DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH TEACHING METHODS

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Abstract: *This focus has been a response to the occasional excesses of a process approach to writing instruction. An emphasis on a process approach often disregards the importance of written form and, in effect, takes power away from learners, particularly those from different language or culture backgrounds. For the L2 student, many writing conventions will remain a mystery unless teachers are able to bring these forms and patterns of language use to conscious awareness. Emphasizing the process to the exclusion of the product neglects direct instruction in certain text features, yet students are still evaluated by their control of these features.*

Key words: *approach, L2 student, learners, culture backgrounds, instruction, features, exclusion, patterns.*

INTRODUCTION

In response to these concerns, I developed an ESL instructional unit that cycles content material through different writing tasks, combining writing process approaches, and integrating language skills activities with specific content material and direct instruction on different genre forms. This combines a functional approach to language with the current emphasis on content-centered instruction. I wanted to see if it was possible to increase content knowledge while giving students practice with school-valued ways of writing. The lessons are based on two concepts. The first involves scaffolding or apprenticeship. The teacher occupies a central role in the scaffolding process and must be familiar with the learning situation, the material that is being presented, and the specific features associated with the writing students are going to produce, and must be able to guide students to help them accomplish the goal. Students practice with models to accomplish a task. As the students gain greater control, the teacher's

role diminishes. Students are expected to progress from the role of active observers to autonomous learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The development of writing skills in foreign language learners has been the subject of extensive research. The term process writing has been bandied about for quite a while in ESL classrooms. It is no more than a writing process approach to teaching writing. The idea behind it is not really to dissociate writing entirely from the written product and to merely lead students through the various stages of the writing process but 'to construct process-oriented writing instruction that will affect performance'. To have an effective performance-oriented teaching programme would mean that we need to systematically teach students problem-solving skills connected with the writing process that will enable them to realise specific goals at each stage of the composing process. Thus, process writing in the classroom may be construed as a programme of instruction which provides students with a series of planned learning experiences to help them understand the nature of writing at every point. Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages – planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting) and editing. Process writing in the classroom is highly structured as it necessitates the orderly teaching of process skills, and thus it may not, at least initially, give way to a free variation of writing stages cited earlier. Teachers often plan appropriate classroom activities that support the learning of specific writing skills at every stage. The planned learning experiences for students may be described as follows.Writing capibilities can be enhanced through modelling, brainstorming, assigning pre-writing exercises, developing frameworks and also encouraging re-writing exercises and continuous practise. Encourage learners to practise through variety of creative writing exercises like diaries, journaling,roll a story, story boarding, fornal letters and emails and etc. These practises will help to enhance the overall learning experience in the classroom.

The stage (5-9 classes) at school must provide more intensive development of writing skills in different situations of communication. Topics and capacity o f writing messages is broaden; the quality of produced text in the written form is improved. The content of writing teaching within this stage differs in its informativeness and is built on the authentic material. The samples of an epistolaiy type as letters, cards, articles from newspapers and magazines are used for developing teenagers' writing skills:

a) to give the information about him/herself, family, school, city/town, interests and hobby;

b)to write a short commentaiy/letter in newspaper or journal with the norms and conventions of native speakers;

c)to write personal data in questionnaire and registration document;

d) to do note-taking (plan, copy out the key words, speech patterns) to use it for production of the text.

In the 5th grades English workbooks, we can identify various types of emails or letters based on writing activities,for instance:

Activity 1. Make notes about you and your town

About Me.
Name: _____ Birthday: _____ Where I'm from: _____

About our town.
Name: _____ Country: _____

When to do and see things.
1 What: _____
   When: _____
   What it's like: _____
3 What: _____
   When: _____
   What it's like: _____

2 What: _____
   When: _____
   What it's like: _____
4 Ask your pen pal a question.
   _____
   _____

Activity 2. Write an email to your town to a pen pal.

Dear _____ ,
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Your pen pal,
(your name) _____

As depicted in Activity 1, you should point out the full of information about yourself,for example: name, birthday, where you are from. Then you can note your town name and country.

In the Activity 2, you write an email about your town to a pen pal. In this activity, you should describe or demonstrate your email. Email will be reflected this phrases: Dear… your friend's name and countinue your gaps. At the end of the activity you should describe your best friends then your name. Usually email divided into 2 types. Its include: formal and informal. Formal emails use standard and address those you don't know well. Moreover, beginner or elementary level pupils does not have a formal writing system. Informal emails are easier than formal and are used to address someone you know well.When you want to write to your pen pal or your best friend you may use informal email. It will be simple and understandable for bestie.It is very exciting and useful exercises for pupils, especially, to increase writing emails and letters, for the reason that, in the second stage, in the upper grades, pupils learn how to write formal letters, essays and other writing skills.

In fact, planning or pre-writing is also appropriate these kind of writing tasks. It is also support pupils to note the functions. You can realize the full of information about planning (pre-writing), group brainstorming, clustering, drafting and editing activities.

Planning (Pre-Writing). Pre-writing is any activity in the classroom that encourages students to write. It stimulates thoughts for getting started. In fact, it moves students away from having to face a blank page toward generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing. The following activities provide the learning experiences for students at this stage:

Group Brainstorming. Group members spew out ideas about the topic. Spontaneity is important here. There are no right or wrong answers. Students may cover familiar ground first and then move off to more abstract or wild territories.

Clustering. Students form words related to a stimulus supplied by the teacher. The words are circled and then linked by lines to show discernible clusters. Clustering is a simple yet powerful strategy: "Its visual character seems to stimulate the flow of association and is particularly good for students who know what they want to say but just can't say it".

