggle to improve their writing skills (Graham, 2008). Writing-related concerns include proper structure, coherence, completeness, appropriateness, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. In addition, elements affecting students' writing were categorized as either student-related, such as a lack of strategic knowledge and a lack of regular practice or teacher-related, such as teachers' feedback methods (Sied, 2018).

Challenges in writing for students are at all phases (Haider, 2012; Hyland, 2003). These problems can be broken down into four distinct areas: language, psychology, cognition, and education. Incorrect English structure makes it harder to understand what is being read (Quintero, 2008; Nik et al., 2010), hence students often struggle with these aspects of the language. Learners can feel disheartened even if they have a firm grasp on the syntactic, lexical, and grammatical aspects of text writing (Rico, 2014) because incoherent language fails to convey concepts.

In addition, a lack of self-confidence and a teaching method that does not cater to students' learning styles and social backgrounds are to be blamed (Ahmad et al., 2013). It is argued that the instructor and the student are the two starting points for poor writing skills. Teachers require the ability to persuade students, as well as the proper pedagogical method, to teach writing, which includes providing students with both encouragement and constructive criticism. However, understudies face many obstacles, including the effects of the language barrier and the necessity of reading, motivation, and practice. The process of translating ideas into content is difficult for aspiring journalists in Pakistan for a variety of reasons, including cognitive, social, and linguistic challenges (Bilal et al., 2013; Dar & Khan, 2015).

The structural and communicative accuracy of students' texts is also severely affected by factors such as teachers' inconsistency in providing feedback, students' lack of an analytical and evaluative approach, and big and unmanageable class numbers (Pineteh, 2013). It is difficult for most students to discover enough reliable sources, to accurately paraphrase or summarize them, and to write in a suitable academic manner (Gonye et al., 2012). Problems in academic English arise from factors such as late introduction to essay writing, excessively large class sizes, students' unfavorable perception of the subject, L1 transfer, and a lack of open conversation between students and teachers about effective solutions. According to Bilal et al. (2013), students' writing abilities are affected by several variables, including a lack of time dedicated to teaching writing, inadequate A/V aids, overcrowded classrooms, conventional pedagogy, and students' weak academic backgrounds. Similarly, Haider (2012) stated that ineffective and out-of-date textbooks do not stress the value of writing or provide any opportunities for students to practice writing. Besides, Siddiqui (2007) criticized unskilled educators for failing to inspire their students to write effectively in the classroom.

The above studies were undertaken to identify the factors affecting students' writing skills in terms of students, instructors and educational environment-related factors. Most Ethiopian research has not indicated that cultural-related factors affect students' writing skills. Though reading has great importance in developing writing skills, the significance of reading in developing writing skills is not considered in different research. Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram may help students enhance their writing skills.

According to Harmer (2007), typical difficulties pertaining to English writing skills are discussed. These concerns pertain to the use of lexical items, punctuation, text formatting, spellings, and syntax. Extensive practice can empower learners to overcome these challenges.

Students at the advanced or intermediate level often struggle with constructing cohesive sentences and integrating them into a broader piece of writing. At this point, pupils may have difficulties in crafting either a formal or informal written composition. Writing skills are often accompanied by other skills that help learners develop their writing abilities (Clementson, 2005).

### 3. Methods

This research employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore factors causing difficulties in students' English writing skills. A mixed methods study, as its name suggests, employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches for data gathering and analysis (Dornyei, 2001). Hence, the inadequacy of one research method is solved by the strength of another. The study was conducted at Sire Secondary School, which is located in Sire town, located in Oromia Regional State. A random sampling technique was used to select samples from the total population of grade 10 students. According to Brown (2001, p.72), "each individual in the population must have an equal chance of being selected", which reduces the effect of bias and enhances objectivity. 110 students (62 male and 48 female students) were selected for the study. To obtain more valid and reliable findings, the researcher utilized qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected through questionnaires and classroom observations. These instruments were chosen as the most appropriate tools for collecting data from the participants. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS and Excel. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis methods were employed to display the results. The results of the analysis were supported by a qualitative analysis from classroom observation.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Number of Participants

	Frequency	Percent
male	68	61.8
female	42	38.2
Total	110	100.0

Table 1 shows that 61.8% of the participants were male students and 38.2% of the participants were female students. This indicates that both male and female students were involved in the study.

Q1. My motivation significantly influences my writing skills.

