

**Difficulties of Teaching Writing Facing Sixth Grade Students as
Perceived by English Teachers in Basic Schools
in Al-Mafraq District/Jordan**

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Received: 15/12/2015

Accepted: 05/12/2016

Abstract

The study aimed at identifying difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district/Jordan. The sample of the study consisted of (368) teachers. To collect the data, a questionnaire of (30) items divided into three domains for difficulties in teaching writing was prepared. Validity and reliability were ensured by Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to be (0.87). To analyze the study data, means , standard deviations and t-test were used. The results of the study showed that the difficulties in teaching writing facing (6th) grade students related to teachers then curriculum as perceived by English teachers. The study indicated that there were statistical significant differences among means responses due to gender. The study also, indicated that there were no statistical significant differences among means responses due to teachers' experience. Several recommendations were suggested regarding to the results of study.

المخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف إلى صعوبات تدريس الكتابة التي تواجه طلاب الصف السادس الأساسي من وجهة نظر معلمي ومعلمات اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الأساسية في قصبة المفرق. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (٣٦٨) معلماً ومعلمة، ولجمع المعلومات تم تطوير استبانة لصعوبات تدريس الكتابة تكونت من (٣٠) فقرة موزعة على ثلاثة مجالات، وتم التأكد من صدق الأداة، كما استخرج لها معامل الثبات باستخدام معادلة كرونباخ ألفا وبلغ (٠,٨٧)، ولتحليل بيانات الدراسة تم استخراج المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية واختبار (ت). وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الصعوبات في تدريس الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية التي تواجه طلاب الصف السادس الأساسي تتعلق بالمعلمين واثم بالمنهاج من وجهة نظر المعلمين، وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق بين متوسطات إجابات أفراد

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عينة الدراسة تعزى لمتغير الجنس، كما لا يوجد وجود فروق بين متوسطات إجابات أفراد عينة الدراسة تعزى لمتغير الخبرة. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى عدد من التوصيات في ضوء النتائج.

Introduction:

Writing is one of the four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) that should be mastered as one of the means to communicate with others. The success of the students is largely based on their ability to communicate in written words. Writing encourages students to express their thoughts and ideas which can be examined, evaluated, and added to rearranged and changed through feedback.

The importance of writing is great as it integrates other language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading) and helps teachers deal with language problems that may face students and hinder their communication. It is also an activity that needs mental effort to think out, combine and arrange sentences to produce meaningful ideas. But writing is not a skill to be learned in isolation from the other language skills. It is taught with goal of supplying students with the ability to use the writing skill in higher education or work. It is also an effective means to express one's needs, thoughts and experiences (Ministry of Education, 1993). Moreover, writing should not be thought of as only a productive skill. It is a three-stage process (prewriting, writing, and rewriting). The teacher gives lessons about writing mechanics and various writing practices to keep his students interested (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Writing is regarded as the most important skill in teaching English, which indicates students' ability to express themselves correctly. To achieve the effectiveness of English teaching, teachers should take care of writing for students which requires the following: teacher can practice the correct steps in writing, and students can recognise how they write short paragraph correctly. The literature on

writing research has shown that revision is an important element of writing process. Some researchers focus on strategies and behaviours of writers when they write in one language (Al-Khabti, 1999).

In Jordan , it is difficult to deny that learners of foreign language suffer from weakness in writing in spite of the efforts exerted by the Jordanian educationalists to overcome this weakness. Toubat (2003) stated that students are weak in writing because teachers concentrate on teaching grammar, spelling drills, punctuation more than involving students in the writing process. In spite of the fact that these are means that help students learn writing, students need to be taught the way to produce language communicatively. Teachers should use effective techniques to help their students write good compositions.

In addition, some students face difficulty in writing. This difficulty can be caused from lack of many different kinds of knowledge which include lack of aspects of the language system and lack of the text structures. So teachers should use the suitable ways in teaching writing which can help students and offer opportunities to be good writers (Richgels, 2002). Paz (2001) also showed that writing difficulty is caused by lacking of mechanics including spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

Consequently, students should be taught how to write using the appropriate procedures that avoid problems in writing. So this study aims at investigating the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students from the teachers' perceived in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district.

