

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mentouri University, Constantine
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Teaching Writing through the Process Approach :

A Case Study of Second-year EFL Students at the English

Department, UMC, Constantine

Dissertation Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the requirement for the

Master degree in Language Science

Submitted by : **Assia AZZIOUI**

Supervisor : **Dr Ahmed MOUMENE**

Board of Examiners

1. Supervisor: Dr.Ahmed MOUMENE M. C. University Mentouri Constantine

2. Chairman: Dr. Ahmed Sid Haoues M. C. University Mentouri Constantine

2009

DEDICATION

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All the Pries is due to God alone, the Sustainers of all the worlds

This work is dedicated to:

My grandfather for his love and support

The most important person in my life: my mother

My father who helped me achieves my dream

My sisters; Hanan, Meriem, Amina, and Khaoula, especially Khadedja who was of

great Help and support

My brother Abderraouf.

My wonderful nephews Louai and khaloda, and my elegant and beautiful niece Lina

All my family and my friends.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks and appreciations to the following people who helped me achieve my goal.

Dr. Ahmed Moumene, my supervisor, who was of great help to me, without his help this dissertation would have never been possible.

A special thank for Pr. Farida Abderrahim for her help and support.

I also express my thanks to Pr. Hacene Saadi for his contribution and support.

I have to acknowledge as well all my friends at Mentouri University, Constantine.

I also express my sincere thanks to second-year EFL students at Mentouri University, Constantine whose contribution to this research has been quite fruitful.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L 1: First Language

L 2: Second Language

%: Percentage

CG: Control Group

EG: Experimental Group

N⁰: Number

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Aspects that Students have Problems with.....	45
Table 2. Teachers' Attitudes towards the Correction of Mistakes.....	46
Table 3. Teachers' Responses to Question Item 7.....	48
Table 4. Methods Used in Grading Students' Compositions.....	50
Table 5. Scours out of 20 Allocated to the Different Composition Components.....	53
Table 6. Approaches Used in Teaching Writing.....	55
Table 7. The Teacher s' Role in the Writing Process.....	56
Table 8. The best Stage in the Writing Process for Grammar Correction.....	60
Table 9. Calculating the Mean of the CG in the Pre-test.....	67
Table 10. Calculating the Mean of the EG in the Pr-test.....	68
Table 11. Calculating the Mean of the CG in the Post-test.....	72
Table 12. Calculating the Mean of the EG in the Post-test.....	73
Table 13. The Difference between the Means of the Pre-test.....	74
Table 14. The difference between the Means of the Post-test.....	75

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Hayes and Flower (1980) Model.....	25
Figure 2: Structures of the knowledge- telling Model (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987)	28
Figure 3: Structure of the Knowledge -transferring Model (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987)....	30
Figure 4: Hayes' (1996) Model	34
Figure 5: Students' Scores in the pre-test	69
Figure 6: Students' Scores in the Post-test	74

Abstract

The present study aims at describing and investigating the effects of the process approach on developing students' writing ability. The aim then is to determine whether the students' writing ability would be improved when teachers use the process approach. To reach such an aim, we have firstly analysed the teachers' questionnaire from which we get insights about the approach (es) used in teaching writing at the Department of English in Constantine University. Furthermore, we have carried out an experimental study at the English Department in Mentouri University Constantine with thirty- four students in the academic year 2008 / 2009. All the participants have been randomly selected and assigned into two groups (the experimental and the control group). The students have been firstly pre-tested through essay writing to know their writing ability prior to the beginning of the experiment. After six weeks of the treatment period, the participants have been post-tested through the same tool: essay writing. Results of the pre-test and the post-test are given in mean scores. The obtained results have demonstrated that the experimental group who had a regular practice with the process approach made more improvement than the control group. To determine the validity of these results, we have used the student t test which determined that the results are statistically significant, and on the light of this conclusion the established hypothesis has been corroborated. This investigation confirmed that the process approach is an important tool to improve students' writing ability.

INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem.....	2
2. Aim of the study	2
3. Hypothesis.....	2
4. Means of Research.....	3
5. Organization of the Dissertation.....	3

1. Statement of the Problem

Writing is one of the four macroskills which needs special attention, especially in foreign language classes because it is considered as the most difficult skill to be acquired or taught. Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) point out that “There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 to master.” Despite the attention given to writing as a skill in foreign language classes, students still have problems with this skill. We think that the primary cause of these problems in this skill is that students still believe and feel that the only sense of good written production comes from what they have learned about grammar. So, students often rush towards more grammar practice and tend to forget about the specific steps and techniques which they have to go through before reaching their final product. Hence, we believe that the best way to teach writing is that the teacher guides his students through the process of writing step by step. So that, he helps them produce well-structured compositions. In that, the teacher has to be present in each step of the students’ composing process, and not simply enter the scene when the final product is already produced.

2. Aim of the Study

The present study deals with the learners’ poor achievement in written production, and our objective is to investigate the process approach as a way to overcome such a problem and ultimately develop the students’ written production. The reason behind the choice of the process approach is that recent research on the best way to teach writing focuses on this orientation as an effective tool to develop students’ written communication skill.

3. Hypothesis

As the aim of the current study is to examine the effects of the process approach on students’ writing ability, we hypothesize that if the teacher adapts an effective writing process approach learners will achieve a better written production.

4. Means of Research

To carry out this research, two research instruments have been used not to guarantee the hypothesis validity, but to get a deeper insight into writing as a skill and into the process approach as an effective method to teach this skill. Firstly, we relied on the teachers' questionnaire. Then, we have used the experimental design to test the validity of the research hypothesis.

5. Organization of the Dissertation

The present study is composed of four chapters. In chapter one, we have presented a review of some theoretical issues on writing which include the nature of writing, the difference between writing and speaking, the connection between writing and reading, approaches to the teaching of writing and methods of scoring students' compositions. The second chapter provides a deeper insight into the process approach; it includes a historical overview of the process approach, definition of the process approach, its models and stages. Chapter three deals with data analysis, it contains a detailed analysis of teachers' questionnaire. Chapter four is the core of this dissertation. It covers the research experimental study.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL ISSUES ON WRITING

Introduction

In this chapter, we will present the nature of writing and its importance as a means of communication, show the relationship between writing, speaking and reading as well as their shared cognitive processes. Then, we will cast some light on the approaches of teaching writing the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach and explore the scoring models of writing and their reliability.

1. The Nature of Writing

Writing is a way of communication that uses graphic symbols; that is, we combine letters that represent our sounds when we speak. These letters are combined to form words, and words are also combined to form sentences and so on. “the act of forming these symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind.” Byrne (1991: 01): Whereas, Crystal (2006: 257) specifies that: “writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression.” For Bloomfield: “Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks.” (Bloomfield; cited in Crystal 1994: 178).

Of course, the meaning of writing does not stop on the boundaries of graphic symbols or visual marks, nevertheless, these symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions and rules to form words, and from these words we form sentences until we produce what we call a text that really communicates a message and expresses our thoughts.

Writing is not an easy task, but it is not so difficult. Writing needs desire and pressing from the writer, so that he can express his thoughts, feelings or points of view towards a given topic. Moreover, writing is one of the macro skills which need to be learned “Writing is not a natural activity” (White, 1981; cited in Nunan 1996: 36). This means that, writing is not a spontaneous activity or a skill which the child born with; i.e., we have to be taught how to write; otherwise, we will never be good writers. In addition, writing needs conscious and mental effort because it is a process where we have to consider various aspects such as: punctuation, structure of sentences and choice of words simultaneously. Rivers and Temperley point out:

To write so that one is really communicating a message isolated in place and time, is an art that requires consciously directed effort and deliberate choice in language.

(Rivers and Temperley 1979: 263)

Another thing which is very important in the nature of writing is that we write for a reader. So, there is another actor implicated in the whole process. That is we translate our thoughts into written language as a channel of communication with a reader who is absent and in sometimes not known. To this end, we are obliged to be clearer when we write than when we speak. Moreover, we have to make sure that what has been written will be understood by the reader without any further help from us. In addition, in writing there are no interchanging participants, and it is almost impossible to measure the effect of the message or the text on the reader because no interaction and no immediate feedback are possible.

2. The Difference between Writing and Speaking

When we talk about writing, we find ourselves obliged to elicit its differences and relationships with the other productive skill; speaking. On one hand, Writing and speaking are the main keys that help every one to get better at language and understand how it works. In addition both writing and speaking are equally important means of communication. Alternatively, writing as opposed to speaking is more standardized system of communication and an essential tool of learning. More than that, writing is not simply speech written down on paper.

Writing is permanent; that is it lasts for long time. A written text or message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time; so that, we read and reread it as often as we want “a written communication may be read as soon as it is written or months, years, or centuries later.” Rivers and Temerley (1979: 263). Speaking is temporary; that is, it lasts for a short time because words fly simultaneously when they are produced. Moreover, communicating through the medium of speech operates on immediate interaction between the speaker and the listener, and the participants most of time can see each other. The shared context that is present between the listener and the speaker in face contact facilitates communication. However, the absence of the reader necessitates greater explicitness from the writer, where the writer is deprived of immediate feedback. In addition, the reader or the audience is most of the time general rather than specific. In this respect, Crystal (1994: 179) argues:

Speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient-part of an interaction in which, typically, both participants are present, and the speaker has a specific addressee (or group of addressees) in mind. Writing is space-bound, static, permanent-the result of a situation in which, typically, the

producer is distant from the recipient-and, often, may not even know who the recipient is (as with most literature).

A crucial difference between writing and speaking is that all children speak and comprehend their native language without any training; i.e., learning to speak happens naturally. In addition all children learn to speak before they learn to read and write, also learning to write has to be taught, and it is usually related to school. White (1981: 02; cited in Nunan 1996: 36) argues that, normal people can learn to speak a language, on the other hand, they must have a teacher in order to be able to write or express themselves through this medium of communication. Thus, writing is thought to be a highly complex process and that learning to write is difficult.

Another significant difference between writing and speaking is the features that each skill uses to convey meaning. In face to face conversation, we use what is called paralinguistic features such as; gestures, facial expressions, stress and intonation. Moreover, we can speak louder or softer, faster or slower, so that, our meaning would be conveyed, Whereas in writing we use question and exclamation marks that modify the meaning of what is written, underlining or writing words in italics to emphasize their meaning, use dashes, indentations, commas, capital letters...etc.

The process that writers and speakers go through is one of the most common differences between writing and speaking. In speaking, there is little time between the production and the reception; that is, our thoughts become words immediately, and what is said cannot be unsaid. Moreover, speakers have to decide quickly what to say and modify their speech as they are

speaking, using different tools such as; reception, paraphrasing and time-buying expressions. On the contrary, in writing our final production is not immediately read and we have enough time to plan, draft, write and rewrite. Moreover, we can modify and correct our mistakes at any stage in the writing process before handing it to the reader. Brown puts it this way

writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation;

(Brown 1994; cited in Weigle, 2002: 15-16)

The construction of speech and writing shows another essential difference between the two skills at the level of organization and language used. In speech, we often use single words or incomplete sentences. Moreover, in speech, mistakes are permissible at the level of grammar, structure of sentences, mispronunciation...etc. Byrne (1991: 3) states that speakers use sentences that are most of the time incomplete and contain grammatical mistakes. Moreover, speech is usually characterized by redundancy and repetition. Unlike speech, in writing, sentences have to be fully developed, complete and we have also to respect the grammar rules and the structure of sentences. Moreover, constructions of writing is usually a topic sentence followed by exemplification or clarification and end up with a solution, advise summary or resenting the writer's point of view towards the written topic. In this respect Byrne (1991: 3) claims that writing usually contains sentences that are constructed, linked and organized with great attention so that it produces what is called a text that has to convey a meaningful message.

In spite of all the foregoing discussion, the differences between writing and speaking are not absolute, and there are occasions where speech and writing look alike for example; a text

message shares the same qualities of temporary and immediacy in that, messages are usually read immediately then removed. Moreover, speech can have a process just as writing has in that careful speakers can make planning and drafting in their mind before speaking; such as in interviews, meetings or special phone calls. In addition, in both writing and speaking the choice of our words is based on who the co-participants are. When the participants know each other well, as in the case of family members and friends, they choose words with less care in both processes. Yet, in the case of strangers, the choice of words has to be with great care.

to talk of written and spoken language differences is to consider the range of communicative purposes to which either writing or speaking is put.

(Sperling, 1996; in Weigle 2002: 17)

3. The Connection between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are two of the most essential academic and life skills which have a very close relationship. When students read extensively, they become better writers, in that reading provides prior knowledge, ideas and information that help students reach their language, deepen and widen their ideas and content...etc. At a deeper level, reading helps writers assimilate stylistic choices, tones, structures, norms, grammatical features, rhetorical strategies, markers of cohesion and coherence and so on, which help students improve their style of writing. Thomas (1976) claims that: “a significant relationship existed between writing achievement and the amount and variety of reading experiences.” (Thomas: 1976; cited in Flippo and Caverly 2000: 15) In addition, Celce-Muria (2001: 224-5) argues:

At the very least, readings provide models of what English language texts look like, and even if not used for the purpose of imitation, they provide input that helps students develop awareness of English language prose style.

Writing-reading relationship is mainly based on communication in that when a writer writes, he is communicating his thoughts, ideas and opinions through this medium. So, the writer needs to make sure that his message is clear and understood by the reader. So, to develop the communicative skill, one needs both writing and reading abilities.

reading and writing affect how people communicate, what they think is involved in communicating, and what they think is involved in thinking.

(Farrell, 1977; cited in Flippo and Caverly 2000: 166)

Moreover, both reading and writing are essential tools to build the forms and functions of language. That is, students need to clearly understand the functions of the two modes, to develop their level in the learned language.

Writing and reading are two complementary and similar processes, in that they include similar cognitive processes that are involved in making meaning. Both writing and reading involve generating ideas, planning, drafting, and revising and so on. In their composing-reading model Tierney and Pearson (1983) claim that:

reading and writing involve similar, shared, linguistic, and cognitive elements. As readers read and writers compose, both plan, draft, align, revise, and monitor as they read and write.

(Tierney and Pearson, 1983; in Flippo and Caverly 2000: 151)

Let's consider revising which is a cognitive process that has an important role in both the writing and the reading skills just as the other cognitive processes have. Revising helps the reader understand the author's text by pausing, thinking, reflecting...etc on what he is

reading. For the writer revising helps detect mistakes, clarifies meaning, re-evaluates choices of words and structures...etc.

