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Spelling Errors Made by Sudanese Secondary School Learners of English –Analytical Study
Case study: Al-Omal Higher Secondary School- Maringan-Third Class

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Abstract
Much of concern has been drawn nowadays from both the learners as well as the researchers towards spelling errors while writing in English. Most of the students, who study English as a foreign language, face difficulty to write correctly. This of course, leads to misunderstanding between the writer and the reader. The main aim behind this research is to try to answer the questions and meet the objectives which were put earlier in this study. Also, to investigate causes of the spelling errors that are made by the Sudanese learners when they write in English. As well as suggesting some ways or procedures to overcome this problem. A spelling test (dictation), which consists of words of different range of difficulty, is designed to be taken by a group of Sudanese students at a higher secondary school- third class. The number of the students who took the dictation test was 100 students. 80 samples of them were chosen. This study has used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for data analysis. Then, the results of the students will be analyzed, causes will be detected and solutions will be shown to reduce committing these errors later. The results of this research reveal that there are different causes for these spelling errors made by students. It is also clearly appeared that these spelling errors

happen because of the lack of phonological, orthographical, morphemic and etymological knowledge. They also showed that some types of different spelling errors mainly take place such as: addition, omission, substitution, transmission, etc. finally, this study has recommended the necessity of developing writing skills among students from early levels to overcome committing these spelling errors in future. Also, it has recommended developing the learning system to meet the requirements towards this issue.

keywords: errors, inevitable, observable phenomenon, omission, substitution, transposition, grapheme, orthographical knowledge, etymological knowledge.

Introduction

As English language is an international language and it is used almost all over the world, learning it is very important. Therefore, people need to learn English language for the purpose of communication. Learning English language means the mastery of the four skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. Correct spelling is a critical component of communication. Spelling and reading are closely related and help to develop overall literacy.

Correct spelling, no doubt, is one of the essential tools for written language. It is the learner's ability to write correctly. Otherwise, his/her message won't be well received or conveyed. Then, misunderstanding with the reader will occur. Errors and mistakes in spelling definitely affect negatively the process of communication. According to Babayigit and Stainthorp (2010) "grammatical and phonological skills make a significant contribution to spelling performance". This means, accurate spelling by mastering these skills is needed to express ideas and thoughts within standard framework so as to be easily understood by readers. Cook (1997, p. 474) states that " …correct spelling is a sign of

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education; a spelling mistake is a solecism that betrays carelessness or plebeian origins." To produce competent writing, students should write accurately with less spelling mistakes.

The vice versa, to (Graves 1983) "Poor spellers' main focus is often on the mechanic of their spelling rather than on the thread of their ideas and expressions. They usually tend to make their writing simple only because they are unfamiliar or unsure of how some words are spelled and this prevents them from expressing their thoughts and ideas more accurately and academically (Pratley, 1988). A way from the negative effect on writing, poor spelling can also be a barrier to the reader; a paper which has a lot of spelling mistakes probably would hinder the reader to follow his thoughts of ideas (Bolton & Snowball, 1993).

Spelling causes several difficulties to language learners not only among low level, but even among advanced level. Vaddapalli (2012) assumes that mother tongue interference is a common source of spelling difficulty for ESL learners. Misspelling is a problem in different languages and since each language has its own spelling system, the sources of difficulty in spelling are not necessarily similar in different languages.

According to Ahmed, (2017) spelling is a linguistic method that deals with phonemic orthography. That is to, spelling is the process of forming words by representing the oral language by using the conventional, accepted individual letters according to the rules of that particular language. According to Johnson (2008), spelling is the act of recognizing or mimicking oral or spoken words by the equivalent correct sequence of letters taking into consideration phonological and alphabetical skills and knowledge.

Among Arab learners, many studies were recently done and showed that difficulties on spelling errors are there. It has been noticed that Sudanese learners of English make spelling errors when they write in English. In other words, they have difficulties and problems with spelling. These problems involve omission of letters,

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substitution, insertion and transposition of letters. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) and Smith (in Swan and Smith, 1987) argue that Arab learners mostly face difficulty in English spelling because of the irregularity of its spelling system which is totally different from Arabic phonetic language.