Statement of the Problem :

Throughout the researcher's field work at schools, the researcher noticed that students are weak in the writing skill, and they need to develop their writing achievement. They face difficulty in writing a paragraph as they are required to

produce good ideas arranged logically and using correct vocabulary items. This difficulty lies on how to produce meaningful sentences which comprise coherent paragraph.

According to the researcher's experience and the literature review concerning this topic, some studies showed that the difficulties in writing related to lack of focus on training teachers in how to teach writing effectively (Graham, 2008; Vygotsky, 2004; Gleason, 2001; Al-Sawalha and Chow, 2012; El-koumy, 2004; Aly, 1995; Paulson, 1992; Peyton et. al, 1994; Al-Shourafa, 2012). Other studies showed that the difficulties in writing due to the students (Msanjila, 2005; Rosenblum, 2003; Al-Khsawneh, 2010). And other studies showed that the difficulties in writing related to lack of systematic and planned writing curriculum (Hirose, 2003; Al-Sawalha and Chow, 2012; El-koumy, 2004; Aly, 1995; Paulson, 1992; Peyton et. al, 1994). The researcher found that there is a shortage in studies dealing with discovering the reasons for difficulties of teaching writing with the previous areas (Teacher, Students, Curriculum) together in Jordanian schools, so this study aims to investigate the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English teachers in basic schools in Al- Mafraq district/Jordan. This is one of the major reasons which enhanced the researcher to conduct this study.

The Questions of the Study :

The following questions were formulated:

- What are the difficulties facing the sixth grade students in teaching writing as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan ?.
- What are the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan which due to English language teachers' gender?.

- What are the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan which due to English language teachers' experience?.

The Purpose of the Study :

The main purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of English language teachers towards the most important difficulties in teaching writing in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district. Thus, basically the aim of this study is to identify the writing difficulties in basic schools.

The Significance of the Study :

The significance of the present study determines as follows:

- It provides valuable data concerning the perceptions of English teachers about the difficulties of teaching writing.
- It may be helpful to decision-makers to improve strategies of teaching writing.
- It might be helpful to increase students' achievements in writing skill.
- It may help English language teachers to recognize the difficulties of teaching writing and find some solutions.
- The study may help educational supervisors to benefit from it when conducting training courses for English language teachers and raise their awareness and knowledge in difficulties in teaching writing skill.

Limitations of the Study:

- The study is administered to English language teachers in Al-Mafraq district basic schools during the academic year 2014/2015.
- The fields of the instrument include: difficulties related to teachers, difficulties related to students and difficulties related to curriculum .
- The generalization of the study results is limited within the questionnaire validity and reliability.

Definitions of Operational Terms:

Difficulties: problems in teaching writing which face sixth grade students in writing skill. These problems may be caused by teachers or students or curriculum.

- ❖ **6th grade students** : who had studied English for six years and their age is around (11) years old.
- ❖ **Basic school**: School which includes classes from 1 to 10 grade classes.
- ❖ **English language teacher**: He is the person who is officially designated by Ministry of Education in Jordan to be responsible for all aspects of the educational process and achieve the educational goals of English curricula.
- ❖ **Writing**: is a process of delivering ideas through written texts or translating what is on mind through written language, which goes through several steps (pre writing, drafting, revising).

Review of Literature and Previous Studies :

Though writing cannot be regarded as an optional skill to be taught outside the class, it is a fact that many teachers are not trained enough to teach writing properly. With regard to this view, Graham (2008) reports that many teachers state that they were not adequately prepared to teach writing in their classes. Around half of those teachers in Graham's study indicate that they haven't received almost preparation to teach writing. As a result of this lack of focus on training teachers in how to teach writing effectively, there are different problematic issues which occur in the writing class. For example, Vygotsky (2004, p:52) claimed very strongly that " *the child must be taught to write about what he is deeply interested in and has thought about much and deeply, about what he knows and understands well. The child must be taught never to write about what he does not know, does not understand, and is not interested in. And yet, the teacher sometimes does exactly the reverse and thus kills the writer in the child* ".