During the revising process, readers should reexamine the text. Similarly, the writer reread, reexamine, revise and reflect on the text by carefully selecting words that convey meaning.

(Flippo, F. R and Caverly, C. D 2000: 152)

From another perspective, reading is an important tool to evaluate the written production. In this type of reading, the writer reads his text critically, so that he detects his problems in grammar, vocabulary choices, structures and so on. In his model of the process approach Hayes (1996) proposed three essential types of reading in the composing process. One of these types is reading to evaluate, this type is a crucial stage in the composing process in that it enables the writer to produce a good written production, since it helps detect the different problems in his writing. Weigle (2002: 27) argues that reading for evaluation purposes is the first type of the Hayes reading types, in which the writer read his text critically to discover his mistakes and improve his language. Reading for evaluation needs concentration and expertise in the reading skill so that the writer can revise and evaluate errors of content, organization, relevance...etc and not only concentrated on detecting surface errors. So, the writer here needs to be skilled in reading.

4. Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

In the last decades, the teaching of writing has been a central element and principal means of education. This interest in writing as a skill leads to the emergence of different conflicting views of the best way to teach writing. The teaching of writing from 1940s to 1960s was based on the notion of controlled or guided composition. In the 1960s, teachers and

researchers in the field began to doubt about the effectiveness of controlled composition. The result of this doubt was the birth of 'rhetorical function' where the focus shifted from the sentence level to the discourse level. When focusing on the discourse level, the main interest is the type of development of the discourse such as narration, argumentation, expository and so on. Later, in the 1970s', the process approach which has the greatest effect on the teaching of writing in both L1 and L2 has emerged. After the process approach, the field of writing has received a new comer which is the genre approach.

1. The product Approach

One way of viewing writing is to see it as an act of imitating or adapting model texts. So that one can create coherent arrangement of words, clauses, sentences and paragraphs that are readable, grammatically correct and comprise different discourse conventions. Viewing writing like this directs our attention to the product approach which has been dominated from the mid 1940s' to the mid 1960s', and is still in use. The product approach encourages analysing students' product at the end of the writing process, so that the teacher can recognize their weaknesses and strengths. This orientation has its origins in the tradition of rhetoric and emphasizes the study of model text to make students aware of text features.

When adapting such an approach to writing, one main interest is accuracy. According to the product approach accuracy will be achieved by imitating model texts. So, the first students' task is to be familiarized with the conventions of writing that they take from model texts. In that, there is a close relationship between the model based approach which is about teaching how to produce a text by imitating another and the product approach. In fact, both approaches are final drafts, but the model comes at the beginning and the product comes at the end. White (1988: 7) puts it this way:

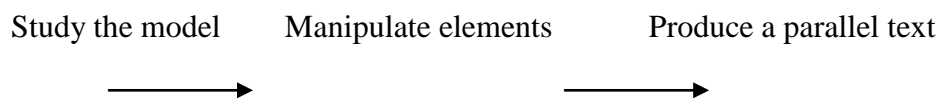
Not only does the model come first in the teaching sequence, it also shows a finished text. In other words, the focus right from the start is on the product, which is, of course, someone else's writing. What the model does not demonstrate is how the original writer arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of process.

Another description of the product approach has been proposed by Richards (2003). Who argues that since the focus is on the study of model text in order to make students aware of text features, the first stage in teaching writing using this approach is familiarization.

1. Familiarization: Learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary usually through a text.
2. Controlled writing: Learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.
3. Guided writing: Learners imitate model texts.
4. Free writing: Learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and so forth.

(Richards, 2003: 3-4)

For White (1988: 5) the model based approach is;



The first step is always the model text which is studied and analysed from different points of view such as structure of grammar, content, sentence organization and rhetorical patterns. In the second stage the different features that the students take from the model text are manipulated. Finally, the students are given a topic and asked to produce a parallel text.

This traditional approach that encourages students to imitate model texts can be outlined in the following way:

Stage one: Students read the model text and highlighted the specific features of genre in this text. For example, if studying essay organization, students' attention will be directed towards the way the essay in the model text is organized; how paragraphs are distributed, linkers used to connect these paragraphs, the thesis statement, indentations and all the techniques that help in the organization of an ideal essay.

Stage two: In the second stage, students have a controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So, following the example in the first stage, students here asked to make practice on linkers between paragraphs, writing introductions, stating thesis statements, writing conclusions and so on.

Stage three: This is a very important stage, where students are asked to arrange paragraphs in order to get a coherent essay (introduction, developmental paragraphs, and conclusion).

Teachers who use this approach give more attention to the organization of ideas rather than ideas themselves.

Stage four: In the last stage students are given a topic and requested to develop an essay in the same way as the model text.

2. The Process Approach

As a reaction to the product approach comes what is called the process approach which has a noticeable effect on the teaching of writing worldwide. The process approach to writing stresses the creativity of the individual writer and sees writing as a highly complex activity. This orientation pays attention to the development of good writing rather than the imitation of model texts. Thus, the focus shifted from the final product itself to the different stages that the writer goes through in order to create this product. The process approach emphasized that writing is an activity that is composed of a variety of activities, and that these different activities are typically recursive. The teacher in the process approach becomes a facilitator.

He guides and helps his students at each stage of their composing process. Whereas, the students in this orientation are asked to come up with multiple drafts of their work and to be aware that re-writing and revising are integral to writing.

3. The Genre Approach

Recently, the field of writing has a new approach which sees writing as an attempt to communicate with the reader. The genre approach not only focuses on form and textual conventions, but more importantly on the rhetorical purposes of that text and every component of the text that contributes to the fulfillment of that process. “The central belief here is that we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.” Richards (2003:18) .This perspective views genre as a typified social action that responds to a recurring situation. That is when one writes a letter, a story, a request and so on, he has to follow certain social conventions for the organization of his message, so that the reader recognizes his purpose. In other words, the structure, the content, the style ...etc has to be socially recognized and shaped according to the expectation of the reader. According to Richards (*ibid*) “these abstract, socially recognised ways of using language for particular purposes are called genres.”

Another explicit description of the genre approach is proposed by Swales (1990) who defines genre as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains Choice of content and style.

(Swales 1990: 58)

In addition, Swales sees that the genre approach starting point is the concept of discourse community and identifies a range of academic contexts. Swales describes six characteristics for identifying a group of writers and readers as discourse community: “common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community specific genres, a highly specialized terminology and a high general level of expertise.” (Swales 1990: 29) ‘common goals’ refer to the objectives of the scholars in any community that may include accounts of replicable experimental procedures, the reporting of new knowledge, the examination of students and so on. For writing, the ‘participatory mechanisms’ are texts that are associated with a particular discipline, such as; academic journals and text-books.

The genre approach has specific characteristics that influence the use of language. These specific characteristics may include; communicative purposes, associated themes, conventions (rhetorical structures and other textual features), the channel of communication, degree of formality, mode of argumentation, textual structures, and the audience type. It is clear that when such an approach is adopted the focus is on texts, but this focus is not on grammar, rather it is on social constraints and choices that operate when writing in a particular context. That is, students study the style, conventions, structures and organization, argumentation...etc of texts in the genre they are going to write.

The genre approach is supported by the functional model of language which discusses the association between discourse and the context in which language is used. Richards (2003: 18) argues that the importance of genre is that it includes discourse and contextual aspects of language use. The genre approach involves the direct teaching of a range of genres through a

cycle that includes modeling, joint constructed with the teacher and finally, the students independently construct a text.

5. Methods of Scoring Students' Compositions

The writing skill is not complex and difficult to be taught and mastered only, rather it is much more difficult to be evaluated or scored. Moreover, it is almost impossible to get a reliable and valid mark when scoring students' essays because this skill does not lend itself to objective testing. Nevertheless, there are different methods that are used by teachers to increase the percentage of reliability in this skill. Three of the main important methods are the following.

1. The Analytic Method

The analytic method considers writing as being made up of various features such as grammar, concepts, vocabulary, creativity and structures each of which is to be scored separately by the teacher who uses scoring procedures to score his students' essays. According to Heaton (1975: 136) teachers who use this method view writing as a demonstration of many isolated skills that when scored separately and added together will come up with an appropriate assessment of the essay. For example, the weighting given to mechanics of writing is 4 out of 20, for grammar the teacher gives 2 out of 20 and so on. The division of the aspects (features to be scored) and the weighting given to each aspect will be changed according to the teacher, the students' level and the course objectives. Heaton (1975: 136) expresses the analytic method.

This method depends on a marking scheme which has been carefully drawn up by the examiner or body of examiners. It consists of an attempt to separate the various features of a composition for scoring purposes.

Even though, this method is time consuming, it is a useful method of scoring, in that it allows students to see areas of weaknesses in their written production. It also helps teachers keep in mind all the writing features as they score, so that no language aspect will be ignored.

2. The Impression Method

When the impression method is used, the teacher gives the mark according to his total impression of the composition as a whole. According to Heaton (1975: 135) in this method usually three or four markers score each paper because it is possible for a composition to appeal to one reader and does not for another. Thus, this method is largely a matter of luck whether the teacher or the examiner likes the students' script or not. The marks given using this method are impossible to obtain any high degree of reliability since it is based on subjective judgment.

3. The Error-count Method

The error-count method or the mechanic accuracy method is another way of scoring students compositions. Using this method the teacher based his scoring or evaluating on the number of mistakes made on each paper. That is he counts the mistakes and deduces marks from a given mark.

The procedure consists of counting the errors made by each testee and deducing the number from a given total: for example, a student may lose up to 10 marks for grammatical errors, 5 marks for miss-use of words, 5 for misspelling, etc.

(Heaton: 1975: 137)

This method also does not lend itself to objective evaluation, because the teacher cannot rely make a decision about errors, that is, which errors that are more important so that the highest

weighting deduced from it. In addition, this method tends to forget about the chief aim of writing, which is communication. Such emphasis on mistakes makes students afraid of mistakes because they find it very difficult to get beyond the first sentence and they tend to stop after each sentence to check it for mistakes of different kinds. Raimes (1984: 83) claims that:

They worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and go back and check it for inflection, word order, spelling and punctuation, breathe a sigh of relief and go on to attack the looming giant of the next sentence.

(Raimes; in Freeman and Richards: 1996: 102)

Conclusion

This chapter clarifies the concept of writing by exploring its nature; how it acquired, where its difficulties and complexities lay and so on. Then, we have explained that the difference between the two productive skills; writing and speaking is not absolute. The third section had proved that reading plays an important role in improving the writing skill, as well as, the close relation between the two skills. The fourth section outlines the most important approaches to the teaching of writing. Finally, the last section gives insights about methods that would help decreasing the percentage of unreliability in scoring students written product.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROCESS APPROACH

Introduction

Writing is one of the four skills that have proved its importance in most language syllabuses in first, second and foreign language classes. The way to teach this skill has been approached differently throughout the history of language teaching. Within the different developments that occurred in this field, the process approach that identifies writing as a process which includes different stages and cognitive activities. This orientation has been originally developed for native language learners and adapted later on for second language and foreign language classes. The process approach has had a widespread influence on the teaching of writing throughout the English-speaking world. This chapter explores the process approach to writing instruction asserting that the act of writing is more than simply the presentation of a written product. Rather, it is a complex, creative and unpredictable progression of strategies, where the writer has to play a crucial role.

1. Historical overview of the writing process approach

Until the 1970s, most studies of writing were about the writing product. During this decade, the birth of communicative teaching methodology, the functional-national approaches and further developments in the various areas of English teaching direct researchers, teachers and methodologists' attention towards the students' practical needs. The main finding of these needs was that each student has his specific requirements which are actually different from other students' requirements. In this context, the importance of writing as a skill has increased as a result of the increase in this status of writing, along with the development of discoursal rather than purely grammatically-based approach, the process approach was born. This new trend in the teaching of writing emerged at a very opportune moment for writing teachers

were dissatisfied with the traditional approaches to teaching writing which had proved inadequate. According to Lynch (1996: 148) the shift from the product approach to the process approach was particularly under the influence of American research in the 1970's. In this respect Celce -Murcia (2001: 220) argues:

There were a number of forces that converged in the mid-1960s to change the way composition has come to be viewed and taught, starting with the call by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) for teachers or researchers to examine how writing is actually produced.

Writing process appears in the research of Emig (1971) who published the composing process of her students using the technique of 'think aloud' to collect information about the processes that students went on in the creation of the written text.

In the late 1960s, Janet Emig pioneered the technique of the "think aloud" procedure for collecting information about student writing processes; she is usually cited as the first researcher to call wide attention to the fact that the ways in which student writers produce text do not necessarily match the model that had been traditionally promulgated (Emig 1971).

(Celce-Marcia 2001: 220)

According to Hedge (2000: 303), several researchers and writers as Perl (1979), Faigly and Witte (1981), Zamel (1983) and Raimes (1985) made studies of the composing processes of their students. In these studies, a number of techniques have been used such as interviews, observation, think aloud, audio and video recording. The findings of these studies had proved the value of the process approach which focuses on the composing process that students follow in order to produce their final product. In addition, the development of the process

approach had yielded a lot of methodologies which emphasize the creativity and unpredictability of writing.

2. Definition of the Writing Process Approach

The process approach sees writing as a creative, individualized, discovery and as a complex process which pays attention to the development of good writing rather than the imitation of models. Thus, the focus shifted from the final product itself to the different stages the writer goes through in order to create this product. The different stages of the composing process that are mostly used in the academic setting and literature are setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. This process is neither easy nor spontaneous; it is a complex process especially for second language learners. Shaughaughnessy argues that the complexity and difficulty of the writing process are caused by the composing process itself (Shaughaughnessy 1977; cited in Hedge 2000: 203).

The process approach tries to provide useful support for students when they write. Its primary aim is to help students gain greater control over the cognitive strategies involved in writing and develop a sense of audience; i.e., before they start writing, they ask themselves for whom we are writing. This approach operates at the level of individual's specific needs and focuses on fluency, content and self-expression rather than accuracy. Consequently, this orientation encourages students to write as much as possible without worrying about mistakes because according to this approach proficiency in writing achieved through the students mastering and understanding of the composing process. Zamel points out that students experience and understanding of the composing process would improve their written product. (Zamel, 1982; in Kroll 1990: 41-41). In addition, Zamel (ibid) argues that: "Competence in

the composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English."