Written language has its own importance in the process of communication. Reading would not exist if there were no written symbols. Writing provides an opportunity for people to communicate in different situations it should be taught and learnt properly. This paper emphasizes the importance of correct spelling as an essential component of writing skill.

Statement of the study

All, the Sudanese teachers of English, learners and previous studies, agree that spelling errors do occur among learners when writing in English language. Spelling errors are inevitable during learning process, but English teachers should try harder to improve the students' abilities to write in a correct way. Once correct spelling is a critical component of communication, students need to write well. Indeed, the writer's mastery of spelling conventions facilitates understanding with the reader and thus, helps in conveying the message in the way he/ she intends.

One of the best definitions about spelling is given by (Tempeton, p.197) he says: "The knowledge and application of the conventional written representation of words in the process of writing, and the instructions necessary to develop this knowledge". This means that great work and efforts must be done by teachers of English by bringing new techniques that can help in developing this main component of learning process.

Objectives of the study

1. Identifying the spelling errors made by the Sudanese learners of English.
2. Finding out the types of spelling errors that Sudanese learners of English make when they write in English.

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3. Finding out the causes that lead to these spelling errors when writing in English.

4. Suggesting practical procedures and solutions that could enable the Sudanese learners of English to overcome or reduce making spelling errors when writing in English.

Questions of the study

This study seeks at finding answers to some questions such as:

1. Do the Sudanese learners of English make spelling errors when writing in English?

2. What types of spelling errors that the Sudanese learners of English commit when writing?

3. What are the causes which lead the Sudanese learners of English to make spelling errors when they write in English?

4. Are there any procedures or solutions that could enable the Sudanese learners of English to overcome or reduce making spelling errors while writing in English?

Limitation of the Study

This study is supposed to be designed to be limited to the Sudanese learners of English. Al-Omal Higher Secondary School- third class- Gezira State.

Literature Review

Definition of Terms

The researchers, in this space, give general definitions to some of the terms that will be mentioned in this study. Examples of some of these definitions are:

- Errors

Errors are likely to hinder the readers' comprehension or lead them to further misunderstanding. However, they are inevitable while learning process. Lots of speech is said about errors specially errors of spelling. This, of course, shows the importance of this issue in communication between the writer and reader and in learning process in general.

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The Oxford American Dictionary defines grammar as: "the study of words and the rule for their formation and their relationships to each other in sentences; the rules themselves; speech or writing judged as good or bad according to these rules" (1980:282).

Hubbard, et al (1983:144) believe that: "Errors are inevitable and they are integral parts of learning process and developing competence. But learners specially at basic level are helped to be aware of their errors".

According to this speech, no one can avoid committing errors in writing especially in writing while learning. They are integral and basic part towards acquiring the language.

The dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defines it as "wrong concept or false judgment." For James (2013) the error is a phenomenon of lack of success in a part of the language that is observable in the learning of a second language or foreign language. On the other hand, Ellis (1994) states that the error is "a derivation from the norms of the target language" (p.51).

According to Isam Addin Mohammed Alhassan Ismaeel, Carl James, (1997:2) states that: "An error is an unsuccessful bit of language. It is un observable phenomenon in FL/ SL learning"
Here, James believes that when an error takes place in learning process, it is seen, captured and observed by others. It means that the writer doesn't succeed in sending his/ her message correctly.

- Spelling

Spelling is one of the ways that shows the learners' ability to write correctly. When a writer misspelled a word, a wrong message may be received by a listener. So, writing correctly is something needed to convey the right message.

In Fagerberg's (2006) point of view "spelling is essential since one misspelling may change the meaning that the author intends to convey in the text". So, this problem should be taken seriously as one misspelling can change the entire meaning of the message.

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Ali Alsaawi in (Bowen, 2011) emphasized the learning of spelling as a component of writing, not as the result of studying isolated words.

Spelling is the writing of one or more words with letters and diacritics. In addition, the term often, but not always, means an accepted standard spelling or the process of naming the letters. (Definitions.net.)