Additionally, El-koumy (2004); Aly (1995) ; Paulson (1992); Peyton et. al (1994) identified some other reasons for the problems of lack of EFL writing skills. These reasons can be summarized in the following points:

- Devoting less time to teaching writing rather than reading, speaking and listening, as many teachers regard writing as a secondary, non-interactive and time consuming activity.
- Students feel uncomfortable when having to write on topics chosen by the teacher, boring topics that they do not know well. These topics are selected without clear specific objectives in mind for each topic, some of them are not

related to students' life. Thus, students misunderstand these topics and spend most of their time analyzing and thinking about them rather than writing.

- Systematic and planned writing courses, which take into account students' actual level of proficiency, interests and future needs, are almost non-existent. Writing exercises in the workbook do not focus exactly on the development of all composition skills, since these exercises do not deal with such skills as spelling, punctuation, capitalization and organization.
- Large numbered classes that make it difficult for the students and the teacher to communicate effectively in an authentic way.
- Insufficient teaching strategies followed by English language teachers in teaching composition and the absence of motivating pre-writing activities that can enable learners to collect enough ideas and information necessary for writing or the lack of due time and attention devoted to developing writing skills and its different sub-skills.
- Teachers who lack sufficient training in the teaching of writing process often use past ineffective practices, and use the traditional approach for teaching writing which view writing as just asking students to write sentences using vocabulary and punctuation marks correctly.
- Environmental restraints such as the insufficient time devoted to writing because of the crowded daily schedules as well as overloaded curriculum.
- Lack of immediate and positive feedback.

Some researchers view writing as a difficult and demanding skill for many learners. It requires physical and mental effort and deliberate choice when thinking out the sentences and consider various ways of combining and arranging them (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008). According to the simple view of writing, writing ability includes transcriptional skills that are, handwriting, spelling, and text generation component, that is, generation of ideas and their translation into language representations in working memory. Both of these are then guided by self-regulation strategies such as goal setting, planning, and monitoring during the writing process (Berninger et al., 2002 and Lerkkanen et al., 2004).

Cooke (1997) conducted a study aimed at suggesting approaches (look, cover, write check method) which seems questionable for several reasons: it seems to disregard the way that the English writing system operates, it doesn't consider the nature of language functioning, it ignores the particular difficulties of dyslexic learners and discussing the approaches. Results revealed that this

approach takes account of the function of language, of the alphabetic writing system of English and of the phonological links between spoken and written words. The study resulted that teachers have arrange of writing strategies and should help learners to discover the ones that serve them best.

Graham and Karen (1999) examined writing difficulties of a 12-year-old boy with learning disabilities and serve writing difficulties is followed from initial assessment through instruction in strategies for planning, revising, and managing the composing process. A validated instructional model, self-regulated strategy development, was used to teach these processes. This study revealed that writing strategies are explicitly taught in combination with procedures for regulating the use of these strategies, the writing process, and any undesirable behaviors that may impede writing performance.

Paz (1999) presented information on how teachers in the United States help middle school students with learning disabilities to develop written language proficiency. Several stages of incorporated in the use of the self-regulated strategy include: teaching writing strategy and self-regulation procedures school students with learning disabilities, development of self-regulated strategies. The result of the study showed the need for planning, plan and write: a strategy for planning expository essay, suggestions for promoting student independence.

McArthur (2000) presented several tips on writing students and advice on how to write down ideas; importance of being operation discovery, suggestions for setting practical goals. The researcher showed the following steps: write down ideas, be open to discovery, revise, revise again, and just when you think you are finished.