One of the most important principles of the composing process stages is that these stages do not develop in a straight line. That is the writer does not follow the different stages of the composing process step-by-step in a chronological order, rather the process is recursive where the writer can loop backwards and forwards between these stages. Dornan and Dees (2007: 47) constructed the writing process as:

The composing process is not a linear, step-by-step process in which creative and critical thinking are neatly divided. Instead, it is a recursive process of exploration, inquiry, and evaluation that engages both modes of thinking at different times.

So, with the process approach, one will construct his text through several phases in a recursive manner. Thus, at the editing stage the writer may feel the need to go back to the pre-writing stage and think again. Moreover, the writer in the revision stage may generate new ideas and drop old ones and he also can reorganize and reformulate his ideas.

In this new trend in the teaching of writing, students need to be aware and understand that what considered as a final product is just a beginning in the composing process. Because of this, the writer has to be sure that this writing would be improved at any stage. So, at any stage even the final one, the writer can find new ideas, new words, new sentences, and he can revise also before writing. With the process approach, the learner is free to write on any topic. In addition, teachers who use this orientation must give their students enough time to draft, redraft, review, clarify and recognize. Simultaneously, teachers have to be present at each stage of the students' composing process. So, teachers using this process have to act as

facilitators who help students develop strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, etc...

In this context Harmer (2001: 257) states that:

Those who advocate a process approach to writing, however, pay attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through. By spending time with learners on pre-writing phases, editing, redrafting, and finally 'publishing' their work, a process approach aims to get to the heart of the various skills that should be employed when writing.

3. Models of the writing Process Approach

The process approach has had a widespread influence on the teaching of writing for both native speakers and foreign students alike. Because of such interest on the writing process, a number of researchers have proposed models that describe the cognitive functions involved in this process. These models have served as a theoretical basic for using the process approach in both L1 and L2 writing instruction. The main interest of these models is the mental activities involved in writing and the source of knowledge that the writer uses. Moreover, these models serve to clearly define the process of writing and state the difference between skilled and unskilled writers. In this section, we have chosen to examine three models which are mostly used: Hayes and Flower (1980), Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) and Hayes (1996).

A. Hayes and Flower (1980)

Hayes and Flower model or as it is called the cognitive process model is the most influential study of writing. The basic insight of this model is that writing does not occur in steps that have to be chronologically followed, nor does each step lead directly to another in a sequential order. Instead, writing is a recursive process where the writer moves fluidly

backward and forward between the stages that make up the act of writing. This illustration of the meaning of writing is the result of Hayes and Flower study where they used 'think aloud' technique to determine the cognitive and psychological processes that the writer followed to produce his final product.

This study allows Hayes and Flower to construct a model of skilled writing. Hayes and Flower deduced that the actual mental behaviors of experienced writers included: the task environment (the writing assignment and text produced so far) the writers' long-term memory (knowledge of topic, knowledge of audience and stored writing plans) besides to a number of other cognitive processes including planning, translating, revising, etc ... as it is well indicated in the following figure.

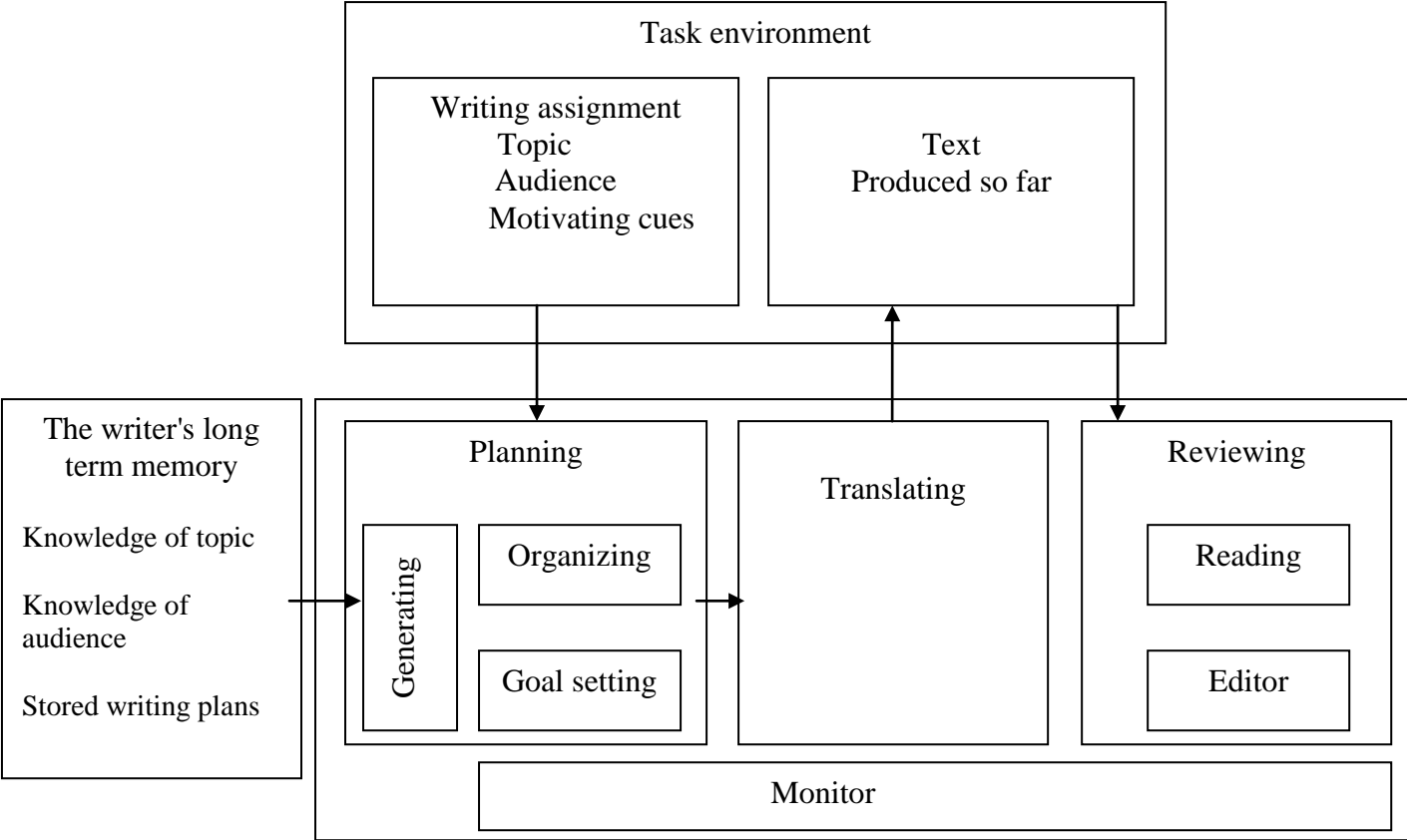


Figure 1: The Hayes- Flower (1980) writing model.

As figure 1 indicated the Hayes -Flower writing model shows the complexity of the process which included processes and sub-processes one goes through when writing. Alexander and Winne (2006: 458) state that:

Hayes and Flower indicated that the execution of the cognitive processes was under the writers' direct control, and proposed that virtually any sub process could interrupt or incorporate any other sub process.

B. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987)

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) is another influential model that is interested in the difference in writing ability between skilled and less skilled writers. The basic difference revealed in their models of writing; knowledge telling and knowledge transforming models. These two models are the result of Bereiter and Scardamalia study, where they observe how children and skilled writers generate ideas. Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2007: 126) state that:

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) distinguish two basic configurations: knowledge telling and knowledge transforming. Knowledge telling involves the retrieval of information on the subject matter, and the relevant discourse schemas, for a long-term memory and translation of these ideas into language. Successive parts of the text (sentence) reflect more or less directly the speed of activation through associative memory. In knowledge transforming, both sub-processes are involved too, but now mediated by more nature problem-solving strategies by which communicative goals are imposed on the generation process.

Knowledge telling model depends on the process of retrieving content from memory; that is, the writer says what he knows about the topic. In knowledge telling model, the writer uses a mental representation of writing assignment to call his knowledge about the topic and describes the type of discourse he has to use. Then, both knowledge about the topic and the type of discourse are used to search the writer's memory for relevant ideas. After that, the writer selected the appropriate ideas to be written down. This process continued until the writer covered all the aspects of his topic. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987: 55) note that knowledge telling strategy is very important since it can help generate content without the benefit of a conversation partner which is very important in writing. In addition, Bereiter and Scardamalia have described knowledge telling model by quoting a 12 year old child's description of this process.

I have a whole bunch of ideas and write down until my supply of ideas is exhausted. Then I might try to think of more ideas up the point when you can't get any more ideas that are worth putting down on paper and then I would end it.

(Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987: 9)

The architecture of the knowledge telling model would be clearer through its graphic representation.

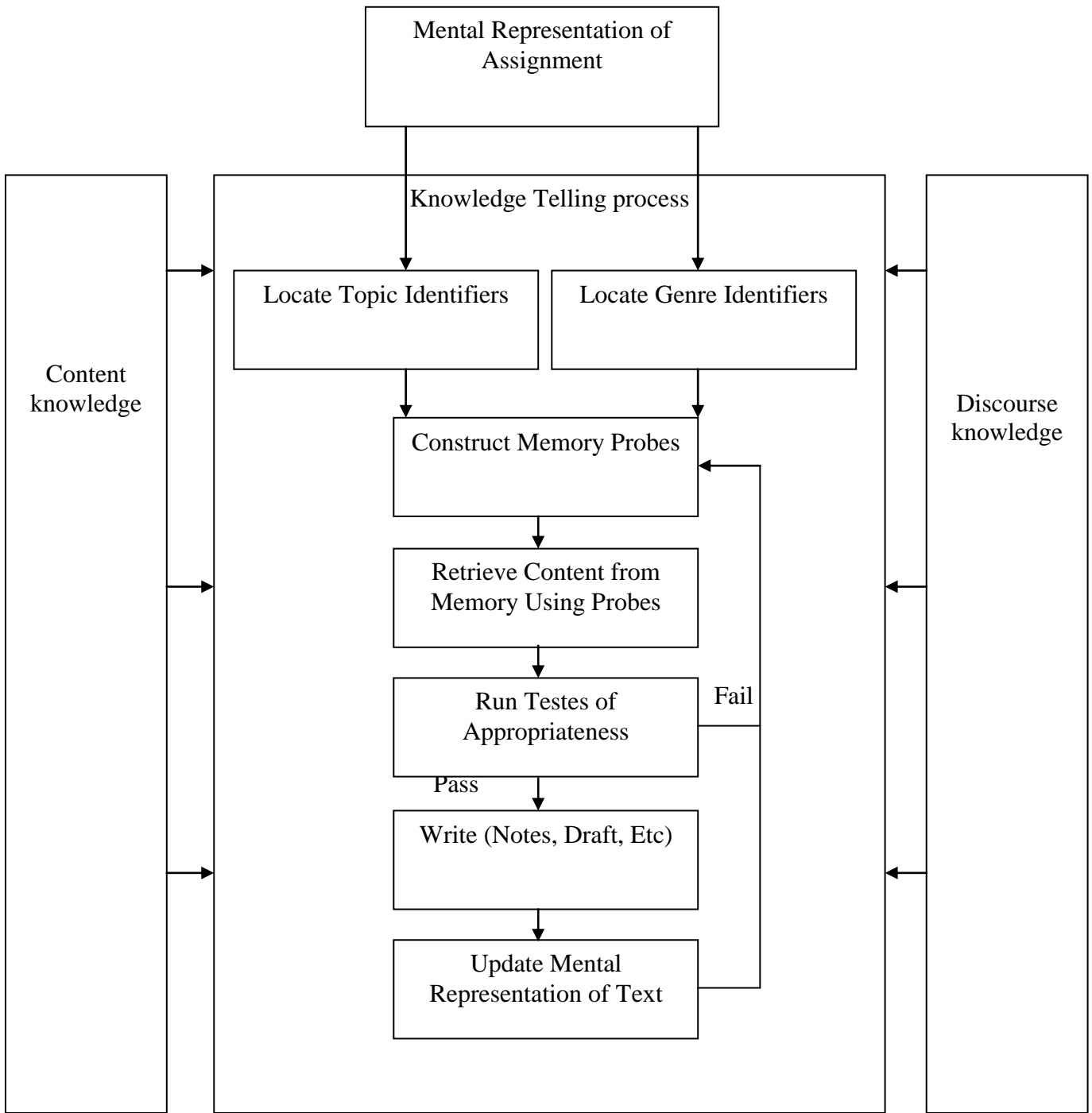


Figure 2: Structure of the Knowledge Telling Model Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987).

Knowledge transforming is a more expert model of writing. This model includes more reflective problem-solving analysis and goal setting. The knowledge transforming model is

an important model since it opens up the idea of multiple processing. Weigle (2002: 32) argues that: “In contrast to the ‘natural and efficient’ process of knowledge telling, knowledge transformation involves much more effort and skill, and is not achieved without a great deal of practice.” In the Knowledge transforming model, the writer’s first step involves problem analysis and goal setting that lead to problem solving activities in two domains; the content problem space and the rhetorical problem space (see structure of knowledge-transforming model). In the content problem space, the writer deals with issues of belief and knowledge. While in the rhetorical problem space the writer’s task is to search for the best way to get the goals of writing assignment. The writer solves his content problem by generating ideas. In the next step his solution to content problem (the generation of ideas) becomes a problem in the rhetorical problem where he modifies his ideas so that he meets a rhetorical restriction. The modified ideas may again introduce a new set of problems to the content problem, so that the writer modifies again in the light of other restriction. In this respect Weigh (2002: 34) state that:

In the words of Bereiter and Scardamalia, there is ‘a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text’ (p.12) .The solutions to the rhetorical and content problems become the input for the knowledge- telling process, during which the actual written text is produced.