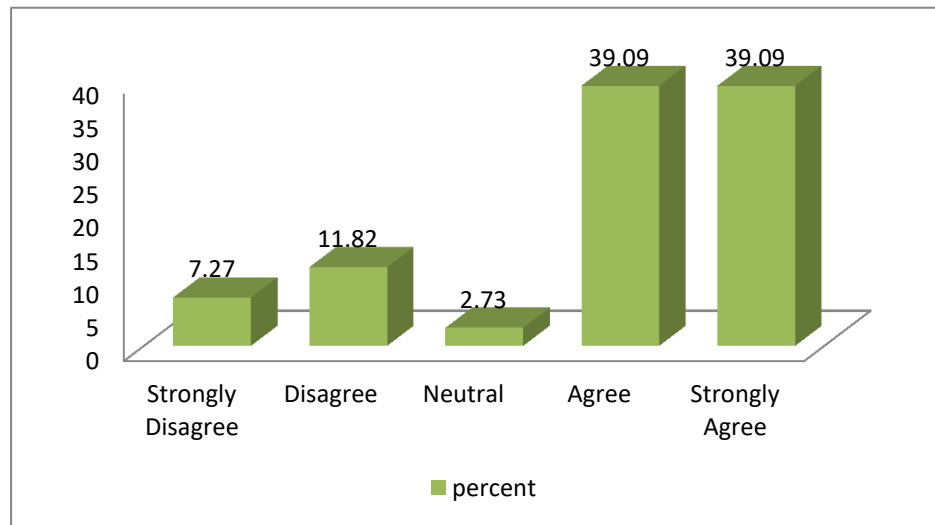


Figure 1. Students' level of agreement on the impact of motivation on their writing skills

Figure 1 shows respondents' perceptions of motivation's impact on writing skills. This figure reveals how motivation affects writing skills and how students view this relationship. 7.27% of respondents strongly disagreed that motivation improves their writing skills. This group thinks motivation doesn't affect their writing skills. This may be due to a lack of interest in writing, external motivation issues, or writing obstacles that seem demotivated them. 11.82% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This group recognizes that motivation may affect their work but doesn't regard it as a major factor. Their view is that motivation may be a component, but other factors may be more important in writing progress. 2.73% of respondents were neutral. This group is unsure how motivation affects their writing skill. Most respondents, (39.09%) strongly agreed and a similar percentage (39.09%) of respondents agreed motivation affects their writing skills. This implies that motivation plays a vital role in improving students' writing skills. Students in these groups believe that their motivation and writing skills are interconnected. This observation shows that intrinsic motivation improves learning performance. This data shows that most respondents believe motivation is linked to the development of writing ability. Many respondents agreed that motivation is key to writing well. To acquire competent writing skills, educational motivation must be fostered and maintained. Similarly Zerin (2007) stated that one of the primary obstacles that teachers encounter in the classroom pertains to the act of writing. Prior to preparing any task, teachers must consider students' motivation, writing proficiency, and chosen learning style.

Q2. My prior knowledge and background have a meaningful impact on my ability to write effectively.

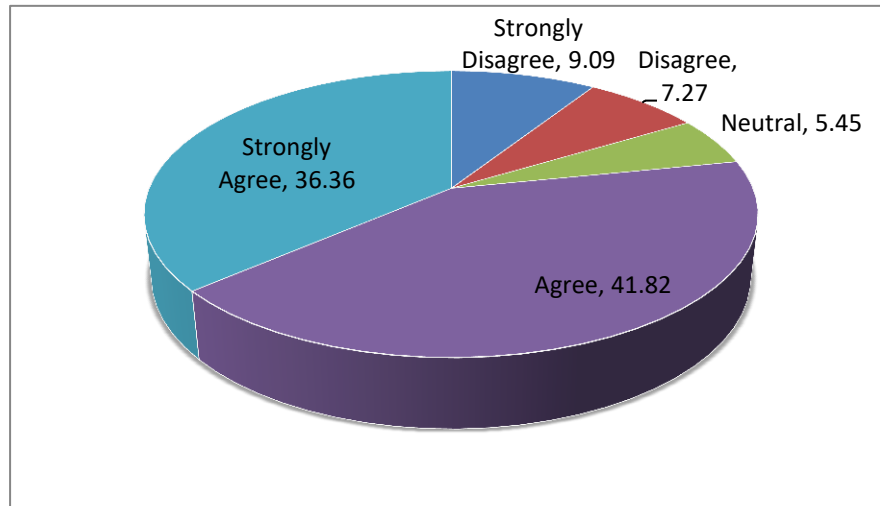


Figure 2. Students' level of agreement on the impact of prior knowledge on their writing skills

Figure 2 shows students' opinions on how prior knowledge and background affect their writing performance. These data show how respondents think their personal knowledge and background affect their composition writing. 9.09% of respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, indicating that they believe their prior knowledge and background have no effect on their writing skills. This group may believe that their writing talents are mostly unrelated to their personal experiences and knowledge base. 7.27% of the respondents disagreed. These students admit that their past and knowledge may influence them but do not consider it significant. Their view is that writing talents are influenced by many factors, including background, but it is not the main factor. 5.45% of respondents were neutral about how their prior knowledge and background affected their writing skills. Most respondents (41.82%) agreed, indicating that their prior knowledge and background affect their writing. In addition, 36.36% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This implies that majority of the students understand how their own experiences, education, and culture shape their writing skills. In conclusion, the results show that largest number of the respondents believe their background and knowledge affect their writing skills. This highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing learners' different experiences and backgrounds, which can improve their writing skills. Teachers can use students' prior knowledge and background to improve their writing skills and accommodate the needs of individuals with different opinions. As the same result, Broughton et al. (2003) identified four specific issues associated with the Poland students' development of English writing proficiency. The issues encompass: "Technical difficulties with the composition of English; challenges pertaining to the precision of English grammar and vocabulary; difficulties in aligning the writing style with the requirements of a specific context; obstacles in cultivating fluency and confidence in conveying necessary information," (P. 116). These challenging areas can be resolved by efficient planning and supervised composition.