Gleason and Isaacson (2001) conducted a study aimed at adding modelling to teacher instruction, make parts of the instruction more explicitly and provide students with scaffolds needed for success writing. The researchers showed that teachers who rely on basal textbooks to teaching students with learning problems may not be meeting their students' needs. It summarized research for teaching writing to students with learning problems. It developed a checklist of instructional features.

Hirose (2003) showed how Japanese EFL students have difficulty while writing cohesive paragraphs in English since most curriculum school in EFL classes focus on sentence-level translations during writing class. Msanjila (2005) noted with great concern that students face writing obstacles in expressing

themselves systematically and logically. Apart from this, students mix English structures and expressions with those of their native language and using literal translation.

Rosenblum et al. (2003) pointed out that handwriting is a complex human activity that entails an intricate blend of cognitive, kinaesthetic, and perceptual motor components. Students are expected to acquire a level of handwriting proficiency that enables them to make skilful use of handwriting as a tool to carry out their work at school. This study revealed students who are poor handwriting have difficulty in developing their writing skills and often suffer in their educational and emotional development.

Saddler and Harris (2004) examined whether early supplemental strategy instruction in planning helped ameliorate writing difficulties second-grade students experiencing difficulty learning to write stories. Learning to use the strategy had a positive effect on writing, as students' stories became more complete and, with the exception of one student, qualitatively better. Collateral improvements in an uninstructed genre, personal narratives, also occurred for all but one student. These positive effects were generally maintained over time and in some instances exceeded post-treatment effects.

A study conducted by Msanjila (2005) aimed to investigate some of the crucial writing problems found amongst students at Kigurunyembe and Morogoro secondary schools. It appears that out of the six writing problems, three are very crucial, including: the misuse of capital letters, inadequate use of punctuation marks and inexplicitness or fuzziness. Their impact is more serious than the other problems because the intended meaning is often misconceived. Even more important is that these crucial problems arise from pedagogical reasons, but this does not mean that teachers alone can solve these problems. Nor does it mean that these problems can be solved outside the school system. However, the study advocated that writing problems can be reduced to a greater extent if the students are taught writing skills by professional language teachers.

Jordanian students sometimes have a challenge acquiring the language, both in written and oral forms. It is a fact that a challenge to effective English Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Jordan is that many EFL instructors are not very well prepared in particular to accommodate and understand the linguistic learning or teaching styles. Another problem is that the Jordanian EFL teachers revert back to the Arabic language to explain what a word means when students are unable to

understand its meaning. Among many challenges that face teaching the English language in the Jordanian public schools is the crowded classrooms (Al-Shourafa, 2012).

Al-Khsawneh (2010) indicated that the students identified that the teaching method and the environment are the main causes of their weaknesses in English. Their weak qualification in English is either related to the lack of student motivation, or the teacher's interest. Many learners use their mother tongue because of the isolated culture. Yet, methods of teaching English included the medium of instructions, using Arabic in English classes, writing done in Arabic, teachers' low proficiency in English, and lack of writing practice in educational institutions.

A study conducted by Douglas et al. (2010) aimed to investigate teacher's perception on the learning difficulties and development of English language skills among high school students. This study revealed that there is a significant influence of method of teaching English skills. And the teacher has to play a greater role in developing English language and communication skills in the early years of schooling. This study revealed that there is a difficulty in using mother tongue inside the classroom. The study also found out that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers based on their gender, management of school i.e. government, private and aided schools and qualification of the teacher on the language development of the students.

Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011) investigated the difficulties of school EFL teachers in Oman as well as their perceptions of their students' difficulties with regard to grammar as sub skill writing. The study showed that there are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of difficulties in relation to their gender, qualification, teaching experience, and the level they teach in school.

Al-Sawalha and Chow (2012) showed that EFL Jordanian students encounter several problems in all language skills, particularly in writing. Similarly, the weaknesses of Jordanian EFL students due to several reasons, including English language curricula which are taught by the EFL teachers in Jordan who focus on the traditional methods in teaching writing to EFL students.