- Spelling Errors

This means making errors while writing or speaking is an essential part in learning process. This regards to communication in speaking or writing with a listener or a reader. Not when dealing with isolated words. So, spelling should be developed by the learners to lead to the best results.

Brumfit, (1992) emphasized that: "in written work, whether dealing with native speakers or non-native speakers, errors are unacceptable".

And according to Brumfit, in writing, errors are not accepted in anyway. Whether the learner is a native speaker, who studies English as a first language or none native speaker, who studies it as a second language. That is to say they lead to a misunderstanding or mis conveying to the message and they should be corrected.

According to Bandar Mohammed Saeed, spelling errors can occur as a result of the lack of knowledge. He thinks that spelling errors refers to an inaccuracy in English words resulting from the student's lack of the knowledge of phonology, morphology, orthography and semantics. He wants to say that, a learner doesn't mean to commit an error in writing if he/ she has the complete knowledge about it.

Types of spelling Errors

Indeed, there are many types of spelling errors which are committed by some of the students who learn English as a second language. And no doubt, these spelling errors do affect the

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communication between the writer and the reader. Here are some of the main types of these spelling errors such as:

1- Addition (insertion): when an extra letter is added to a word such as <verey> for <very> or <caluture> for culture.

2- Omission: when a letter is deleted or missed from a word such as <diffrent> for <different> and <blak> for <black>.

3- Substitution: when a letter is replaced by another one, such as<picnik> for <picnic<.

4- Transposition: when two neighboring letters transposed, such as <tow> for <two<.

5- Grapheme substitution: "involving more than two letters but only a single cause, for example when an equivalent according to sound correspondence rules is substituted for the usual form, as in thort " for „thought) ""Cook, 2004, p. 124.

6- Word space: when a compound word was separated with a space or where not word space left between words, such as <break fast> for <breakfast> and <alot> for <a lot.<

7- Capital: when a letter is capitalized unnecessarily or in a sentence or a when required capital letter is written in lower case for instance, <i> for <I> or <My? for <my> in a sentence.

8- Others: when an erroneous word cannot be classified under one particular given category or it has more than one type of spelling mistake in it such as <colegge> for <colleague> or <langueg> for <language> as the latter contains both omission and substitution spelling error in it.

Components of Spelling.

No doubt, spelling is an indispensable writing skill. Good spelling contributes to clear nonverbal communication. Spelling requires to be aware of a range of knowledge about the English language such as:

a) Phonological knowledge – it is knowledge of sound and phonetics of language.

b) Orthographical knowledge – refers to the system of written

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symbols used to represent spoken language.

c) Morphemic knowledge - knowledge of the smallest components of words that convey meaning.

d) Etymological knowledge – it means the knowledge of words history. (Oakley& Fellowes, 2016, p.6)

The Case for Good Spelling

Educators are interested in mistakes and errors that students make while learning a second or foreign language. It is important for students, particularly at higher levels of education, to be able to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas through writing or speaking. To prevent misunderstandings or miscommunications, students need to have a strong command of correct spelling. Therefore, acquiring proper spelling skills is an essential aspect of students' educational development.

According to Alhaysony (2012), proper spelling enables individuals to express their thoughts clearly and unambiguously in written form. There may be situations where it is important to understand the reasons behind correct spelling, even if traditional instructors have not explicitly addressed this. The occurrence of the situation suggests that there is value in formal spelling exercises that cater to individuals with varying levels of ability. If spelling correctly was not important, it would not receive significant attention or be considered a relevant topic in language teaching and learning.

Peters (2013) provides a list of reasons to emphasize the importance of teaching and learning spelling. Firstly, there are causes regarding effective communication and showing respect for others. Inaccurate and careless spelling can create obstacles in understanding. The reader may face constant interruptions while trying to decode the intended word, leading to confusion or incorrect information. Therefore, the level of precision required in spelling directly affects the ease and fluidity of communication. Secondly, there is a connection between spelling and courtesy. Failing to speak

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clearly, write legibly, or spell correctly can be seen as disrespectful behavior, suggesting a lack of consideration for others.