Q3. My language proficiency, including vocabulary and grammar, is a key factor in my writing skills.

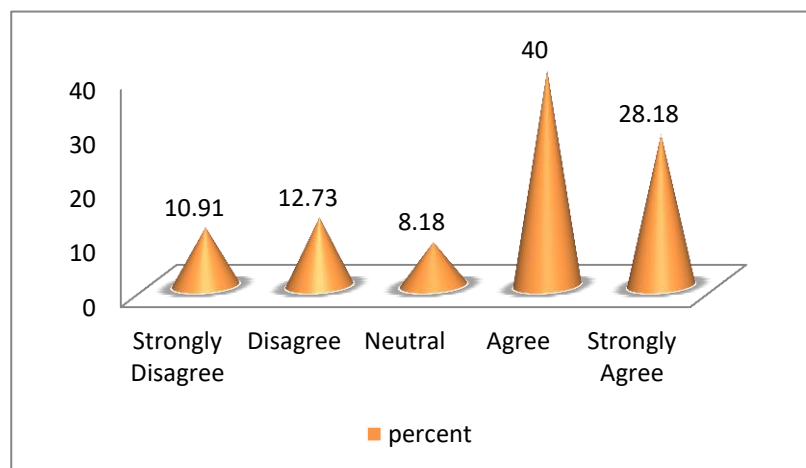


Figure 3. Students' level of agreement on the impact of their language proficiency on their writing skills

Figure 3 shows students' views on how vocabulary and grammar affect their writing skills. It reveals how students view linguistic

proficiency in writing. 10.91% of students strongly disagreed that language proficiency is a crucial component in improving writing. These students don't think linguistic proficiency affects writing skills. 12.73% of students disagreed with the statement. These students don't think vocabulary and grammar affect their writing skills. Only 8.18% of respondents were neutral. Most significant (40.0%) of students agreed with the statement. This suggests that most students believe language proficiency, including vocabulary and grammar, is crucial in enhancing their writing abilities. This group recognizes the importance of other linguistic skills in improving writing skills. 28.18% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. These students firmly believe that their language proficiency is a fundamental and indispensable factor in their writing skills. The results highlight the importance of language proficiency in writing skills and emphasize the need to integrate language development into writing instruction. While a substantial majority of students agree with the statement, teachers should continue to support and enhance students' language skills to further improve their writing abilities. In conclusion, the finding provides valuable insights into students' perceptions of the significance of language proficiency, including vocabulary and grammar, in their writing skills. It highlights the importance of recognizing diverse perspectives and adapting teaching methods to cater to the varying needs and beliefs of students. Similarly, Benard (2014) argued that grammar is a crucial factor in the process of writing. Kenyan students with a low understanding of grammar will experience anxiety when attempting to construct grammatically accurate statements. Inadequate spelling is an additional factor that contributes to pupils' anxiety when acquiring writing skills. Possessing proficient spelling abilities will facilitate the acquisition of writing skills for students.

Q4. Teaching methods and strategies used by teachers significantly impact my writing skills.

Table 2. Students' level of agreement on the impact of teaching methods and strategies

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	7.3
Disagree	17	15.5
Neutral	11	10.0
Agree	46	41.8
Strongly Agree	28	25.5
Total	110	100.0