Based on the findings of the previous studies, the researcher observes that the studies included the primary and secondary grades. The studies identified some reasons in general for the problems of lack of EFL writing skills such as (Al-Sawalha and Chow, 2012; El-koumy, 2004; Aly, 1995; Paulson, 1992; Peyton et. al, 1994; Cook, 1997; Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008; Msanjila, 2005). Some studies focus on teaching writing as a

process which decreases the difficulties of writing such as (Berninger, et al., 2002; Lerkkanen, et al., 2004; Dela Paz,1999; Neuman,2004). Some studies showed that the difficulties in writing related to lack of focus on training teachers in how to teach writing effectively such as (Graham ,2008; Vygotsky ,2004; Gleason ,2001; Al-Sawalha and Chow,2012; El-koumy,2004; Aly,1995; Paulson,1992; Peyton et. al,1994; Al-Shourafa, 2012). Some studies showed that the difficulties in writing due to the students such as (Msanjila,2005; Rosenblum,2003; Al-Khsawneh,2010). Some studies showed that the difficulties in writing related to lack of systematic and planned writing curriculum such as (Hirose ,2003; Al-Sawalha&Chow,2012; El-koumy,2004; Aly,1995; Paulson,1992; Peyton et. al,1994). Some studies showed that there are differences for the difficulties of teaching as perceived by English teachers in school due to English teachers' gender and experience such as (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). Some studies showed that there are no differences for the difficulties of teaching as perceived by English teachers in school due to English teachers' gender such as (Douglas et al., 2010). This study is different from the previous studies in that it may examine the reasons of the difficulties which are caused by teachers or students or curriculum so it may help teachers, supervisors and designers curricula find the accurate solutions of the difficulties in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan. These issues have never been investigated in any study.

Study Design and Methodology :

Population and Sample of the Study :

The population of the study consisted of all English teachers in Al-Mafraq district. The population of the study consisted of (368) teachers for the academic year 2014/2015. The sample of the study consisted of the same population of the study as shown in table (1).

Table (1) : Distribution of Study Sample

Gender	Experience in Teaching		Total
	ten years and less	more than ten years	
Male	108	60	168
Female	110	90	200
Total	218	150	368

The Study Instrument :

A questionnaire was prepared depending on the review of literature and previous studies which related to the difficulties of teaching writing. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: part one covered some demographic information, and part two consisted of three domains of (30) items, using a five Likert Scale as follows: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree, corresponding to the following numerical: 5,4,3,2,1 respectively.

According to the (5 point) scale and according to the categories distance law which indicates that the distance or difference between the categories = ((the uperlimit – the lowerlimit) ÷ the categories number), so this formula was adopted, for correcting the response level means upon the following estimations:

- (1) to (1.8) is very weak or (none).
- (1.81) to (2.60) is weak.
- (2.61) to (3.40) is moderate.
- (3.41) to (4.20) is high.
- (4.21) to (5) is very high.

Validity of the Instrument :

To validate the questionnaire it was distributed to (15) experts at (Al al-Bayt University, Uarmouk University and Hashmiah University) who are concerned with writing teaching. They were asked to submit their suggestions regarding the language, clarify of meaning for the statement, its relation to the field and omitting or adding any statements in the questionnaire. Upon the notes and directions that the experts mentioned, the researcher made some amendments for the questionnaire items, so according to (80%) of the convention of jury. Based on their suggestions and comments , the words in some items were modified according to the aim of the study. Finally, the total number of items that were formulated was (30) items and three domains (Appendix 1).

Reliability of the Instrument:

The researcher had calculated the reliability coefficient for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha formula which resulted in (0.87) for the instrument as a whole, which is accepted value as shown in table (2).

Table (2) : Reliability of the instrument

No.	Domains of the Study	Cronbach Alpha Values
1	Teachers	0.93
2	Students	0.90
3	Curriculum	0.94
Total		0.87

Variables of the Study :

This study includes the following variables:

- **Independent variables:**

1. Gender with two levels: male, female.
2. Experience with two levels: ten years and less, more than ten years.

- **Dependent Variable:**

The respondents of the study sample related to the difficulties of teaching writing questionnaire.