Thirdly, the issue of habit formation is considered. Possessing the skill of correct spelling requires precision, and developing the habit of being accurate is an essential quality for educated individuals to acquire. Precision is crucial for effective communication, particularly for the recipient of the information, but it is also highly significant for the sender of the message (Banfi et al., 2017). Spelling precision can be examined from two perspectives: accuracy and stability. Spelling accuracy refers to the correct spelling of a word or the consistent efforts made by an individual to spell a word correctly. They may consistently spell a word accurately (always right), inaccurately (always wrong), or inconsistently (sometimes right) (Rossi, Martin-Changa, & Ouellette, 2018). Inconsistent spelling can sometimes be attributed to a transitional phase when learners are in the process of acquiring correct spelling, but it has not yet become stable.

According to this assumption, the learning process can involve the transfer of training, specifically the transfer of skills such as spelling. However, in this context, transfer does not refer to a specific technique, but rather serves as the foundation for developing a habit of being meticulous. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between the habits, skills, and abilities involved in handwriting, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, and forming paragraphs. All of these aspects demand careful attention from learners who aim to achieve a high level of proficiency in a language (Ouellette, Martin-Chang, & Rossi, 2017). Additionally, proficient spellers must also possess orthographic knowledge, which is built on a word-by-word basis (Perfetti, 2007).

Fourthly, a strong argument for good spelling is that it significantly contributes to the development of learners' self-concept. It enables learners to communicate accurately and effectively in written form, and they receive recognition and

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admiration for their spelling accuracy, which boosts their self-esteem. The fifth reason for learning to spell is that most spelling systems have been established and standardized by linguists many years ago. Changing or reforming these spelling systems is challenging because they have become deeply ingrained in the language users. People tend to strongly resist any attempts to modify a spelling system, as it has become deeply entrenched and resistant to change.

The sixth significant purpose for learning to spell is the educational necessity associated with it, particularly in relation to the freedom to express oneself through writing. The freedom to write or engage in creative writing does not imply the ability to arbitrarily create new spellings (although individuals can invent new words), but rather the development of spelling skills that enable one to write without making orthographic errors. It is only when individuals have acquired a level of spelling proficiency that is automatic, consistent, and error-free, akin to a machine, that they can confidently write without the need to constantly double-check if a word "looks right."

Methodology

In this study, data is collected and analyzed not only in order to discover and locate the spelling errors, but also to provide some solutions. Thus, applying the descriptive and analytical methods is helpful in this case. The researchers here are showing the dictation spelling test and the data collection besides, its analysis.

Dictation Spelling Test

A dictation of separate words spelling test is designed and prepared by the researchers, who teach English for a long time. This dictation spelling test was given to a group of Sudanese higher secondary school students of English. So, this research is done and conducted among the Sudanese higher secondary school students who learn and study English as a foreign or second language. In specific, the students of Al-Omal Higher Secondary School- third

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class. The students who took the test were 100 and they were all from male section. That is to say, a particular group of students was selected to take the spelling test. The number of dictated words was 60 from different kinds of words; one syllable and two syllables. 80 samples of this spelling test were taken and chosen randomly to be marked.

According to Sltiz (1980), sited by Hernandez (2003), the population is a set of all cases that coincide with a series of specifications, so it is important to clearly establish the characteristics of the population.

This study is carried out in order to assure that there are spelling errors that students who study English as a second language make in writing. It is also made to meet the objectives and to find answers for the questions were put in this research.

Data Collection and Analysis

A sixty-word-dictation test is given to the targeted segment of students at the above-mentioned school. The test is designed to check words from different types; one syllable, two syllables or more, and different classes; verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. All is checked before taking the dictation spelling test; pronouncing the words correctly, the number of repeating the words, time allocated to students, and quietness inside the classroom where the test is taking place. Each word is going to be read and pronounced three times. Enough time will be given for students to check what they wrote before handling their spelling test papers.

After that, teachers mark the test to find out the spelling errors made by those students. Then, these spelling errors will be examined by the researchers and suggestions will be given to solve these problems in future. The examination and classification of these spelling errors will made according to Cook's four classifications; omission, substitution, insertion and transposition.