Table 2 presents data related to the impact of teaching methods and strategies on students' writing skills. Various teaching approaches have varying degrees of influence on students, as reflected in the percentages of respondents. The table shows that the most significant percentage (41.8%) of respondents agreed that teaching methods and strategies influence their writing skills. This indicates that a substantial number of the student population surveyed acknowledges the role of teaching techniques in shaping their writing abilities. This is a critical insight, as it highlights the importance of pedagogical approaches in the development of fundamental writing skills. It implies that teachers can positively impact students' writing proficiency by employing effective methods and strategies. 25.5% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement which signifies an even stronger consensus on the influence of teaching methods. Students in this express a high level of conviction regarding the significant impact that their educators have on their writing skills. This is a clear affirmation that the majority of students recognize the pivotal role of teachers in shaping their writing abilities. It also suggests that when teachers employ effective teaching methods and strategies, students are more likely to excel in writing. 7.3% of respondents strongly disagreed" with the statement, and 15.5% of respondents disagreed. It's crucial to acknowledge these perspectives as well, as they highlight the diversity of opinions and experiences within the student population. Some students may feel their writing skills are primarily self-driven or that teaching methods are not well-suited to their learning styles. Nevertheless, they do not believe that teaching methods play a significant role in their writing development. 10.0% of students were neutral, and neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. They are undecided or perhaps have not given much thought to the influence of teaching methods on their writing skills. It is important to note that this group may have varying degrees of receptivity to teaching methods, and their writing could be influenced by factors such as their previous educational experiences or the teaching methods employed by their current teachers. These results should serve as a reminder of the significance of their instructional approaches. It suggests that when teachers adopt effective methods and strategies, they are more likely to foster improved writing skills in their students. However, they should also consider the needs and preferences of students who may have dissenting views or remain neutral. This highlights the importance of adopting a diversified approach to cater to various learning styles and individual needs. In conclusion, the table offers a snapshot of the diverse perspectives among students regarding the influence of teaching methods on their writing skills. It emphasizes the critical role that educators play in shaping their students' writing abilities and highlights the need for teachers to consider and adapt their methods to better meet the needs of all students. According to Clark (2003), it is necessary to instruct learners in the writing process. This allows the learners to write in any given circumstance. According to the traditional approach, teaching grammar is considered to be crucial in the development of writing abilities. However, recent research has demonstrated that grammar instruction does not have a substantial impact on the development of Arab students' writing skills.

Q5. Teacher feedback and guidance are highly effective in helping me improve my writing skills.

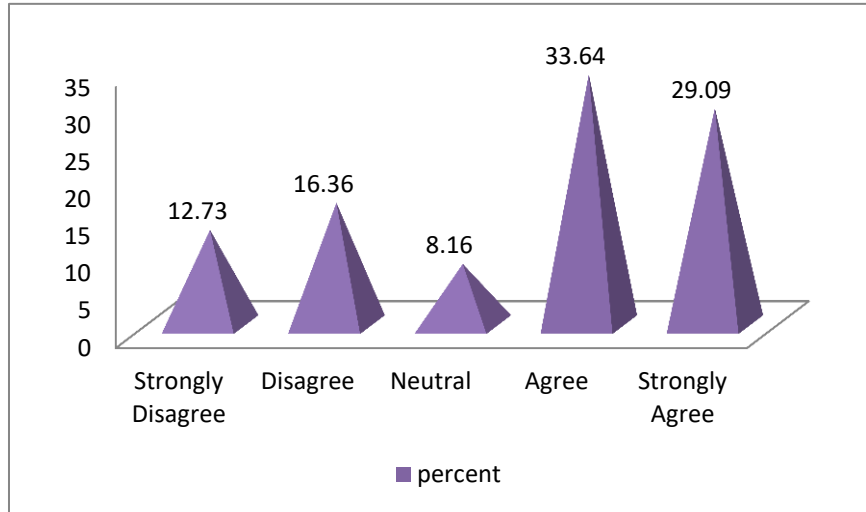


Figure 4. Students' level of agreement on the impact of teacher feedback and guidance on their writing skills

Figure 4 explores the relationship between teacher feedback and guidance and its impact on students' writing skills. It provides insights into the perceptions and attitudes of students regarding the influence of teacher feedback on their writing abilities. The figure highlights that a majority of students recognize the value of teacher feedback and guidance in enhancing their writing skills. 33.64% of respondents agreed with the statement. These respondents believe teacher feedback and guidance have a positive impact on their writing skills. They likely find value in the corrections, suggestions, and insights provided by their teachers, which help them refine their writing abilities. And 29.09% of the respondents strongly agreed that teacher feedback is beneficial for their writing development. 12.73% of respondents strongly disagreed, and 16.36% of respondents disagreed with the statement. These percentages reflect a minority of students who do not perceive teacher feedback as a significant factor in their writing improvement. 8.16% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. These students may have mixed feelings about the impact of teacher feedback on their writing abilities. Overall, 62.7% of the participants believe that teacher feedback is a potent tool for nurturing and enhancing students' writing capabilities. This indicates students acknowledge the constructive role that teacher feedback plays in their writing progress. Teachers feedbacks are seen as valuable resources for refining their writing abilities. It highlights that when teachers offer constructive and supportive feedback, they are more likely to have a positive impact on their students' writing skills. In conclusion, the figure reinforces the significance of teacher feedback and guidance in improving students' writing skills. It highlights the need for educators to continue providing effective feedback to nurture their students' writing capabilities while being aware of and responsive to the concerns of those who may not fully agree with the statement. Similarly, Imran (2011) emphasized that the majority of Pakistan learners experience discomfort during the various stages of developing their English writing skills, particularly when dealing with grammatical structures, orthography, punctuation, and vocabulary. The prevalence of faults and errors in the written works of these learners can be attributed to the use of a traditional teaching and learning approach.

Q6. The teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching motivate me to enhance my writing skills.