Data Analysis :

Means, standard deviations and t-test were used to answer the study questions.

Results, Discussion, and Recommendations :

Question (1): What are the difficulties facing the sixth grade students in teaching writing as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan?

To answer this question, the researcher used means and standard deviations for all domains and for all items, shown in tables (3-6).

**Table (3) : Means, Standard deviations
and Ranks of Teachers' responses for all domains of the study**

Rank	Domains	Means	Std.
1	Difficulties Related to Teachers	4.54	.47
2	Difficulties Related to Curriculum	3.60	.48
3	Difficulties Related to Students	2.59	.49
Whole Instrument		3.58	.28

Table number (3) shows that the means of the domains of the study are between (4.54 - 2.59). This shows that domains number (1) (Difficulties Related to Teachers) was the highest mean (4.54) which reveals that the response is very high, and area number 3 (Difficulties Related to Curriculum) scores mean (3.60) which reveals that the response is high. While the area number (2) (Difficulties Related to Students) was the lowest mean (2.59) which reveals that the response is weak. These results show that the difficulties in teaching writing facing 6th grade students related to teachers then curriculum.

Domains (1): Difficulties Related to Teachers:

Table (4): Means, Standard deviation of Teachers' responses accordingly

Rank	Item Number	Item	Means	Standard deviations
1	3	Teachers don't teach writing as a process (pre writing-drafting-revising).	4.64	.55
2	8	Teachers translate any idea from Arabic to English (mother tongue interference)	4.60	.52
3	10	Teachers decrease using dictionary in writing class.	4.58	.52
4	6	Teachers don't interest in how students indentify the parts of speech.	4.57	.57
5	9	Teachers don't offer feedback and suggestions to students.	4.55	.59
6	5	Teachers don't employ brainstorm in writing class.	4.54	.58
7	4	Teachers don't check students' writing in correct usage and grammar.	4.52	.61
8	7	Teachers don't use picture and flash card in writing class.	4.48	.65
9	2	Teachers don't focus on using punctuation marks.	4.47	.63
10	1	Teachers don't concentrate on correct way of writing letters.	4.45	.70
Whole items			4.54	.47

Table number (4) shows that the means of the items are between (4.64-4.45). Items number (3) and (8) are the following highest means: (4.64 and 4.60). While items number (2) and (1) are the lowest means: (4.47 and 4.45). All items have very high responses which reveal the difficulties in teaching writing related to teachers. This result is compatible with (Graham,2008; Vygotsky,2004; Gleason,2001; Al-Sawalha &Chow,2012; El-koumy,2004; Aly, 1995; Paulson,1992; Peyton et. al,1994; Al-Shourafa, 2012).

Domain (2): Difficulties Related to Students:

Table (5) : Means, Standard deviations of Teachers' responses accordingly

Rank	Item Number	Item	Means	Standard deviations
1	18	Students have anxiety about writing in English.	2.82	.78
2	19	Students use Arabic style in writing .	2.69	.68
3	20	Students feel boring in writing class.	2.68	.50
4	15	Students have difficulty with word order in English sentences.	2.66	.85
5	12	Students don't interested in teachers' instruction in writing.	2.63	.55
6	16	Students have difficulty using verb tenses within a paragraph.	2.52	.66
7	17	Students don't know where and when to punctuate and use capital letter.	2.48	.66
8	13	Students feel English writing is impossible issue.	2.47	.69
9	14	Students can't use appropriate vocabulary in writing.	2.46	.70
10	11	Students don't spell words accurately.	2.44	.68
Whole items			2.59	.49

Table number (5) shows that the means of the items are between (2.82-2.44). Items number 18 and 19 are the following highest means: (2.82 and 2.69). While items number 14 and 11 are the lowest means: (2.46 and 2.44). Items number (18/19/20/15/12) are moderate responses. While items number (16/17/13/14/11) are weak responses. This means difficulties in teaching writing didn't relate to students. This result disagrees with (Msanjila,2005; Rosenblum,2003; Al-Khsawneh,2010).