Table (1) consists of some words which were given to students in the dictation test.

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Helpful	Difficult	Account	Actor	Receive	Group
New	Discuss	Teach	Speak	Heavy	Telephone
Go	Happy	Place	Hungry	Can	Money
Children	School	Spoon	Too	Like	Sleep
Dress	Tringle	Table	Play	Hobby	Special
Knee	Give	Visit	Believe	Help	dangerous
People	Problem	Quite	To	Favorite	Like
Read	Tennis	For	Middle	Modern	Leave
Bottle	Draw	Destroy	Secondary	Drive	Make
Campus	Name	Apple	Wrong	Family	Price

Results

In this part, the researchers made some classification of spelling errors in order to check out all the types of errors and the spelling errors that taken place in them. Williams (1974) states that: "Classification of spelling errors is a crucial step to recognize spelling problems". So, the spelling errors here are put in certain division and are analyzed according to their types. The following tables, which consist of two columns, carry the intended word and the misspelt one, will show this in details with some examples.

Table (2) mentions the spelling errors regarding "Omission" type of errors.

Word	Misspelt
Knee	Nee
Difficult	Dificult
School	Scool
Tennis	Tenis
Too	To
Middle	Midl
Wrong	Rong
Like	Lik
Group	Grop
Money	Mony

As it is mentioned here, "omission" is the preferred type for students to commit spelling errors. The percentage is the highest, (39%). Most of their spelling errors were in omitting the "e" before "y" as in "mony" for "money, one of the double letters as in "dificult" for "difficult, the silent letter as in "scool" for "school" and so on.

Table (3) shows the spelling errors that students committed regarding "Addition/ Insertion" type of errors.

Word	Misspelt
Helpful	Helpfull
Dress	Deress
Campus	Campuss
Tringle	Tringele
Name	Naime
Spoon	Espoon
Heavy	Heavey
To	Tow
For	Foor

As for this type, 31% of students committed spelling errors in different ways. "Addition" comes in the second place in committing spelling errors. Examples of spelling errors committed by students like; doubling the last letter as in "helpfull" for "helpful, adding an extra letter as in "deress" for "dress", etc.

Table (4) indicates the "Substitution" errors that students made in the dictation test.

Word	Misspelt
New	Neo
Give	Geve
Problem	Proplem
Quite	Kuite

Destroy	Distroy
Actor	Aktor
Hungry	Hangry
Price	Prise
Telephone	Telefone

Not many students committed spelling errors here. The percentage of spelling errors was (18%). Students normally substitute letters with others. For example; "p" instead of "b" as in "proplem" for "problem", "e" instead of "i" as in "geve" for "give", "k" instead of "q" as in "kuite" for "quite" and so on.

Table (5) shows the students' spelling errors made as "Transposition" type.

Word	Misspelt
Children	Childern
Bottle	Bottel
Draw	Drwa
Table	Tabel
Believe	Beleive
Receive	Recieve
Special	Spesial

It is the least type in which students committed spelling errors. Only 12% of students failed to write the correct spelling. Examples of this as follows: transposing "e" as in "bottel" for "bottle", "i" as in recieve" for receive and "s" as in "spesial" for "special.

Discussion

Actually**,** the majority of students commit spelling errors while writing in English language. General speech, we can say that most of the students who study English as a second language face the difficulty of writing correctly in English. The results of the

dictation test which was given to students, proved that there is a problem. Almost all types of spelling errors taken place there, but only the main one will be mentioned in this study, omission, addition, substitution and transposition. With a notice that the problem happens with all levels of words; short one-syllable, two or long more than two syllables.

There are of course many causes affect the students writing in English correctly. Besides the lack of knowledge which have been mentioned earlier, one of the most reason behind making these spelling errors is the interference of the mother tongue. Also, the lack of good pronunciation and the learning system have greats result in this problem.

Always, for learners who study English as a second language, the vowel letters "a, e, i, o and u" are a real obstacle in writing correctly. These vowel letters have many sounds that is why they are a greet challenge for the students. It doesn't mean that they don't commit errors regarding consonants. That appear clearly in examples of errors that students commit in the tables above.