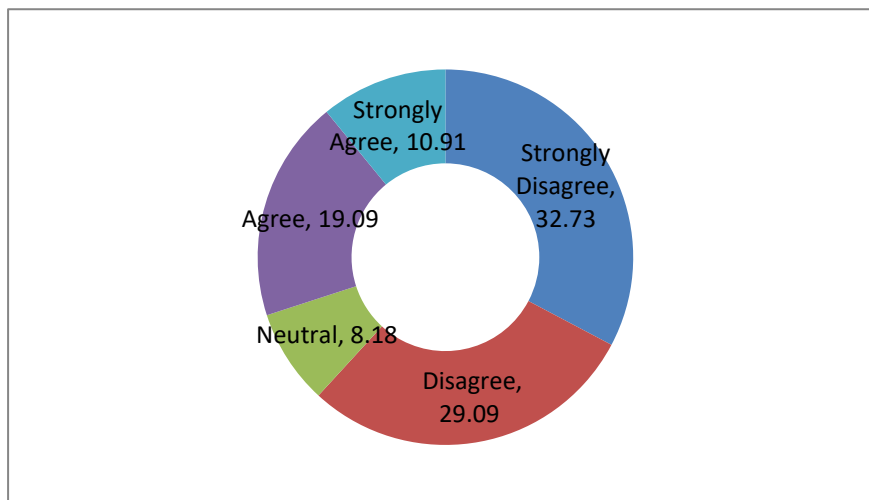


Figure 5. Students' level of agreement on the impact of the teacher's enthusiasm and passion on their writing skills

Figure 5 presents valuable data regarding the influence of a teacher's enthusiasm and passion for teaching on students' motivation to enhance their writing skills. The results shed light on the extent to which students are motivated by their teachers' enthusiasm and passion. 32.73% of students strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates a significant number of students strongly disagreed that their teacher's enthusiasm and passion for teaching motivate them to enhance their writing skills. There could be several reasons for this, such as a teacher's lack of enthusiasm or a mismatch in teaching styles and student preferences. For these students, the teacher's approach may not effectively inspire them to improve their writing. In addition, 29.09% of students disagreed with the statement. This suggests that a substantial number of students do not find their teachers' enthusiasm and passion motivating enough to enhance their writing skills. These students may be looking for additional sources of motivation or teaching methods. A smaller percentage of students (8.18%) were neutral. These students neither agree nor disagree regarding the influence of the teacher's enthusiasm and passion. Their lack of a strong opinion could be due to various factors, including indifference to the teacher's teaching style or a balanced perspective on the role of the teachers' enthusiasm in their writing motivation. 19.09% of students agreed that their teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching motivate them to enhance their writing skills. This group acknowledges the role of the teacher's passion in boosting their motivation. These students may find their teacher's enthusiasm inspiring, making them more willing to invest time and effort in improving their writing. 10.91% of students strongly agreed with the statement. For this group, the teachers' passion is not only motivating but also a driving force behind their dedication to improving their writing skills. They likely see their teacher as a source of inspiration and guidance. The findings give emphasis to the crucial role that a teacher's enthusiasm and passion can play in motivating students. Teachers can use this information to understand the varied responses of their students and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. In conclusion, the finding highlights the need for teachers to be aware of the impact of their teaching style and adapt to better motivate students. Moreover, students can use this information to make informed decisions about how to enhance their writing skills, taking into account the role of their teacher's enthusiasm in their motivation.

Q7. The content and exercises in textbooks significantly contribute to the improvement of my writing skills.

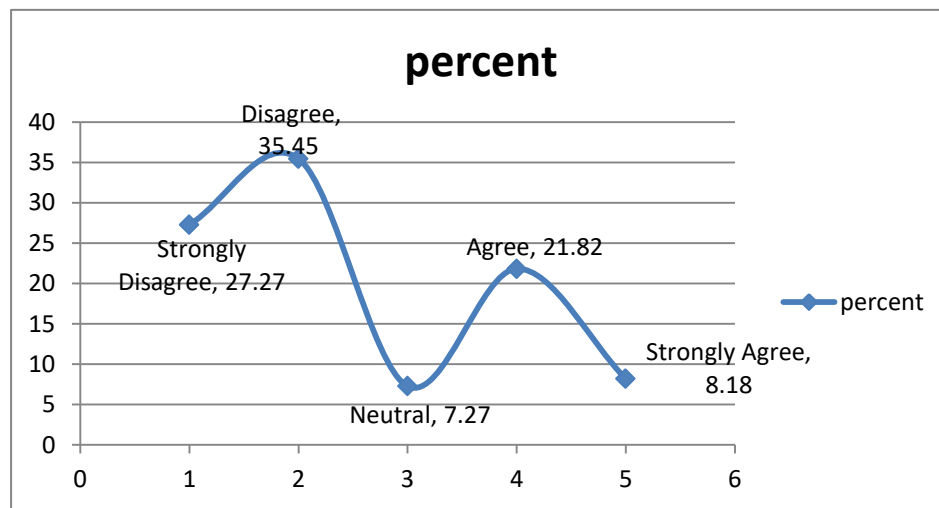


Figure 6. Students' level of agreement on the impact of the content and exercises in textbooks on their writing skills