Domain (3): Difficulties Related to Curriculum:**Table (6): Means, Standard deviations of Teachers' responses accordingly**

Rank	Item Number	Item	Means	Standard deviations
1	21	Curriculum doesn't contain handwriting book for the sixth grade class.	3.75	.63
2	26	Curriculum doesn't encourage free-writing.	3.67	.66
3	24	Curriculum doesn't encourage students to summarize the text.	3.64	.61
4	22	Curriculum doesn't emphasis on correct way in writing letters.	3.63	.59
5	30	Curriculum doesn't contain activities of writing sub skills.	3.62	.58
6	29	Curriculum doesn't focus on a basic writing stages (prewriting, drafting, revising).	3.57	.52
7	23	Curriculum doesn't encourage students to write their opinions about the text.	3.56	.49
8	28	Curriculum doesn't consist of writing homework.	3.53	.62
9	25	Curriculum doesn't ask students to write paragraph about specific topics.	3.52	.58
10	27	Curriculum doesn't consist of different exercises about using punctuations.	3.51	.60
Whole items			3.60	.48

Table number (6) shows that the means of the items are between (3.75-3.51). Items (21 and 26) are the highest means: (3.75 and 3.67). While items number (25 and 27) take the lowest means: (3.52 and 3.51). All items have high which reveal the difficulties in teaching writing related also to curriculum. This result is compatible with (Hirose,2003; Al-Sawalha and Chow,2012; El-koumy,2004; Aly,1995; Paulson,1992; Peyton et. al,1994).

The researcher, according to the statistical analysis showed that there are great difficulties in teaching writing related to teachers, a part of these difficulties refers to lack in-service training courses in teaching writing skills and sometimes,

teachers with insufficient training could not perform their job very well. Teachers also need more session and specialized training courses for teachers inside the classroom. Also some teachers are careless of developing the abilities of students to write proficiently. This study also shows that difficulties in teaching writing related to curriculum, this related to English curriculum doesn't focus on writing sub skills and lack of activities which enhance students' writing skills.

Question (2): What are the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan which due to English language teachers' gender?

To answer this question, the researcher used means, standard deviations and t-test data as shown in table number (7).

Table (7) : T-test, Means and Standard deviations for all domains of the study according to Gender

domain	Gender	Number	Means	Std.	t-value	* Sig.
Difficulties Related to Teachers	Male	168	4.50	.45	1.668	.096
	Female	200	4.58	.49		
Difficulties Related to Students	Male	168	2.37	.48	8.273	.000
	Female	200	2.76	.42		
Difficulties Related to Curriculum	Male	168	3.60	.48	.141	.888
	Female	200	3.60	.48		
Whole domains	Male	168	3.49	.22	5.679	.000
	Female	200	3.65	.30		

*Significance at $\alpha = 0.05$

Table number (7) shows that there are statistically significant differences for the whole instrument in favor of female (3.65) and there are statistically significant differences for the area of difficulties related to students in favor of female (2.76), this result is compatible with (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). While the table shows that there are no statistically significant differences for the domains of difficulties related to teachers and curriculum due to gender. The researcher, after analyzing the statistical data, realized that there is difficulties in teaching writing as perceived by teachers due to gender, in favour of females. This result is due to the ability of female teachers in developing themselves through training and specialized courses more than male teachers , this result agrees with (Douglas et al., 2010).

Question Number (3):

What are the difficulties of teaching writing facing sixth grade students as perceived by English language teachers in basic schools in Al-Mafraq district in Jordan which due to English language teachers' experience?

To answer this question, the researcher used means, standard deviations and t-test data as shown in table (8).