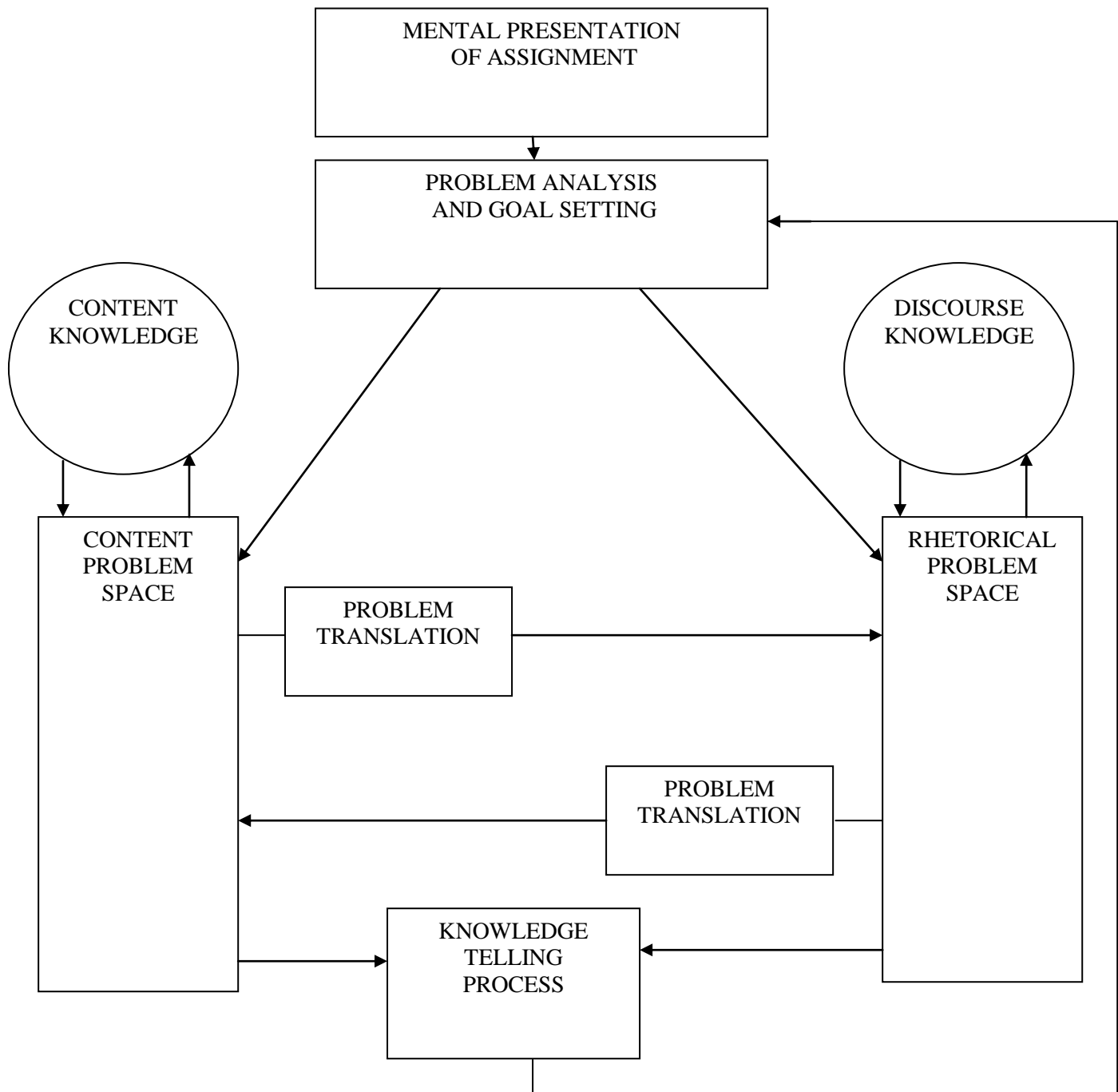


Figure 3: Structure of Knowledge-transforming Model (Bereiter and Scrdamalia, 1987)

Bereiter and Scardamalia's model is considered as a very important model of writing instruction and research on the composing process because it provides very important issues such as explanation for the difference between skilled and unskilled writers and the benefit of multiple processing.

The Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) “models” not only open up the idea of multiple processing models, but also introduce hierarchical predictions in terms of processing involved while writing.

(Silva and Matsuda, 2001: 48)

C. Hayes' (1996)

Hayes' (1996) model opens up Hayes- Flower (1980) model with some additional components in the composing process. In this model, Hayes constructed the writing process as consisting of two main parts: task environment and the individual. Task environment includes social environments (the audience, other texts read while writing besides to any collaborators in the writing process) and the physical environment (the text written so far and the writing mediums such as word processing and handwriting). Hayes' model focuses on the individual rather than the task environment. The individual aspects of writing include interaction among four components; working memory, motivation and affect, cognitive processes and long term memory.

The first individual component in Hayes' model is working memory, which is a modification version of Baddeleys' (1986) concept of working memory. Hayes' working memory contains: phonological memory (auditory/ verbal information), the visual-spatial sketchpad (visual /spatial information) and semantic memory (conceptual information). These three components of the working memory are used for maintaining and processing information, but the capacity of working memory is limited in the amount of material it can hold as well as the length of time it can hold it. Alexander and Winne (2006: 461) argue that:

Finally, working memory was added to the model. This component provides a limited place for holding information and ideas for writing as well as carrying out

cognitive activities that require the writer's conscious attention.

The second individual complement in Hayes' model is motivation and affect. Hayes' model indicated that this component plays an important role in the composing process, especially the writer's goals, predispositions and beliefs and attitudes which influence the writer's way of using the composing process as well as the effort he uses. In this respect, Alexander and Winne state that:

First, he included the motivation / affect component and indicated that affective factors such as goals, predisposition, beliefs and attitudes influence the writing process.

Alexander and Winne (2006: 461)

The third individual component is cognitive process. This component consists of text interpretation, reflection and text production. Text interpretations consist of listening, reading and scanning graphics. In text interpretation, reading plays a central role, in that the writer can read and evaluate his text when revising the source text to get writing content, and reading helps him define his writing task. These different tasks of reading help the writer to form an internal representation of the text. "Hayes emphasizes the importance of reading as a central process in writing, and discusses three types of reading that are essential in writing" Weigh (2002: 26-7). Reflections encompass problem-solving, decision-making and inferencing. These reflection components are used to create new internal representations for the existing internal representations. Text production is the third component of the cognitive process. Text production cues used to guide the retrieval of semantic information that is then held in working memory. These processes used in both drafting and revising stages. Weigh (2002: 25-6) points out that:

The cognitive processes in the Hayes model include text interpretation, reflection, and text production. Text interpretation, which includes listening, reading, and scanning graphics, is the process by which internal representations are created from linguistic and graphic input. Reflection is a process by which new internal representations are created from existing internal representations. Finally, in text production, new linguistic (written or spoken) or graphic output is produced from internal representations.

The last individual component in Hayes' (1996) model is long-term memory, which is used as storage where information and knowledge relevant to the writing task is stored. Weigle (2002: 28) defines long-term memory as: "The fourth individual component in Hayes' model is long-term memory, in which information and knowledge relevant to the writing task is stored." Long-term memory includes: the writer's knowledge of the audience and the topic which are included in Hayes-Flower (1980) model besides linguistic and genre knowledge as well as task schemas. Task schemas specified how to carry out specific writing tasks such as reading a text to obtain information and revising. Task schemas consist information about task goals, the processes necessary for accomplishing the task, how to sequence the process, and how to evaluate the success of the task. The following graphic representation of Hayes' (1996) model will give a better clarification and explanation.

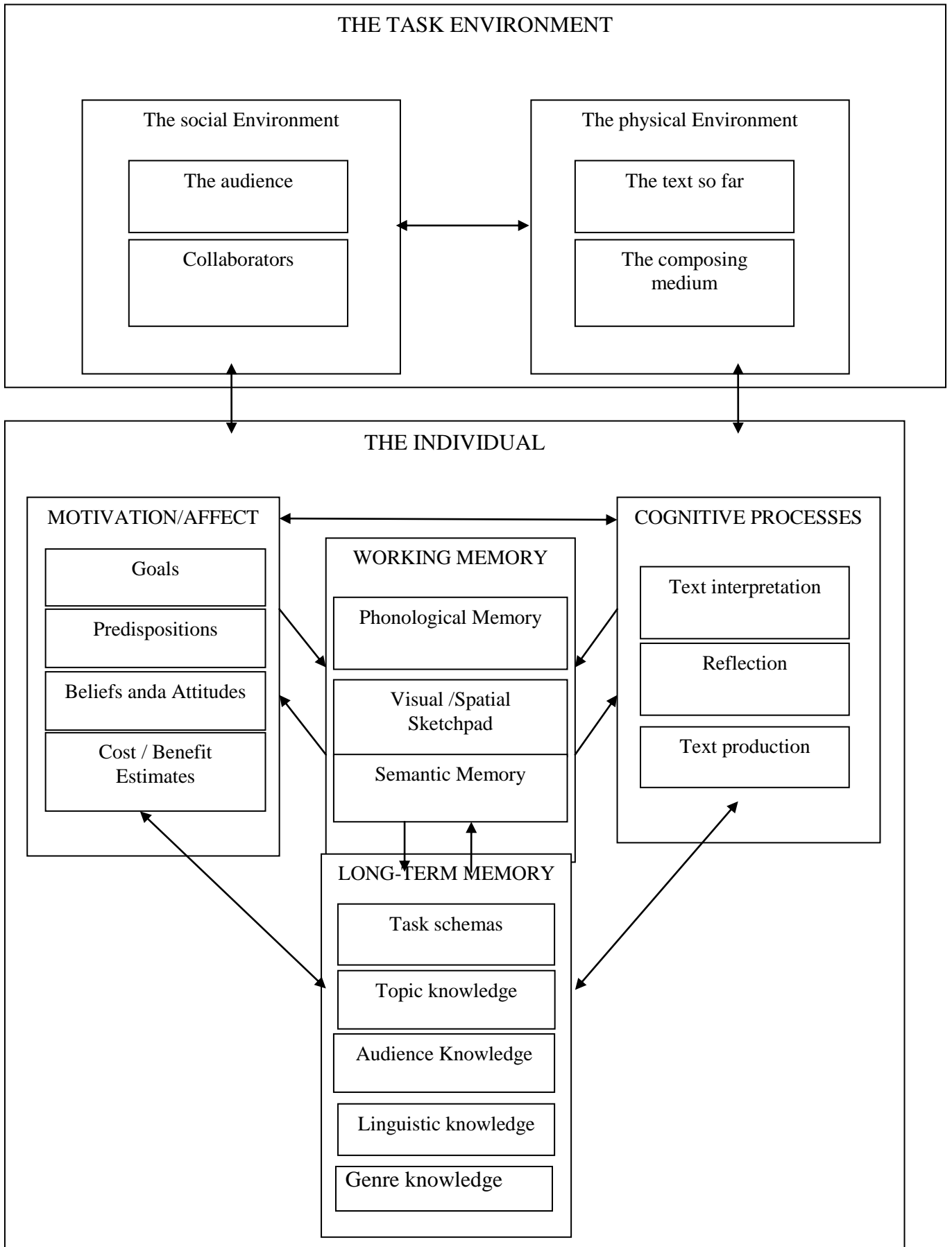


Figure 4: The Hayes (1996) Model

4. Stages of the Writing Process Approach

With the rise of the process approach, the focus is no longer on the finished text, but on the steps that the writer engaged in to produce this text. The main aim of this orientation is to help students be aware of what they are exactly working on. In other words, students need to consider how to handle the various steps involved in the whole process. Moreover, this orientation aims at helping students to gain control over each step of these steps. In fact, there is no agreed consent on the definite number of the stages that characterize the composing process. But the most recursive ones are pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

A- Prewriting

Prewriting is the crucial stage in the composing process, where the writer generates and explores ideas and information about the topic he decided on. It is the first stage which includes all the things the writer does before he gets ready to write out the first version of his text. Richards and Renandya constructed the prewriting stage as:

Pre-writing is in 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 towards generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing.

(Richards and Renandya 2002: 316)

The mostly used prewriting strategies in the academic setting are brainstorming and free writing. Brainstorming is a way to gather information and come up with ideas. Its main principle is to let the writer's ideas flow without judging them. First, the writer generates ideas and then he can come back to them and omit the ones that he thinks irrelevant. One way to brainstorm is to begin with a word or phrase and let ideas flow for a set of time. According to Oshima and Hogue (1999: 04) "Brainstorming for ideas can get you started writing more

quickly and save you time in the later stages of the writing process.” So, brainstorming and the other strategies used in the prewriting stage are the key for the biggest hurdle of writing which is to start. Like brainstorming, free writing is a strategy where the writer lets his sentences flow freely without thinking whether the ideas are appropriate or the grammar is correct. The writer just starts writing quickly and tries not to stop. When he finished free writing, the writer reads what he has written and checked the most interesting facts or ideas to use later on. Williams (2003: 109) defines free writing as:

This technique involves writing nonstop for 5, 10, or 15 minutes. During this period, students keep generating words, even if they cannot think of anything meaningful to say. The rationale is that, eventually, they will be producing ideas that they can develop later into an effective paper.

The prewriting stage may also include reading, mapping, listing, clustering, role play, interviews, problem-solving, decision-making activities, listening to tapes and records and so on.

B- Drafting

Drafting is the second stage of the writing process, where the writer gets down his ideas and thoughts based upon the prewriting strategy that he has used. At the drafting stage, the writer begins to determine what to include and exclude as well as make initial decisions about how ideas will be organized. So, in this stage the emphasis is on content and meaning rather than mechanics and conventions. All in all, drafting is a series of strategies used to organize and develop a sustained piece of writing.

However, there does need to be some point at which the writer begins to ‘translate plans and ideas into provisional

text' (Harris 1993: 55) and moves from thinking about writing to doing it. This is called variously 'composing' (Hedge 1988), 'drafting' (White and Arndt 1991), or 'creating and developing' (Harris 1993). During the composing, writers move towards a text that most closely matches what they want to convey to their reader.

Tribble (1996: 112)

Beginning to draft is always a difficult task, where the writer feels frustrated as a result of his production of false starts and mistakes at different levels. In this context, Pickett et. al. (2001: 146) claim that writing the first draft is a hard task even for knowledgeable writers.

C- Revising

Revising is a procedure for improving a work in progress; it is a series of strategies designed to rethink, reexamine and reevaluate the choices that have created a piece of writing (add, omit, correct, order, change in syntax, sentence structure and organization). According to Mather and Jaffe (1899: 507), students at the revising stage concentrate on the clarity of their message by reorganizing their ideas and providing their text with more effective vocabulary.

D- Editing

In the editing stage, the writer makes a final check to polish his draft. When editing, the writer has to make sure that he has used all the right words and proofreads his text to find mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation and so on. Mather and Jaffe (1899: 507) put it this way:

In editing, the students proofread for and correct errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and usage.

Whereas, Hedge (1988: 23) expresses his opinion about editing as follows:

Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave the details like correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar until later.