Figure 6 presents data that explores the perception of students regarding the role of textbook content and exercises in enhancing their writing skills. It provides insights into how students perceive the contribution of textbooks to their writing skills. 27.27% of students strongly disagreed about the use of textbook content and the contribution of exercises to the improvement of their writing skills. These students are firm in their belief that textbooks do not play a substantial role in enhancing their writing abilities. 35.45% of students disagreed that they do not see textbook content and exercises as a significant contributor to improving their writing skills. A smaller percentage of students (7.27%) of the respondents were neutral. These students neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. 21.82% of students agreed indicating that they believe textbook content and exercises contribute to the improvement of their writing skills. This group recognizes the value of textbook materials and exercises as a beneficial factor in enhancing their writing abilities. 8.18% of respondents strongly agreed, suggesting that textbook content and exercises play a significant role in improving their writing skills. These students firmly believe in the efficacy of textbooks in helping them enhance their writing abilities. The results emphasize the need for various teaching materials and approaches. Teachers need to be aware of these varied preferences and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. In conclusion, the figure provides valuable insights into how students perceive the role of textbook content and exercises in enhancing their writing skills. It emphasizes the importance of considering individual learning preferences and tailoring teaching methods to accommodate the diverse needs of students.

Q8. Supplementary writing activities in textbooks are highly effective in developing my writing abilities.

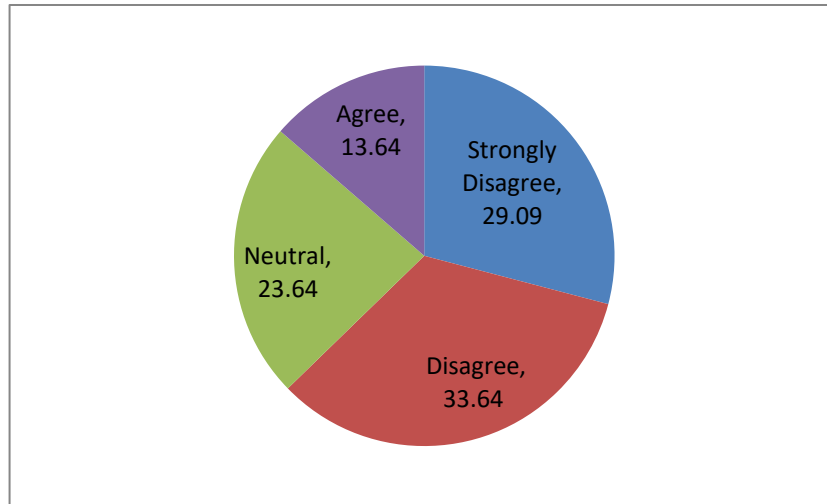


Figure 7. Students' level of agreement on the impact of supplementary writing activities in textbooks on their writing abilities

Figure 7 explores the effectiveness of supplementary writing activities in textbooks in developing writing abilities. This figure presents the distribution of responses among the surveyed participants regarding their agreement or disagreement with the statement, "Supplementary writing activities in textbooks are effective in developing my writing abilities." 29.1% of the surveyed participants strongly disagreed about the effectiveness of supplementary writing activities in textbooks for enhancing their writing abilities. These respondents strongly believe that such activities are not helpful in developing their writing skills. The most substantial percentage (33.6%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. These individuals do not see the effectiveness of supplementary writing activities that improve their writing skills. 23.6% of respondents were neutral. These individuals are unsure about whether supplementary writing activities in textbooks contribute significantly to the development of their writing skills. 13.6% of respondents agreed with the statement, expressing that such activities are indeed beneficial in enhancing their writing skills. The results are useful in providing an overview of the diverse perspectives among the surveyed individuals on the role of supplementary writing activities in textbooks. This data could provide insights into the specific aspects of supplementary writing activities that participants find effective or ineffective, enabling educators and curriculum developers to make more informed decisions about the inclusion of such activities in textbooks. Similarly, Ahmed (2007) argued that the limited duration of English classes and the presence of excessively large class sizes have a negative impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning English writing skills. In addition, the Pakistan learners are given pre-made supplementary materials to pass their tests. Occasionally, the teachers themselves complete the writing tasks on black or white boards.

Q9. Diverse reading materials in textbooks play a significant role in helping me become a better writer.