**Table (8) : T-test, Means and Standard deviations
for all domains of the study according to Experience**

Domain	Experience	Number	Means	Standard deviations	t-value	* Sig.
Difficulties Related to Teachers	Ten years and less	218	4.54	.46	104.	.917
	More than ten years	150	4.55	.50		
Difficulties Related to Students	Ten years and less	218	2.48	.50	5.060	.000
	More than ten years	150	2.74	.43		
Difficulties Related to Curriculum	Ten years and less	218	3.70	.45	5.027	.000
	More than ten years	150	3.45	.48		
Whole domains	Ten years and less	218	3.57	.24	.145	.885
	More than ten years	150	3.58	.33		

* Significance at ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Table number (8) shows that there were statistically significant differences for the areas difficulties related to students in favor of more than ten years (2.74) and difficulties related to curriculum to the benefit of ten years and less (3.70). While the table shows that there were no statistically significant differences for the whole instrument and difficulties related to teachers due to teachers' experiences in teaching writing. The researcher attributed that no differences in teaching writing as perceived by English teacher due to teachers' experience at whole instrument, this result has shown that clearly serious needs to enhance writing

teaching through in-service training courses and improve the method in teaching writing skills in the schools whether teachers' experience ten years and less or more than ten years, this result isn't compatible with (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011).

Recommendations :

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

- Ministry of Education in Jordan ought to try its best to find solutions for the difficulties in teaching writing skills.
- Conducting similar studies that investigate other areas affect of difficulties in teaching writing skills.

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Appendix (1)

(A questionnaire of Difficulties of Teaching Writing Skills)

Dear Teacher,

The researcher is conducting a study which entitled :

**Difficulties of Teaching Writing Facing Sixth Grade Students
as Perceived by English Teachers in Basic Schools in Al-Mafraq District/Jordan**

To be ensure, your answers will be used for scientific research only and kept in highly confidential.

Thanks for your cooperation,,,

**Researcher
Abeer Shdifat**

Part One : Demographic Information :

- **Gender :** Male ☐ Female ☐
- **Experience in supervising :** Ten years and less ☐
More than ten years ☐

Part Two : Items

No	Statements	Strongl y agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Area No.(1): Difficulties Related to Teachers :						
1	Teachers don't concentrate on correct way of writing letters .					
2	Teachers don't focus on using punctuation marks .					
3	Teachers don't teach writing as a process (pre writing-drafting-revising).					
4	Teachers don't check students' writing in correct usage and grammar.					
5	Teachers don't employ brainstorm in writing class.					
6	Teachers don't interest in how students indentify the parts of speech.					
7	Teachers don't use picture and flash card in writing class.					
8	Teachers translate any idea from Arabic to English (mother tongue interference).					
9	Teachers don't offer feedback and suggestions to students.					
10	Teachers decrease using dictionary in writing class.					

Area No.(2): Difficulties Related to Students						
11	Students don't spell words accurately.					
12	Students don't interested in teachers' instruction in writing.					
13	Students feel English writing is impossible issue.					
14	Students can't use appropriate vocabulary in writing.					
15	Students have difficulty with word order in English sentences.					
16	Students have difficulty using verb tenses within a paragraph.					
17	Students don't know where and when to punctuate and use capital letter.					
18	Students have anxiety about writing in English.					
19	Students use Arabic style in writing.					
20	Students feel boring in writing class.					
Area No. (3) : Difficulties Related to Curriculum						
21	Curriculum doesn't contain handwriting book for the sixth grade class.					
22	Curriculum doesn't emphasis on correct way in writing letters.					
23	Curriculum doesn't encourage students to write their opinions about the text.					
24	Curriculum doesn't encourage students to summarize the text .					
25	Curriculum doesn't ask students to write paragraph about specific topics.					
26	Curriculum doesn't encourage free-writing.					
27	Curriculum doesn't consist of different exercises about using punctuations.					
28	Curriculum doesn't consist of writing homework .					
29	Curriculum doesn't focus on a basic writing stages (prewriting, drafting, revising).					
30	Curriculum doesn't contain activities of writing sub skills .					