Drafting. Once sufficient ideas are gathered at the planning stage, the first attempt at writing – that is, drafting – may proceed quickly. At the drafting stage, the writers are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft. One dimension of good writing is the writer's ability to visualise an audience.

Although writing in the classroom is almost always for the teacher, the students may also be encouraged to write for different audiences, among whom are peers, other classmates, pen-friends and family members. A conscious sense of audience can dictate a certain style to be used. Students should also have in

mind a central idea that they want to communicate to the audience in order to give direction to their writing.

Revising. When students revise, they review their texts on the basis of the feedback given in the responding stage. They reexamine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meanings to the reader. Revising is not merely checking for language errors (i.e.,editing). It is done to improve global content and the organisation of ideas so that the writer's intent is made clearer to the reader.

Editing. At this stage, students are engaged in tidying up their texts as they prepare the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. They edit their own or their peer's work for grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure and accuracy of supportive textual material such as quotations, examples and the like. Formal editing is deferred till this phase in order that its application not disrupt the free flow of ideas during the drafting and revising stages.

A simple checklist might be issued to students to alert them to some of the common surface errors found in students' writing. For instance:

- Have you used your verbs in the correct tense?
- Is the verb forms correct?
- Have you checked for subject–verb agreement?
- Have you used the correct prepositions?
- Have you left out the articles where they are required?
- Have you used all your pronouns correctly?

The students are, however, not always expected to know where and how to correct every error, but editing to the best of their ability should be done as a matter of course, prior to submitting their work for evaluation each time. Editing within process writing is meaningful because students can see the connection between such an exercise and their own writing in that correction is not done for its own sake but as part of the process of making communication as clear and unambiguous as possible to an audience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of my study indicate that this approach may offer ESL students valuable practice in various school-valued ways of writing while they learn content material and work through steps in the writing process. The role of genre in content writing instruction should emerge naturally from the material. Caution should be exercised not to turn genre instruction into a formulaic type of instruction in which students are simply instructed to manipulate certain features. Rather, students must learn to respond to the informational and organizational demands of various settings. Instruction needs to provide a scaffolding so that

students can progress toward more academically valued ways of writing, learn content material, and have a better chance to experience success in school.

The focus on the writer has led to the process approach which lays stress on the activities which move students from the generalization of ideas and collection of data to the production of texts (more publication). The process approach is the dynamic, creative, unpredictable and non-liner writing. It emphasizes the writing process over the product, which is recognized as recursive process (the stages are recursive or non-liner) that encourages student to explore topics through writing.

This approach is more beneficial for advanced students, because it belongs to the creative writing and demands complicated mental operations and activities as thinking, revising and editing. The process of creation o f a written product follows getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts and revising. That's why, during creation of the written product the following stages are organized: 1) prewriting; 2) composition/drafting; 3) revising; 4) editing.

"Writing is characterized by the tree-phase structure: 1) inducement-motivation, 2) analytical-syntactical and 2) operation. Under the first phase the motive appears as an intention to communicate. The author' s message has an intention to inform somebody.

In the second phase an utterance is formed and pronounced: the necessary words for producing the utterance are selected, within a set of sentences, subjective area of indicators is distributed, the predicate or a key part of the idea organization between sentences is defined.

The third phase of writing is decoding of the idea/message with the help of graphical symbols. In the ELT the writing is the goal and means of teaching and learning. The goal of teaching writing is to teach production of written texts which students can write in the mother tongue. To produce the written text students should master mechanics of writing. That's why, in domestic methodology the two types of writing are distinguished: 1) mechanics of writing (handwriting, spelling, punctuation); 2) process of expressing ideas in a graphical form. Writing is meant as acquiring graphical and orthographical systems of EL by students for fixation speech and language material to remember it and support acquiring oral speech. Modern approaches to teaching writing recognize its dual purpose: as a means (a support skill) and as an end (communicative skill).

Focus group discussions revealed that students appreciated the structured approach of the process writing method, which allowed them to focus on each stage of writing without feeling overwhelmed. Many participants noted that they became more confident in their abilities to revise and edit their work. Students in the genre-based group expressed that understanding different writing styles helped them tailor their writing to specific audiences and purposes. Meanwhile,

those in the collaborative writing group highlighted the benefits of peer feedback and support in reducing anxiety associated with writing.

I used several types of pre- and post-assessment measures to determine changes in student writing, content knowledge, and attitudes. All reflected a positive change. Through a focus on language use and the genre demands of different ways to organize information, students also mastered content material while gaining greater skill with various school-valued ways of writing.

Conclusion: Developing writing is a significant skill in our globalized world. The teaching of writing has assumed much greater importance in recent years with the arrival of new forms of rapid written communication. Writing is fundamentally different from other four skills, not only because it is visual as contrasted with oral/aural,or productive as contrasted with receptive, but also because of how it is produced and the way it communicates. Most people acquire the spoken language intuitively, whereas the written form is normally taught and learned in school. Literate people are more respected, in general, than the illiterate. Writing gives learners the opportunity to try out the language with plenty of thinking time. Writing allows learners to practice new structures in an extended context. Writing can provide more variety in class work. Moreover, writing process is based on grammar and lexis, punctuation.We have seen that writing cannot normally be 'picked up' but has to be systematically taught. This means that we actually need to devote a lot of attention to teaching it, even though it is actually used by most people far less than the other skills.

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