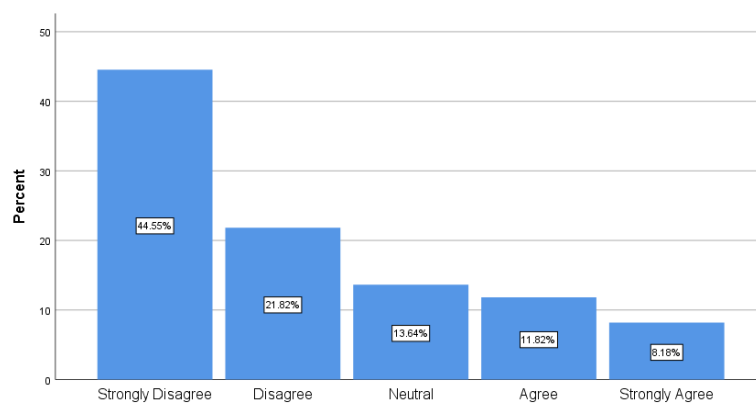


Figure 8. Students' level of agreement on the impact of diverse reading materials in textbooks in helping them become better writers

Figure 8 presents data related to the impact of diverse reading materials in textbooks on individuals' writing abilities. It reveals the distribution of responses among participants in a survey based on their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, "Diverse reading materials in textbooks play a significant role in helping me become better writers." The largest number of participants (44.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This group of respondents firmly believes that diverse reading materials in textbooks do not significantly contribute to improving their writing skills. 21.8% of respondents disagreed with the statement. These respondents do not believe that diverse reading materials are effective in enhancing their writing skills. 13.6% of participants were neutral. However, 11.8% of



respondents agreed that they believe that diverse reading materials in textbooks do have a positive impact on their writing abilities. This group acknowledges the significance of such materials in improving their writing skills. 8.2% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. These individuals strongly believe that diverse reading materials play a substantial role in helping them become effective writers. Understanding what participants consider to be effective or ineffective about diverse reading materials can inform the development of educational materials and curricula. Similarly, Ahmed (2007) stated that Pakistan learners are given pre-made supplementary materials to pass their tests. Occasionally, the teachers themselves complete the writing tasks on black or white boards.

Q10. Writing activities and exercises in textbooks are crucial for me to practice and improve their writing skills.

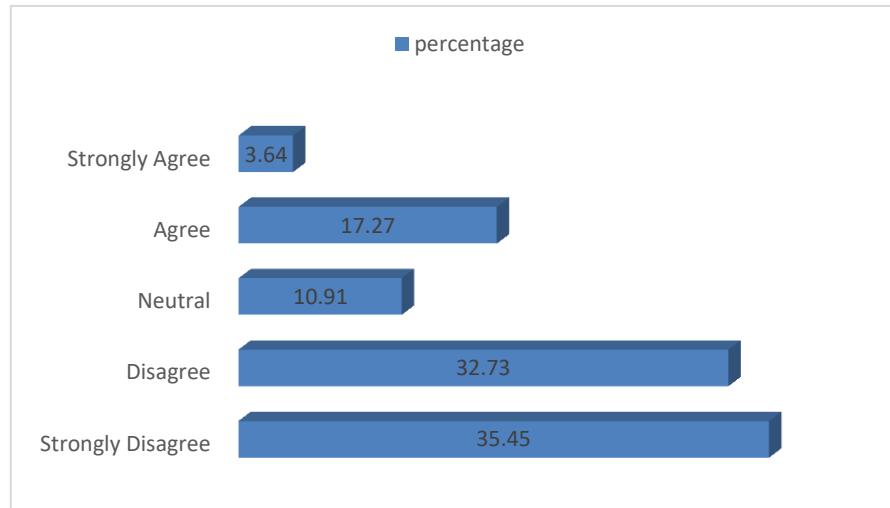


Figure 9. Students' level of agreement on the impact of writing activities and exercises in textbooks in improving their writing skills

Figure 9 presents data related to the effectiveness of writing activities and exercises in textbooks as a means of practicing and improving their writing skills. It illustrates the distribution of responses among participants in a survey based on their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, "Writing activities and exercises in textbooks are useful for me to practice and improve my writing skills." The largest number (35.45%) of participants strongly disagreed with the statement. This group of respondents firmly believes that the writing activities and exercises in textbooks are not useful for practicing and improving their writing skills. This indicates that a significant number of participants have a negative view regarding the efficacy of the activities. 32.73% of respondents disagreed with the statement. These respondents believe that the writing activities and exercises in textbooks are not useful for practicing and improving their writing skills. 10.91% of participants were neutral. These individuals neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating a level of uncertainty regarding the usefulness of writing activities and exercises in textbooks. 17.27% of respondents agreed that they believe that writing activities and exercises in textbooks are useful for practicing and improving their writing skills. This group acknowledges the value of such activities in enhancing their writing skills. 3.64% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. These individuals strongly believe that writing activities and exercises in textbooks are highly effective for practicing and improving their writing skills. This signifies that the participants who find these activities extremely useful. This figure provides valuable insights into the diversity of opinions and perceptions among respondents regarding the utility of writing activities and exercises in textbooks for their writing improvement. The data indicates that a considerable number of participants do not believe about the effectiveness of these activities in enhancing their writing skills. These results could inform educators and curriculum developers to refine the materials and exercises included in textbooks to supply students' needs and preferences better. In summary, this data serves as a valuable starting point for analyzing the diverse attitudes of the surveyed group toward the usefulness of writing activities and exercises in textbooks for improving their writing skills.