By 'getting the content right', Hedge means revision whereas the rest is editing. In the editing stage, the writer can use different strategies such as proofreading, editing checklists as COPS which stand for: C: capitalization, O: organization, P: punctuation/ paragraphs, S: sentences/spelling. Hedge (1998: 23) proposed editing checklists in which writers ask themselves the following questions both during and after composition:

- Am I sharing my impressions clearly enough with my reader?
- Have I missed out any important points of information?
- Are there any points in the writing where my reader has to make a 'jump' because I've omitted a line of argument or I've forgotten to explain something?
- Does the vocabulary need to be made stronger at any point?
- Are there any sentences which don't say much or which are too repetitive and could be missed out?
- Can I rearrange any sets of sentences to make the writing clearer or more interesting?
- Do I need to rearrange any paragraphs?
- Are the links between sections clear? Do they guide my reader through the writing?

E- Publishing

Publishing is the last stage in the writing process in which the writer puts his writing out to the public to find out how others feel about what he had written. Publishing helps enhancing the writer's achievement and motivation, and it is a good way to validate the writers' piece of writing. Writers can publish their work using different strategies such as reading aloud, reading to a group and web publishing. Williams (2003: 107) defines publishing as:

Sharing your finished text with its intended audience,
Publishing is not limited to getting the text printed in a
journal. It includes turning a paper in to a teacher, a boss,
or an agency.

Even though these stages are said to be universal; that is, each writer is assumed to engage in these stages to certain degree. The process approach claims that writing is a highly complex individualized activity, which means that there are a lot of behaviours that are not universal. More than that, there is a variation within the universal way. Thus, prewriting is a universal task that may take the form of free writing, brainstorming, reading, discussion and so on, depending on the writers' preferences as well as the writing task at hand.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have introduced and defined the process approach in relation to the teaching of writing. Firstly, we have clarified the circumstances and causes of the emergence of this orientation in the historical overview of the process approach. Then, we have defined the process approach by giving a collection of definitions of different authors followed by explanations, clarifications and comments made by others. Moreover, this chapter presented three of the most effective models in the process approach which help aiding the actual practice of writing. These models were primarily interested in the steps that make up the act

of writing. Finally, we have indicated the most recursive and used stages of the process approach as well as the strategies used in each stage.

CHAPTER Three

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

In this chapter, a full analysis and discussion of the data generated by the teachers' questionnaire will be introduced. The teachers' questionnaire has been used to shed light on the teaching of Written Expression module for second-year EFL students at Constantine University. More precisely, this research instrument is used to gain a deep understanding of the approach (es) teachers of English use in teaching writing during the academic year 2008 / 2009 and their attitudes towards the process approach as well as the methods and techniques used for scoring students' compositions. In addition, different comments and suggestions that help guiding and motivating students to get a better achievement in this written communicative skill have been proposed by teachers who answered the questionnaire. The procedure followed consists of the analysis of each question separately with a brief introduction for each section. In addition, some results have been reported in tabular form so that results will be clearer. The chapter ends up with a general conclusion in the form of a summary.

1. Questionnaire Administration

Most teachers' questionnaires were handed directly on 19th of May 2009 to teachers from the Department of English at Constantine University. All the teachers who participated in this questionnaire (12) teach Written Expression module for second-year students at Constantine University in the academic year 2008 / 2009.

2. Description of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is largely conceptualized on the basis of the review described in the theoretical part of the present research. We have mainly used the technique of close-ended

questions because teachers were restricted with time and have a lot of duties. In short, there are three types of questions used in this questionnaire:

1/ Numeric Questions: these questions are used to gain background information of the participants such as the teachers' work experience and the degree (s) held.

2/ Open -ended Questions: are questions that allowed respondents to answer in their own words. The aim of using this type of question is to determine the responders' opinions towards the subject under study.

3/ Close -ended Questions: which are mostly used in this questionnaire, are questions that ask respondents to choose from pre-determined answers. In addition to this type, we have used follow-up questions in the form of clarification such as "please specify" or "justify your answer". This type of questions helps obtaining clear and complete responses to open questions so that, the number of ambiguous responses is reduced.

As shown in appendix A, the teachers' questionnaire consists of fifteen questions, organized in five sections. Each section in this questionnaire is related directly or indirectly to a specific aspect of this research. The first section aims at getting background information of the participants. It is a short section that consists of three questions starting with a question about the teachers' experience in teaching English in general, then in teaching Written Expression module and ends up with a question about the degree(s) held by the participants.

Section two is concerned with the writing skill. It consists of two questions (question items 4 and 5). These questions aim at highlighting the teachers' points of view about the teaching of writing for second-year EFL students and the aspects that their students have problems with. As for the third section, we have shifted to composition scoring. It consists of four questions (question items 6-9) these are related to the theoretical part of this research.

The next section (section four) is about the writing process where we shed light on the process approach; the teacher's role in this process and other questions that serve as an indication of the use of the process approach by teachers. we end up with section five where teachers allowed to make any suggestions, comments or ways that help in motivating and improving second- year EFL students in this productive skill.

3. Data Analysis

A- Background Information of the Teacher

All teachers are from Mentouri University and all of them have university degrees; 50% of them hold BA (licence degree) they are part-time teachers with short experience arranged from one to three years either in teaching English in general or in teaching writing precisely. 33.33 % of the participants have MA (magister degree) and their experience in teaching writing arranged from three to seven years. Whereas the lowest percentage is for those who have PhD (doctorate) with 16.66 % their experience in teaching writing is about twenty and twenty eight years lecturers.

B- The Writing Skill

The questions used in this section demand from the participants the least effort they can make, and this is by putting a cross or ticking a box.

Question Four

Is writing an easy task for second-year university students?

Yes.....

No.....

This question is about the teachers' opinion about the task of writing for second- year EFL students, whether it is an easy or a difficult task. 75% of the participants said that writing is a difficult task for second-year students, and only 27% said that it is an easy task. The answers

to this question item revealed that the majority of teachers arguing that writing is a difficult task that needs separate and special attention. In this respect, Bell and Burnaby rightfully argued:

writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.

(Bell and Burnaby, 1984; in Nunan 1996: 36)

we think that the difficulty of writing is also due to the absence of the reader that deprives writers from the possibility of interaction and the benefit of feedback. This absence also obliges writers to make a lot of efforts to be sure that the text they produce can be interpreted on its own.

Question Five

What are the aspects that your students have problems with?

- a: Essay organization
- b: Ideas organization.....
- c: Grammar
- d: Vocabulary.....
- e: Conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...etc).....

This is a close ended question with multiple-choice, which asked teachers about the aspects their students have problems with when they write and require them to choose one or more of the given options. The teachers' responses to this question yield the results displayed in the following table.

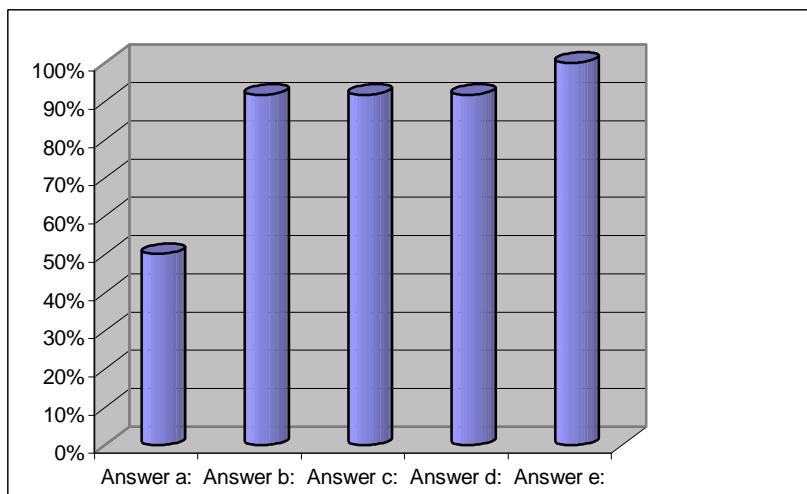


Table (1) Aspects That Students have Problems with (1)¹

According to the results obtained, all the respondents have stated that their students have problems in all the aspects previously mentioned. Besides, as revealed in table (1), the percentages of the aspects are very close. Convention of writing ranks first with 100 %; i.e., all the teachers said that their students have problems in these aspects. So, students need considerable amount of time in getting a good command of these aspects. Consequently the teaching of these conventions has to be emphasized.

Ideas organization, grammar and vocabulary come in the second rank with the same percentage 91, 66%. We think that the problems in these aspects are primary due to the lack of practice because these aspects usually develop from extensive reading, some specific training and a good deal of practice. It is surprising to note that even essay organization poses a problem to some second-year learners. Here, 50% of the respondents said that their students have problems with this aspect. What makes the problem with this aspect surprising

¹ 1 Teachers ticked more one box, so the total is not necessarily 100%

is that all the second- semester of the Written Expression programme in the second-year is about essay organization from A to Z.

The results obtained in table (1) confirm the respondents' answers to question item four where 75 % considered writing as a difficult task for second-year EFL students.

C-Composition Scoring

The third section in this questionnaire tries to get a deeper insight into the fundamental techniques and methods that teacher use to score their students' composition.

Question Six

Should the teacher correct every mistake the students make?

Yes.....

No.....

(Please justify your answer)

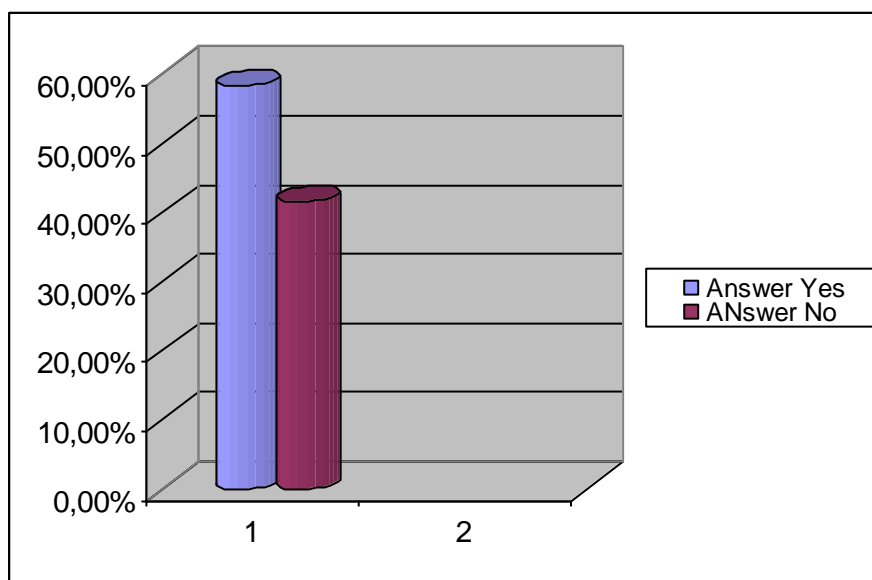


Table (2) Teachers' Attitudes towards the Correction of Mistakes.

As indicated in the above table, 58, 33% of the respondents would correct every mistake the students make. The justification that teachers have given for their choice were to a certain extent different. For some teachers, students' mistakes are occasions that they have to profit from in order to improve their students' writing level. Others said that every mistake students make present one language aspect, and every language aspect is important, therefore every mistake should be corrected so that no aspect would be overlooked. Another justification that has been given by the participants is the fact that the teacher is concerned with the students' mistakes is an act that helps students to reduce mistakes, especially if they pay attention to their teachers' instructions.

However, 41, 66% of the respondents opted for 'No', that is the teacher should not correct every mistake the students make. Again their justifications behind this choice were different. Some see that the teacher should focus on a particular problem each time with much practice because focusing on all the mistakes will lead to confusion and will not help students correct their mistakes by themselves. Other teachers see that they should concentrate on the aspect being taught and point to other mistakes only when they are serious. More than that, concentrating on the aspects being taught is more pragmatic with the huge number of students in class, and it helps students to concentrate better on writing. In addition to this, some respondents claim that there is no need to correct every mistake the student makes since the aim of essay writing is to produce a meaningful text and to successfully express oneself through writing.

wer think that the correction of mistakes is of great importance, but it is preferable to focus only on some special aspects each time, so that students would not be confused and would pay more attention to the correction. In this aspect Davies and Pearse (2000: 99) claim:

It is usually best to limit error correction to a manageable number of major errors only, and also to get learners to correct their own error as far as possible.

In addition, correcting every mistake the students make when getting a piece of written work back and during the writing process alike is very dispiriting for most students because over-correction indicates for them that their written English is terrible. As Harmer (2007: 120) indicates ‘over-correction can have a very demotivating effect.’

Question Seven

Do you think that the scoring system in writing should be strongly based on the course objectives?

Yes.....

No.....

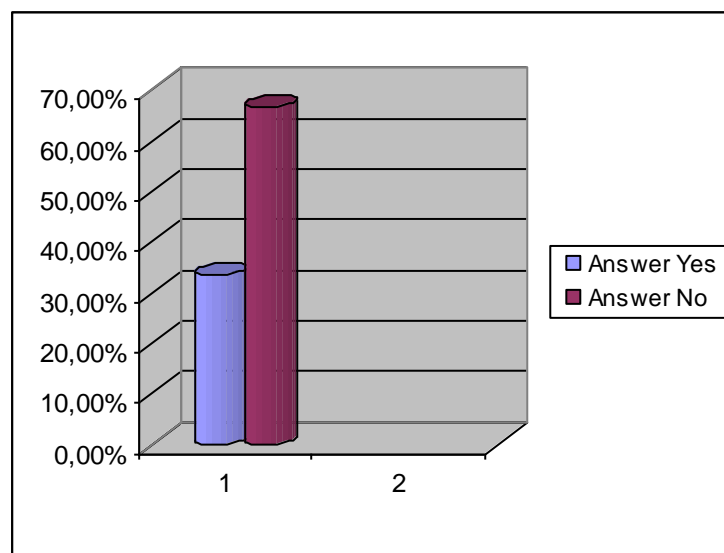


Table (3) Teachers' Responses to Question item 7

To gain deeper insights into the answers generated by this question, the answers to this question are analysed in the light of the teachers' answers to question item (6). The results achieved as displayed in table (3) show that once again the majority of the respondents 66, 66% would not base their scoring system in writing on the course objectives because writing is not a subject on its own. It is a combination of rules, grammar, mechanics...etc. So, teachers' justifications to their choice are based on their answers to question item (6) that indicates that the teacher has not only to take into consideration the aspects that have relation with the course objectives in scoring his students' essays, but all the aspects of the written language as well.

However, 33, 33% of the respondents said that the scoring system in writing should be strongly based on the course objectives in order to indicate the extent to which the course objectives have been achieved.