Table (6): students who committed and who didn't commit spelling errors

Students who committed spelling errors	69 %
Students who didn't commit spelling errors	31 %
Total	100 %

In this table, for example, the number of students who committed spelling errors is bigger comparing with those who didn't commit any errors in writing in English. The percentage shows that 69% of them have made spelling errors while only 31% managed to write correctly.

Graph (1) compares between students who committed spelling errors and those who didn't commit spelling errors
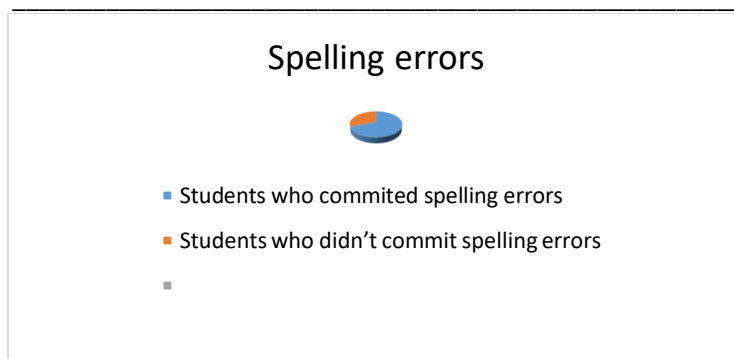
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Spelling errors

- Students who commited spelling errors
- Students who didn't commit spelling errors
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Table (7): types of errors and their percentages

Type of error	Spelling errors' percentage %
Omission	39 %
Addition	31 %
Substitution	18 %
Transposition	12 %
Total	100 %

Of course, omission, addition, substitution and transposition are not the only types of spelling errors. There are others as it was mentioned before in this study. But they are mentioned here because they are the most common types.

Students always omit some letters while writing, they also add others, sometimes substitute and transpose letters. Thus, errors appeared in the test given.

Graph (2) illustrates the types of spelling errors committed by students in percentage %.

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Types of spelling errors

■ Omission ■ Addition ■ Substitution ■ Transition
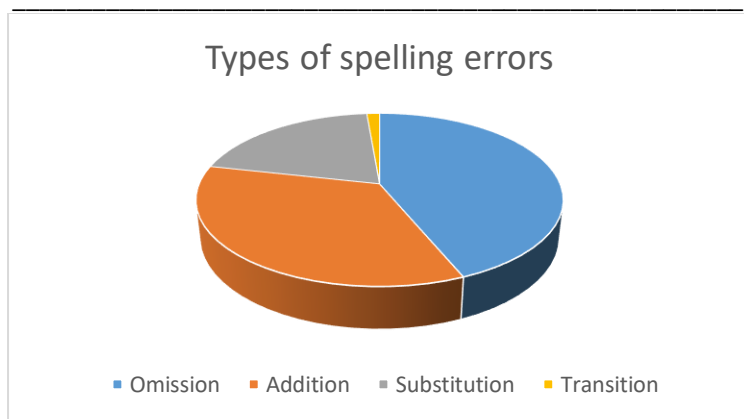
Conclusion

The problem of this study emerges from the fact that Sudanese leaners of English make spelling errors when they write. According to the results, the most frequent types of spelling errors made by Sudanese learners of English are omission, insertion, transposition and substitution of letters.

These errors from the fact that the English spelling is difficult for Arab learners who need a lot of practice and time to overcome these difficulties to master the most common words in English language. Also, it is obvious spelling is not taught systematically in Sudan due to improper teaching and learning strategies.

Based on the results, the researchers suggest some solutions and recommendations learners to be put in mind. Regarding the fact that the English spelling system is complicated, they should be aware of writing English, especially in spelling. Students should practice spelling English words to improve and develop their writing skill. As for teachers, they should be well trained in problem areas and phonetics. Also, they need to differentiate their strategies of teaching by using flashcards, wall-charts, CDs, etc. besides, they

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need to give more practice in spelling. Finally, learning process needs the efforts of teachers, learners and families to overcome all the difficulties mentioned earlier.

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