Q11. Access to digital resources and online writing tools has a substantial impact on my writing skills.

Table 3. Students' level of agreement on the impact of access to digital resources and online writing tools

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	33	30.0
Disagree	44	40.0
Neutral	2	1.8
Agree	20	18.2
Strongly Agree	11	10.0
Total	110	100.0

Table 3 presents a breakdown of survey responses regarding the influence of digital resources and online writing tools on the enhancement of writing skills among students at a specific school. These findings provide valuable insights into how students perceive the role of digital resources and writing tools in their educational experiences. The largest number of the surveyed students (40%) disagreed with the notion

that these resources contribute to the improvement of their writing skills. This statistic raises questions about the specific digital tools and resources being used in the educational context and whether they align with students' needs and preferences. Furthermore, it may suggest that students have encountered challenges or limitations with the tools provided, hindering their perceived utility for improving writing skills. In addition, 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This suggests a strong and unwavering dissatisfaction among these students regarding the effectiveness of digital resources and online writing tools. Exploring the reasons behind this sentiment would be crucial to address potential concerns or areas for improvement in the school's digital infrastructure and its integration into the curriculum. However, 10% of students strongly agreed with the statement, demonstrating a high level of confidence in the positive impact of digital resources and writing tools on their writing skills. 18.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement, indicating that they believe digital resources and online writing tools do contribute to the enhancement of their writing skills. A relatively small number of students, 1.8%, of the respondents were neutral. This group neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This information can guide educators and administrators in making informed decisions about resource allocation and instructional practices to better support student learning and development in this digital age. Asep (2014) asserted that a deficiency in vocabulary has resulted in Indonesia students encountering difficulties in obtaining writing proficiency. Vocabulary is the essential component in formulating sentences, which serves as the foundation for developing efficient writing abilities. A strong vocabulary can assist students in effectively expressing their ideas through speaking or writing. Utilising an electronic dictionary and engaging in additional reading activities can assist kids who possess a restricted vocabulary.

## 5. Conclusion

Writing is the most significant development in the history of human life. It offers a record of knowledge, views, beliefs, sentiments, arguments, explanations, theories, and so on that is relatively long-lasting. Writing enables us to communicate not only with the generation that currently exists but also with generations that will exist in the future. It enables people from the recent as well as the distant past to communicate with one another. There are a great number of pupils who struggle to write an effective text. According to the data that was analyzed, most students do not pay attention to improving their writing skills. Students truly experience a great deal of difficulty while attempting to explain themselves in logical writing in the English language. However, writing is an ability that needs to be developed further via several practices. In light of this, the best way to improve one's writing skills is to spend a lot of time practising and prioritizing writing time. The majority of Ethiopian learners in all educational level have poor writing skills. They find it difficult to master writing skills; as a result, they are unable to write an acceptable text. Overall, this study attempts to explore the factors affecting students' English writing skills. The major findings of the study are:

- English teachers use the traditional approach (product approach) of teaching writing skills. Teachers' approach to teaching writing is the major factor that affects students' English writing skills.
- Teachers never give students corrective written feedback on their written productions.
- Teachers rarely motivate students to practice writing in and outside the classrooms.
- Students have a lack of practice writing, a lack of interest, a lack of attention and a wrong attitude towards writing skills.

Finally, the researchers recommend some solutions to improve students' writing skills: English Teachers should be well trained; the school administration should reduce the overcrowded number of students in the classrooms. In addition, the educational environment should be comfortable for practising writing, and teachers should use a more process-oriented approach and very little product approach to teach writing skills. Furthermore, teachers should encourage students to practice writing inside and /outside the classroom. Students should give sufficient time to practice writing. The curriculum designers should improve the number of communicative writing activities in students' books. Furthermore, the results of this study call for further exploration to understand the factors influencing the integration of digital resources and writing tools in the educational environment.

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## Author's Contribution

**Dr. Ng Miew Luan** conceptualized and developed the arguments presented in the article and edit the manuscript and **Dr. Megala Rajendran** contributed to the literature review, validation of the arguments presented, provided critical insights and ensured the overall clarity of the paper. Besides, **Dr. Jeyalakshmi Subramanian** contributed to the development of the literature review. Furthermore, **Dr. D. Jaisankar** contributed to edition and revision of the paper. In addition, **Lamessa Oli** contributed to questionnaire development, data analysis, interpretation, edition, revision and writing the paper. **Dr. Prakash A** contributed to edition and revision of the paper.

We, authors, discussed the research findings, contributed to interpretation of the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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#### **Data sharing statement**

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