In this aspect, we can say that teachers have to give the marks which reflect students' mastery of the aspects focused on in the course, and at the same time mark other aspects in relation to students' level. For instance, if we take second-year students, some mistakes such as those made in capitalization and the 's' of the first person singular should not be allowed, so the students' performance in these aspects have to influence their marks.

Question Eight

Which one of the following methods do you use in scoring your students' compositions?

A- The Analytic Method (using scoring procedures)

B- The Impression Method (the total impression of the essay)

C- The Error-count Method (deducing marks according to the number of error)....

The replies given by the respondents to this question as shown in table (4) indicate that the highest rate 75% goes to option 'A', that is the majority of teachers use the scoring procedures when they evaluate students' written production. This shows that the use of scoring procedures is important and helpful. When using scoring procedures, teachers can conceive the scoring according to the points they have emphasized or they see that are more important. Moreover, using scoring procedures obliges teachers to take into account all what students produce when evaluating their compositions.

On the contrary, some teachers would argue that it is not advisable to separate the different language parts or the different composition features when correcting students' compositions. This is the case of 16, 16 % of the respondents who have chosen the impression method as a way of scoring and 8, 33% who opt for error-count method.

We think that although the total writing skill is difficult to be scored objectively, using the analytic method or identifying the composition components and using them for scoring constructions purposes might help getting reliable marks.

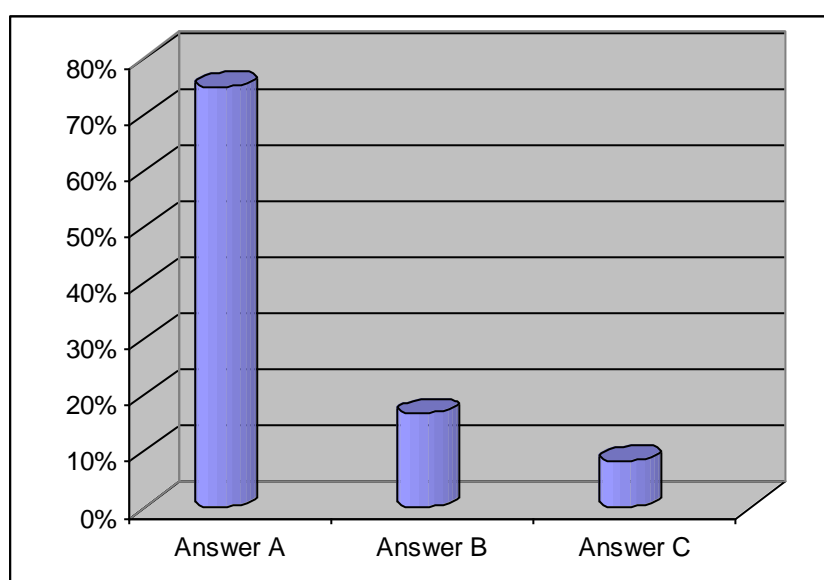


Table (4) Methods Used in Grading Students' Compositions

Question Nine

If you have opted for the analytic method, what credit would you give to?

Essay organization	/ 20
Grammar accuracy	/ 20
Vocabulary	/ 20
Mechanics of writing	/ 20
Organization of ideas	/20

This question aims to clarify the teachers' attitudes towards each aspect that composes students' compositions by giving the grade or points they allocate for each aspect. Firstly we have to note that:

- Essay organization refers to the ability to write the essay in a tidy and conventional way.
- Grammar accuracy refers to the ability to write correct sentences.
- Vocabulary refers to the ability to use appropriate and different words.
- Mechanics of writing refers to the ability to use well those conventions which belongs to the written language such as punctuation and capitalization.
- Organization of ideas refers to the ability to develop ideas adequately and smooth and smoothly.

The first observation we can make is that all the teachers gave approximately the same importance to each aspect. Starting with essay organization, we note from the results obtained that 37, 5% of teachers allocate 5 out of 20, 25 % allocate 4 out of 20, 25 % allocate 6 out of 20, and the lowest percentage 12, 5% opted for 8 out of 20. These results indicate that essay organization is a useful aspect for teachers of second-year EFL students in Mentouri

University Constantine. We think that the reason behind giving much importance to this aspect is that this is the first experience for second-year EFL students in essay organization. In addition, this aspect is a part of their Written Expression module.

The second observation is that 62, 5% of the respondents allocate 5 points out of 20 for grammar accuracy, 25% allocate 4 out of 20, and 12,5% (just one teacher) allocate 3 out of 20. This reveals that in spite of the fact that teachers do not give a great attention to grammar according to the approaches used nowadays in teaching, they do consider grammar in their evaluation. In our opinion, grammar is one of the aspects that have to get a great importance because it is the framework without which there would be no agreement about the accepted forms to convey meaning.

Concerning vocabulary, 37, 5% of the teachers allocate 2 out of 20 and the same percentages of the participants allocate 3 out of 20. Whereas, 25% of the teachers have allocate 4 out of 20. This indicates that although this item is not considered as important as grammar and essay organization, it is of a relative importance in the score of a composition because the appropriate choice of vocabulary is very crucial to make writing comprehensible.

In relation to mechanics of writing, we have obtained the following results: 37, 5% of the teachers allocate 3 out of 20, 25 % allocate 4 out of 20, 12,5 % allocate 5 out of 20, 12,5 % allocate 6 out of 20 and the same percentage (12,5%) opted for 7 out of 20. we have noticed from these results that mechanics of writing are considered as vital ingredients in composition writing. This is not surprising because the mechanics of writing are indispensable elements since they serve for the understanding of compositions and play a great role in the clarification of meaning in the same way as grammar, vocabulary and organization of ideas.

As for the organization of ideas, we have noticed that the credit allocated to it is very high. All teachers gave a credit between 3 and 10 out of 20 to this aspect (for more details see table 5). The results obtained indicate the great value given by teachers of second-year students to the organization of ideas that plays a crucial role in creating a successfully communicated and comprehensible composition. So, it is necessary for students to have the ability to organize their ideas in an expressive and a smooth manner.

The results revealed that each one of the aspects previously mentioned (see table 5) is a complementary element for the other aspects. In addition, a successful communication cannot be achieved in the absence of one of them.

Element credited											N ^o of Teachers
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Essay organization				02	03	02		01			8
Grammar accuracy			01	02	05						8
Vocabulary		03	03	02							8
Mechanics of writing			03	02	01	01	01				8
Organization of ideas			02	02	02	01				01	8

Table (5) Scores (out of 20) Allocated to the different Composition Component.

D- The Writing Process

This section as its title indicates will provide an overview of the process approach. We have Started with the approach (as) used in teaching the Written Expression module to second-year EFL students. Then, we have moved to the role played by the teacher in the

writing process. In the third question, we asked whether teachers discuss the topic with their students before they start writing or not. This section will be ended up with the stage of writing where grammar mistakes should be corrected.

Question Ten

Which of the following approaches do you follow in the teaching of writing for second-year EFL students?

- a- The product approach.....
- b- The process approach.....
- c-The genre approach.....

As it has been elaborated in the theoretical part of this research (chapter one), the three approaches suggested to the teachers to choose from convey three different views about the writing procedures. The product approach is concerned with the final result of the writing process, the process approach focuses on the process the writer engaged in when constructing a composition, whereas the genre approach is interested in the ways of using language for particular purposes, and every component of the text that is used in the fulfillment of this purposes. In addition, this orientation claims that the text should be socially recognized so that readers would understand its meaning and purposes.

The replies given by the respondents, as shown in table (6), allow to the conclusion that the process approach is the one which is widely used by teachers at Mentouri University to teach writing to second-year EFL students. In statistical terms, the highest rate 83, 33% of teachers choose answer (b) an approach which sees writing as a process that involves a

number of different activities such as setting goals and generating ideas that the writer has to engage in, but he is not obliged to follow these stages or activities in a linear way. The rest of the respondents 16, 66% have opted for (a) the product approach which is interested in the final product of the writing process. Moreover, this approach requires from the learner to be engaged in imitating and transforming model texts in order to make students aware of the text features. Concerning the genre approach, the results obtained indicate that none of the respondents teaches writing using this approach which focuses on the reader and relates to the association between discourse and the content in which language is used, the social action and purposes of the text. That is each discourse community has individual qualities and so on.

Once more, we say that the results typically show a preference for the process approach as an approach that could help students to carry out a writing task effectively.

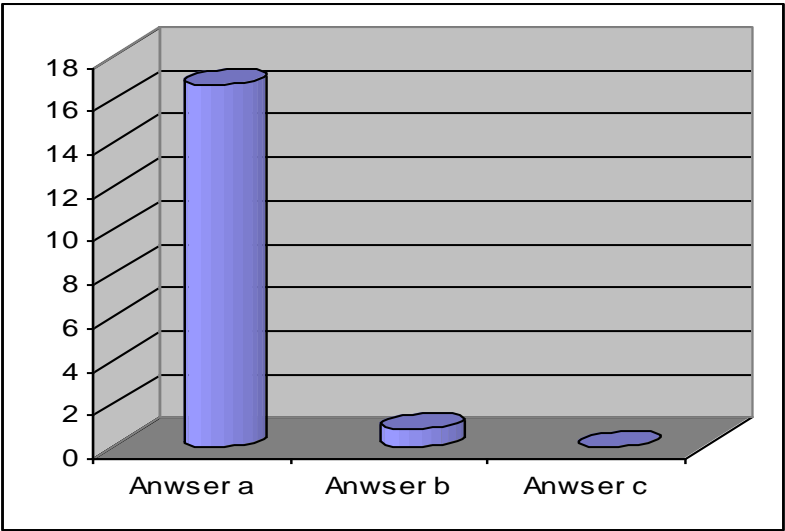


Table (6) Approaches Used in Teaching Writing

Question Eleven

What is the teacher’s role in the writing process?

A- Supervisor.....

B- Participant.....

C- Observer.....

This question aims at highlighting the teacher's role in the writing process. And we think that the best way to analyze the respondents' answers to this question would be to start with a brief elaboration of the three roles suggested to teachers to choose from.

- Supervisor: as a supervisor, the teacher is in charge of the students writing and makes sure that everything is done correctly.
- Participant: as a participant, the teacher joins his students while they are writing and takes part in the discussion.
- Observer: as an observer, the teacher observes what students do so that he can give them a useful feedback for each individual or for the whole group.

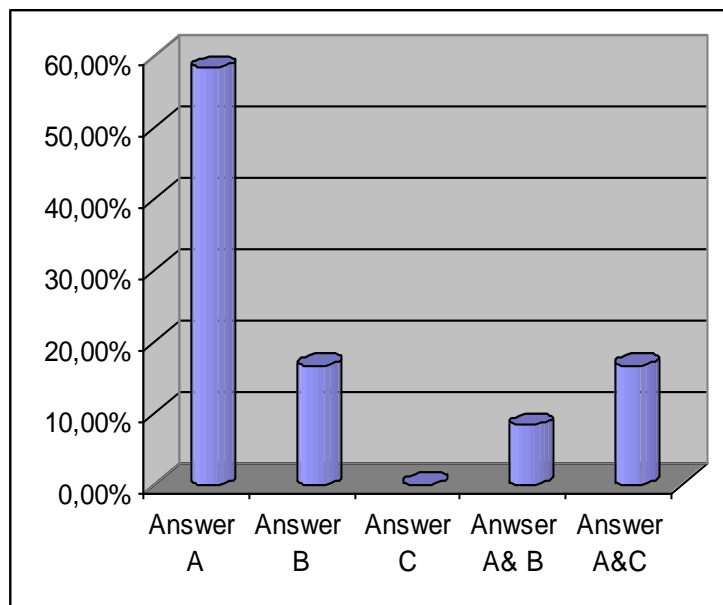


Table (7) the Teacher s' Role in the Writing Process

Teachers were to some extent unified in agreeing about the role they take in the writing process. Statistically, 58, 33% of the teachers said that their principal role in the writing process is that of a supervisor; that is, they control and guide their students in all the stages they follow in order to make them produce the final product . In this aspect C. Richards (2003: 12) describes the teacher s' role as:

The teacher's role is to guide students through the writing process, avoiding emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas.

16, 66% of the respondents have chosen option (B) that is the teacher plays the role of a participant, whereas, 8. 33 % prefer to play two roles as a supervisor and participant, and 16, 66% have chosen to be supervisors and observers at the same time. Yet none of the respondents has opted for the option that stipulates that the teacher's role is considered as an observer in the writing process.

we think that the teacher in the writing process should be able to switch between the various roles, the ones that have been suggested and the other roles such as a motivator, a resource, a facilitator and so on. The role of the teacher depends on the stage that the student engaged in and the student s' level alike because writing is a highly individualized process and not all the students have the same needs. After all, all the roles aim to facilitate and help students improve their written communicative skill.

Question Twelve

Do you discuss the topic with your students before they start writing?

Yes.....

No.....

This question item aims at confirming the use of the process approach in teaching writing for second-year students in Constantine University because the discussion of the topic or the class brainstorming is one of the steps that teachers generally follow when teaching writing using the process approach. In this question, teachers were quite unified with a high per cent (83, 33%) of respondents who agreed on discussing the topic with their students. Only 8, 33% of the respondents (just one teacher) said that he does not discuss the topic with his students, whereas another respondent said that he does not discuss the topic unless the students finish brainstorming.

The results obtained indicate the importance of discussing the topic with the students in the writing process. From our view point, the importance given to the discussion of the topic is due to the fact that this discussion highlights the main ideas of the topic for students and directs them to the right way of developing it. Moreover, the discussion of the topic facilitates the brainstorming or the free writing for students because after discussion they have some ideas to start with. According to Jim (2008: 194), one way of helping students to write might include discussing some key issues about the topic introduced. In addition, Elbow points out:

for helping native speakers break through the difficulty of getting started...For ESL/EFL students, this often works best if the teacher provides an opening clause or sentence for the students to start with to structure the free writing.

(Elbow, 1973; in Celce-Murcia: 2000: 224)

Question Thirteen

At what stage of the writing process might grammar be best introduced?

- a- Planning.....
- b- Drafting.....
- c- Revising.....
- d- Writing the final copy.....

As table (8) indicates, the highest rate of the respondents (58, 33%) agrees that grammar should be introduced in the revising stage. The rest 41.63 % was spread between 16.66 % those who said that they correct grammar mistakes in both the revising and writing the final copy stages, 16, and 66%, those who see drafting as the best stage for grammar correction, and 8, 33% who claim that both drafting and revising are appropriate stages for introducing grammar mistakes.

The results yielded by this question once again show that teachers use the process approach in teaching writing for second-year EFL students. That is because the focus of the process approach is on content and not on form. This approach sees that focusing on grammar accuracy makes students inhibited and limit their creativity and earnest in writing. As Celce-Murcia (2001: 229) argues:

It is very important that the teacher not be swayed by the presence of language problems into turning a writing course into a grammar course. Rather, errors must be dealt with at an appropriate stage of the composing process, and this stage is best considered part of the final editing phase.

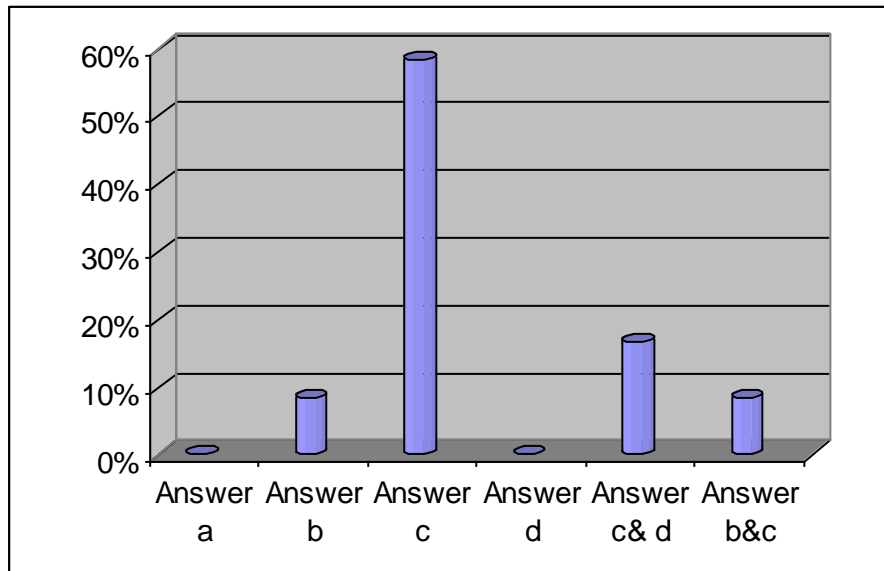


Table (8) the Best Stage in the Writing Process for Grammar Correction

E-Suggestions

We have used in this section open questions that invite teachers to make any comments or suggestions that might help students to improve their writing. In addition, teachers were asked to suggest any ways and activities that would make the writing activity motivating and enjoyable.

Question Fourteen

How do you think the level of students' writing could be improved?

Teachers' comments concentrated on practice as the best way for improving students' level in writing. Among the answers that support practice are the following: 'writing can be improved primarily through practice.', 'Students need more practice in order to improve their level in the writing skill'. In another comment, one teacher expresses his belief that practice is the best way to improve the students' level in the writing skill as he plainly stated: 'Practice,

practice and practice. It ranks long before reading.’ Another important comment made by teachers who refer to the huge number of students as an obstacle to improve their level. So, they propose to reduce the number of students for a better achievement in the writing skill. Using reading model texts is another suggestion that has been proposed. A further interesting comment made by another teacher was ‘I am still looking for the best way to help students improve their writing.’ For as we believe that practice is the appropriate key for developing the students’ writing ability because writing is an art; and like any art, writing improves by practice.

Question Fifteen

Could you give any suggestions that make the writing activity a motivating one?

The last question in the last section aims at shedding light on the different factors and activities that make writing a motivating activity. The proposed suggestions vary enormously from one teacher to another, but we have noticed that the majority of teachers who answered this questionnaire agreed on the topic as a necessary factor for motivating students to write but from different perspectives. By different perspectives, some teachers mean that the choice of the topic which is related to the students’ own lives, their personal experience, authentic and interest would motivate students to write. For others, students would be motivated if they discuss the topic orally; that is, the teacher makes a classroom brainstorming before students engage in the writing process. Giving students the opportunity to choose the topic is for some respondents a motivating factor. In addition, other teachers suggested that giving incentives, peer interaction, making the session as a kind of competition, convincing the learners that they are in the right path, implementing the policy of collaborative work, avoiding scoring their papers and developing a suitable mood in the classroom are important factors for

motivating students. All in all, we can say that there are inevitably a lot of activities that motivate students to write. So, the teacher would choose the appropriate content and time to present students with the most adequate activities that enhance students' writing.

Conclusion

The analysis of this questionnaire shows that all teachers were aware of the difficulty of the writing task for second-year EFL students, and the students' problems in all the aspects that make up the act of writing. The results also indicate that teachers were unified in choosing the appropriate method for scoring their students' compositions that is the analytic method which helps getting a reliable mark. In addition, teachers have agreed on the last stages of the process approach as the most appropriate stages for introducing grammar correction. More importantly, in the light of the foregoing data analysis, it becomes clear that teachers were aware of the benefit of using the process approach and believed that this approach would help their students achieve a better writing ability. Last but not least, the present questionnaire has revealed that teachers of the Written Expression module at Constantine University use modern approaches in teaching writing. Moreover, they seem to be in line with the changes that affect the aspect of teaching writing in English as a foreign language worldwide.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIELD STUDY

Introduction

This study is designed to investigate if the process approach helps in improving the writing ability of second-year EFL students. To test if this approach would have a significant effect in developing the ability to express oneself through the medium of writing, an experimental design has been established. The writing development has been exhibited in essays written by Second-Year EFL Students at University Mentouri Constantine from which the data of this study was selected. Sixteen participants are randomly selected and assigned either to the experimental group which receives the treatment or the control group which used the traditional approach.

The first step in this experiment is the pre-test. All the participants (32) of both groups are pre-tested via essay writing. After the pre-test, the treatment period begins. During six weeks and within twelve sessions, the experimental group have used the process approach, whereas the control group used the product approach. After the end of treatment period (six weeks) the participants have the post-testes through the same tool of measurements as in the pre-test.

The analysis of the differences between the scores of the experimental group and the scores of the control group has been divided into two parts. First we have compared pre and post test results and means, and secondly, we have used t-test analysis. The use of the t-test would confirm if the difference between the means is statistically significant, so the research hypothesis could be accepted, or it is not significant; consequently the hypothesis will be rejected.

1. Research Questions and Purposes

The aim of this study is to show how the process approach helps second-year EFL students at Mentouri University Constantine to develop their written communicative skills. So it is a tool that aims at checking and refining this research hypothesis with a small sample. For such interests, the following questions are to be answered.

1. Does the process approach improve the students' ability to create paragraphs that are coherent, smoothly developed and to effectively communicate their ideas?
2. Does the process approach improve the students' ability to write correct and complete sentences?
3. Does the process approach improve the students' ability to use specific and appropriate vocabulary that makes the written language fresh and vivid?
4. Does the process approach improve the students' ability to use correct and effective spelling, punctuation and capitalization?
5. Does the process approach improve the student's' ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively?

2. The population

This study deals with second-year EFL students in the English department at University Mentouri Constantine. The population under this survey is about 767 students in the academic year 2008-2009, organized in nineteen groups with an average of thirty-six to forty-two students in each group. For this population, English is a foreign language which started to be taught in most cases since the eighth grade, in addition to the two years of instruction at the university. Of far greater importance, second-year EFL students in Mentouri University

Constantine take considerable courses on writing during their university career, especially in second year where the programme is chiefly concerned with essay writing.

3. The sample

From the population of about 767 students, thirty-two students have been invited to participate in this experiment design. We have randomly selected sixteen participants to whom we assigned the experimental condition, whereas the rest have been assigned into the control condition. The majority of students were girls. From the sixteen students in the experimental group, two of them were boys. So, in this study sex will not be taken into account.

The sample of the population has been restricted to thirty-two students because using the process approach is time-consuming. Moreover, using this approach requires from the teacher assistance to his students in the form of regular guidance, especially that we have worked with individual students; i.e., a pattern of individual learning. This sample corresponds to students who have taken the pre-test, have been under observation during the treatment period and finally have been post-tested.

4. Materials used for practice

As materials to carry out his research, different topics have been used. For the pre-test, we have opted for “watching TV is not a waste of time” (see appendix B). During the treatment period, since the time allocated to carry out this research was limited, only six topics have been used, the different topics have been used in the treatment period are:

- Learning foreign languages is important.
- Traditional and modern marriage

- Everyone is the architect of his own future
- Different ways of escaping stress and difficulties of modern life
- A person who has a significant influence on you
- Watching TV at home and going to the cinema

(Examples of the topics used in the treatment period in appendix C)

“Reading a story in a book is often very different from seeing it as a film” is the topic that have been used in the post-test (see appendix D)

5. Content and Procedures

5.1 The Method of Scoring Students’ Essays

Correction of the written production must be conducted carefully because it is at this stage that the teacher can measure to what extent his teaching and his students learning have been effective, real and efficient. For this reason and more importantly for the sake of being objective as far as possible, students’ essays are analytically scored using scoring procedures (see chapter one). The students' essays are scored on five essential dimensions of writing. These dimensions are; essay organization, grammar accuracy, vocabulary choice, conventions of writing and ideas Organization. Each dimension is scored using four-point scale. If we take organization of ideas as an example we will score it as follows:

Well organized	—————→	four points
Fairly well organized	—————→	three points
Loosely organized	—————→	two points
Ideas disconnected	—————→	one point.

5.2 Pre-test: description and analysis

The thirty two participants are pre-tested via the task of essay writing. Each student is asked to take 90 minutes to produce an essay about “watching TV is not a waste of time”. The aim behind choosing this accessible and relatively easy topic is that second-year EFL learners have short experience in essay writing. In addition, the theme is related to their daily life experience. To calculate the means of the control group and the experimental group in the pre-test, the sum of the scores of each group have to be divided on the number of the participants as shown in the following tables.

participant	scores
1	10.5
2	11.5
3	12.5
4	11
5	10.5
6	12
7	9.5
8	12
9	09
10	12
11	11
12	10.5
13	12
14	10
15	9.25
16	11
The Mean	10.89

Table (09) Calculating the mean of the control group in the pre-test

participant	scores
1	11
2	10
3	9.5
4	12
5	13
6	10
7	12
8	12
9	11
10	10
11	12
12	9
13	11.5
14	12.5
15	10.5
16	9
The Mean	10.92

Tables (10) calculating the means of the experimental group in the pre-test.

After calculating the means of the control and experimental group in the pre-test, the results are presented in a diagram (figure 5) so that they become clearer.

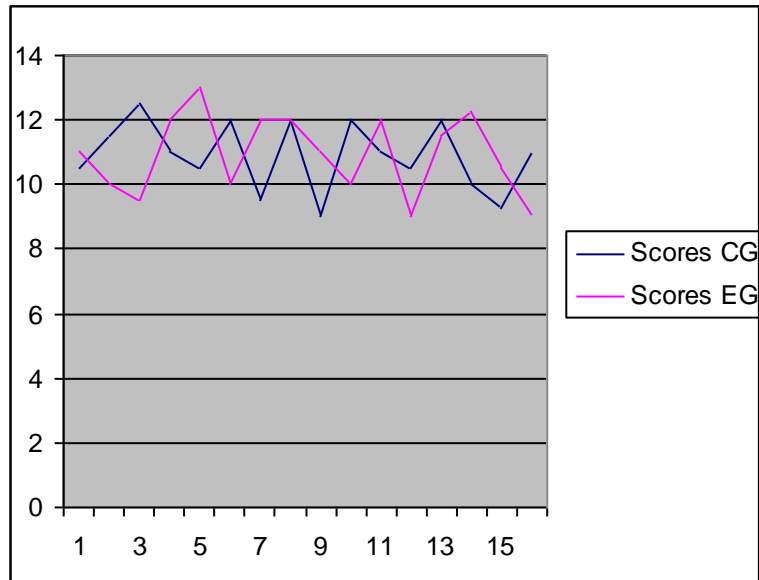


Figure 5: student's scores in the pre-test

As shown in table (9) and (10) two, the control group has scored 10.87 whereas the experimental group scored 10.92. Comparing the means of the two groups, there seems to be no significant difference between the performances of the two groups in the pre-test. The essays of the pre-test yield average writers who have some problems and difficulties in the five components that have been employed to score their essays. So, as evident in figure (5), the two groups started with the same proficiency level.

5.3 The treatment period: description

The treatment period of this study lasts for six weeks, and the reason behind this restricted period of the treatment period is the limited time given to carry out the present research. The treatment period has started in April 2009 and ended in May 2009. Conditions during the treatment period were the same for both groups except that the experimental group has regular practice with the process approach for the six weeks, whereas the participants of the control

group spent the same time practicing writing using the product approach. The sessions when the treatment period was conducted are within the block room of the regularly scheduled sessions of the Written Expression module.

During the treatment period, we used to give the topic to both groups at the beginning of the session. Then the following steps are followed with the experimental group. First, a guide discussion that would help each student to thoroughly set the stages during the pre-writing phase, more than that this discussion serves as a warm up or a phase of ice breaking for students. After that, we played the role of participant in the composing phase of each students serving as accessible reference for them. As a third step, we tried to transfer to students the responsibility for proof-reading and revising their own papers. All in all, we have played the role of a supervisor, facilitator and participant with the experimental group, whereas with the control group we have too little to contribute; our main role was to give them a composition title.

Since the use of the process approach needs available time, we used to give students two sessions to finish their essay (three hours for each essay written in the treatment period) after correcting students' essays of both the experimental and the control group, all the participants took the corrected form not graded but on which there were some comments and remarks. These comments and remarks helped students to be motivated, since they can see how they are progressing day after day. Along with, these commands and remarks on students' written production helped us to observe and monitor their progress during the treatment period

5.4 Post-test description and analysis

To determine the students' gaining in the writing skill, the students are post-tested after the six weeks of the treatment period. The same tool of measurement (essay writing) that has been used in the pre-test is also used in the post-test. Not only the tool of the measurement was the same, but also the time allocated to each student to produce his essay (90 minutes). The essay of the post-test was "reading a story in a book is often very different from seeing it is a film". It is a topic that has been developed using comparison and contrast pattern of essay development, in which students explain the similarities and differences between reading a story in a book and watching the same story as a film on TV or in the cinema.

We have decided that the development in students writing encompasses five components: essay organization, grammar accuracy, vocabulary choice, conventions of writing and ideas organization. Thus, the development is marked by the increasing range of structures a learners use, strong and appropriate vocabulary, the ability to organize concepts represented within a paragraph into a logical order, the ability to edit sentences that fit into the context of the topic discussed and its meaning as well as the ability to maintain cohesion and coherence throughout the whole essay. As essays of the pre-test, essays of the post-test have been analytically scored using four-point scale.

The means of the students' scores in the post-test have been calculated in the following tables, so that we will be able to measure the extent to which the treatments were effective for both groups, as well as the group that has scored better; i.e., has better writing achievements.

participant	scores
1	12.25
2	11
3	12
4	12
5	13
6	12.5
7	12
8	11
9	11
10	12
11	11.75
12	10
13	13
14	11
15	12
16	07
The Mean	11.46

Table (11) calculating the mean of the control group in the post-test.

participant	scores
1	12
2	11
3	12
4	13
5	12
6	14
7	13
8	13
9	14.5
10	10
11	12
12	11.5
13	14
14	12
15	13.5
16	14
The Mean	12.59

Tables (12) calculating the means of the experimental group in the post-test.

As the previous tables (11) and (12) showed, the performance of both groups has been improved. The control group has scored 11.45, and the experimental group has scored 12.59. These results indicate that the students in both groups definitely learned something during the treatment period because the scores of both groups in the post-test are better than the ones in the pre-test. However, scores improvement was higher on the students' group that used the process approach than in the students' group that used the product approach as it is evident in the following figure.

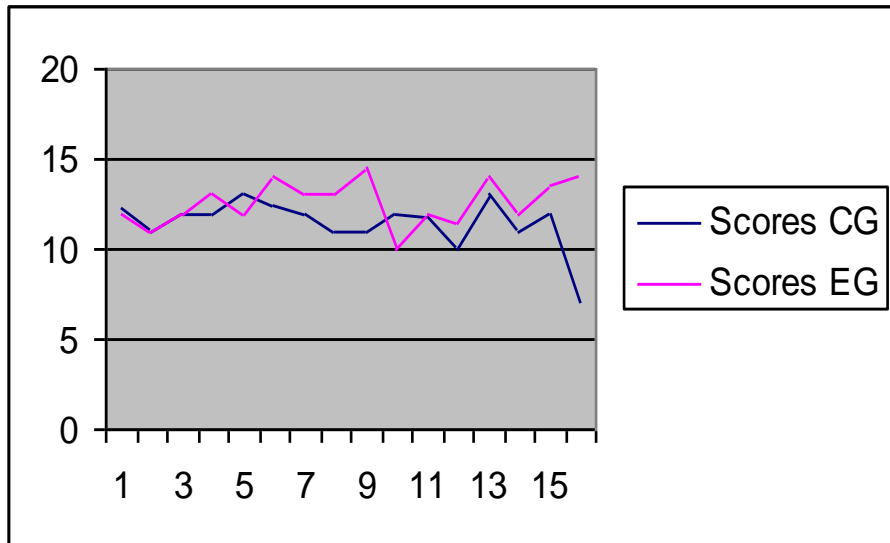


Figure 6: students' scores in the post-test.

6. Data analysis: comparison of results and means

6.1 Comparing the means of the pre-test

The Pre-test scores indicated, as it is shown in table 13, that the two groups of students have some baseline level knowledge about the art of expressing oneself through the medium of writing. The table also indicated that there was no remarkable difference (0.32%) between the two groups before the treatment period that is both the experimental and the control groups started with the same level in the writing skill.

	Control group	Experimental group	The difference %
Mean %	68.06	68.25	-0.19
SD	SD = 1.11	SD = 1. 51	SD = 0.4

Table 13: the difference between the means of the pre-test

6.2 Comparing the means of the post-test

The following table sums up the results and the differences between the control and experimental group in the post-test.

	Control group	Experimental group	The difference %
Mean %	71.62	78.68	-7.06
SD	SD = 2.13	SD = 1. 54	SD = 0.59

Table 14: the difference between the means of the post-test.

As shown in table 14, there is a significant difference (-7.06%) between the two groups in the post-test. This indicated that the experimental group did better than the control group in the post-test. In other words, the experimental group who had regular practice with the process approach made more improvement than the control group. Along with, since the two groups of students have the same conditions and classes during the interval between the pre-test and post test, we can claim that the difference in the performance of the two groups in the post-test is due to the fact that the experimental group had practice with the process approach.

7. T-test analysis

The t-test is the widely used and known statistical test. It is robust, simple and adjustable to a broad range of situations. As Miller (1975: 71) argues the t-test is the strongest of the three tests. By the three tests Miller means; the t-test, the mann-whitey test and chi-square test. Because the foregoing discussion, and of far greater importance because the t -test for independent groups is more appropriate to assess whether the means of the two samples

involved in this study are statistically different from each other or not. We have opted for this test to test the validity of this research hypothesis. The main step in the t-test analysis is the finding of the t value that determines whether the research hypothesis will be accepted or rejected.

To calculate the t value, one has firstly to find the distribution of the difference between the means of the two groups. Then, the sampling distribution will be used to find the probability of the difference between the means, this probability will be obtained by finding the extent to which the difference between \bar{x}_1 and \bar{x}_2 exceeds zero, which is represented by the t value. Once the t value is determined, one has to look it up in table of significance to test whether the ratio is large enough to say that the difference between the means is not likely to have been a chance finding. On the basis of the comparison, one can accept or reject the established hypothesis.

The computational formula of the t-test as stated in Miller (1975: 78) is:

$$T_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2) N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

\bar{X}_1 = Mean of the first group

\bar{X}_2 = Mean of the second group

N_1 = Number of the participants in the first group

N_2 = Number of the participants in the second group

S_1 = Standard deviation (sample variance) of the first group

S_2 = Standard deviation (sample variance) of the second group

7.1 The t-test for the difference between the CG and the EG in the post-test⁻¹

<p style="text-align: center;">A- The control group</p> $\sum X_1 = 183.5$ $\sum X_1^2 = 2135.37$ $\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} = \frac{183.5}{16}$ $\bar{X}_1 = 11.46$	<p style="text-align: center;">B- The experimental group</p> $\sum X_2 = 201.5$ $\sum X_2^2 = 2560.75$ $\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} = \frac{201.5}{16}$ $\bar{X}_2 = 12.59$
<p style="text-align: center;">The standard deviation</p> $S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2$ $S_1^2 = \frac{2135.37}{16} - (11.46)^2$ $S_1^2 = 133.46 - 131.33$ $S_1^2 = 2.13$	<p style="text-align: center;">The standard deviation</p> $S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2$ $s_2^2 = \frac{2560.75}{13} = (1259)^2$ $S_2^2 = 160.04 - 150.50$ $S_2^2 = 1.54$

The T-value

$$T_{N_1 + N_2 - 2} = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2) N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

$$T_{16 + 16 - 2} = \frac{(11.46 - 12.59) \sqrt{(16 + 16 - 2) 16 \times 16}}{\sqrt{(16 \times 2 + 16 \times 1.54)(16 + 16)}}$$

$$T_{30} = -2.284$$

⁻¹ N.B: Data used for the calculation of the t value in appendix E

As the above results indicate the t value (the absolute t) is 2.284, the critical value of t with 30 degrees of freedom is 2.042 at .05 level of significance (P= .05 the most common probability used as alpha level in statistic inference testing). Since we have specified a directional difference between the two samples and hence probabilities are obtained from one-tailed hypothesis (directional hypothesis), this value should be divided by 2. Miller (1975: 133) puts it this way: "For a one-tailed test the significance levels should be divided by 2." That is $2.042 / 2 = 1.021$. Since the calculated t exceeds the value of the tabulated t, $2.284 > 1.021$, this means that the results are statistically significant. To be more precise, the probability that the difference between the means arose by chance is less than 0.05.

8. Results and Discussion

In the present research we have hypothesized that students' writing ability would be improved if the process approach is followed. This hypothesis has been tested by comparing the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group in the post-test. The experimental group mean exceeds the control group by 7.06%, $t_{30} = 2.284$, $p = 2.042$ for two tailed test and 1.021 for one tailed test. Since the results are in the direction of the present research hypothesis, we can say that the process approach has a positive effect on the writing of second year EFL students.

9. The findings summary and discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that the process approach can help second-year learners improve different aspects of their proficiency level in writing. Starting with essay organization, students' essays in the experimental group show a significant improvement in that all students show the ability to produce paragraphs and maintain coherence throughout

their essays. In addition, students were able to clearly state the governing idea (the thesis statement) of their essays. Concerning the control group, their essays were fairly-well organized, but some students still have problems with the thesis statement. Moreover, students in this group were unable to achieve paragraph unity because they discuss more than one idea (more than one topic sentence) in one paragraph which prevents the writing from being clear and graceful.

The second dimension that has been chosen to measure the students' writing improvement is grammar. In this aspect, we have noticed that there is an improvement in the experimental group and the control group alike; that is, the students' grammatical mistakes in the post-test were fairly minor comparing with their mistakes in the pre-test. Nevertheless, students in both groups still have some grammatical mistakes, especially in tenses, articles, 's' of third person singular and the structure of complex sentences. So, in this aspect the improvement was fairly well for both groups.

The vocabulary of the experimental group shows a significant improvement over the control group. Students' essays were rich with effective and strong words that express the topic and make their writing alive. Vocabulary in the control group was limited and simple. This impairs their ability to engage and persuade the reader.

For the conventions of writing (mechanical skills), the development of both groups was fairly well because students still have problems with the aspect of punctuation. Contrary in the other conventions such as capitalization and spelling, the students' development was to certain extent significant, especially for the experimental group.

In the last aspect, ideas organization, we have noticed a remarkable development for the group that follows the process approach. The ideas of this group were interesting, clearly stated more than that they were logically combined, and each idea expressed and clarified the preceding one. For the control group, the first thing we have noticed is redundancy in their rhythm of writing. That is, they write an idea and repeat it using different words. Some students still have the tendency to close their ideas without fully explaining the significance of their points.

In the present study, the term writing development means change or development in the writing ability over time. The measures of that change have been chosen according to the students' level and needs. To determine this improvement, the means of the two groups at the pre-test and the post-test have been compared. This comparison shows the following: while in the pre-test, both groups' essays yielded average writers, with the same degree on the ability to express themselves through writing. In the post-test however, the scores improvement were higher in the group that has extensive process approach than in the control group. This suggests the positive effect of the process approach that the experimental group has used during the treatment period. Moreover, these results indicate that the students in the experimental group have demonstrated a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. However, the control group has demonstrated minimal improvement.

The assessment of the results confirms the research hypothesis and suggests that various features of composition are sensitive to improve over time by using the process approach. In addition, the experimental group post-test scores clearly indicate that by the end of the treatment period students increased their knowledge in the writing skills. These findings suggest that the process approach has enabled students to improve their level in the different aspects of the writing skills. This increase in students' writing ability was measured on a short

term basis. we suppose that if the treatment period is extended, the gains might have been greater.

These findings assure that the improvement in the writing ability of the experimental group is mainly related to the process approach that the participants in this group have been exposed to. Although the two groups have the same classes during the interval between the pre and post test, they have been at the same level of the writing ability prior to the beginning of the study, with the only difference that the experimental group had practice with the process approach whereas the control group had practice with the product approach. The experimental group shows better improvement than the control group. The conclusion we can draw is that the process approach is more efficient than the product approach. This means that not all the approaches have the same effect on the writing skill.

Conclusion

We have designed and implemented the present study to answer the statement of the problem: whether the use of the process approach helps second-year EFL students improve their writing ability. To determine the effectiveness of this approach and measure the learners' progress, we have developed a pre- and post-test. The data analysis of this study reveals that the students who have used the process approach have achieved better results in the writing ability than the control group which used the product approach. Furthermore, the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test prove that the students have benefited from this approach. The use of the t-test confirmed that these results are statistically significant and not a mere chance finding. All in all, this experiment has demonstrated the need to embed the

process oriented approach within the teaching of written expression courses so that second-year EFL students could improve their writing ability.

Bibliography

- A. Alexander and H. Winne (2006). *Handbook of Educational Psychology*. (2nd ed)
Routledge.
- Beriter, C. and Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of Written Composition*. Hillsdale,
N J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brookes, A and Grundy, P.(1998). *Beginning to Write*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press.
- Byrne, D. (1991). *Teaching Writing Skill*. London: Longman.
- Celce-Murcia (2001). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed). Boston:
Heinle & Heinle.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2006). *The Encyclopedia of the English* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.
- Davies. P with Pearse. E. (2000). *Success in English Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University
Press.
- Dornan, E. A. with Dees, R. (2007). *A Guide to Writing, Thinking, Grammar, and Research*
(8th ed). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Flippo, F. R and Caverly, C. D. (2000). *Handbook of College Reading and Study Strategy*.
Research. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Freeman, D and Richards. J. C. (1996). *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haley M.H & Austin, T. Y. (2004). *Content-Based Second Language Teaching and Learning*.
Pearson Education, Inc.

- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (3rd ed) Pearson Education: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Pearson Education: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to Teach English*. Pearson Education: Longman.
- Heaton, J. B. (1975). *Writing English Language Test*. London: Longman.
- Hedge, T. (1988). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Kroll, B. (1990). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacArthur, C. A., Graham, S. and Fitzgerald, J. (2008). *Handbook of Writing Research*. Guilford Press.
- Mather, N and Jaffe, L.E. (1899). *WOODCOCK-JOHNSON (R) iii: Reports, Recommendations and Strategies*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Miller, S. (1989). *Experimental Design and Statistics*. New York Methuen G Co.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oshima, A and Hogue, A. (1999). *Writing Academic English* (3rd ed). Addison Wesley: Longman.
- Pickett, N. A, Laster. A. A. and Staples. K. E. (2001). *Technical English, Writing, Reading, And Speaking*. Addison Wesley: Longman, Inc.
- Richards, J. C. and Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. y ress.
- Richards. J. C. (2003). *Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Rivers, W. M. and Temperley, M. S. (1978). *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Scrivener J. (2008). *Learning Teaching*. (2nd ed). London: Macmillan publisher Limited.
- Silva, T and Matsuda, P.K. (2001). *On Second Language Writing*. (2nd ed) Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tony, L. (1996). *Communication in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Den Bergh, H. and Rijlaarsdam, G. (2007). *The Dynamics of Ideas Generation during Writing: An Outline Study*. In Rijlaarsdam and M. Torrance, L. Van Waes and D. Galbraith (year Eds.) : *Writing and Cognition : Research and Application* (Studies in Writing, Vol. 20, pp. 125-150). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White, R.V. (1988). *Academic Writing Process and Product*. London: British Council.
- Williams, J.D. (2003). *Preparing to Teach Writing: Research, Theory and Practice*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc