

Investigating the Effects of Using Writing Process on Students' Writing Performance at Foundation Program- Hai'l University

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Abstract

This study sheds the light on investigating the effects of using Writing Process Approach in developing EFL students in writing skill. It consists of 60 students from foundation program at Hai'l University –Saudi Arabia. The researchers use content analysis procedures to analyze students' writing. This paper also focuses on the importance of the methods of teaching writing for preparatory year. Pretest and posttest were used to investigate the effects of traditional and writing process on students' writing performance. The results showed that students who studied according to the writing process outperformed than those who studied by traditional method. The study recommended to use the writing process in the foundation program at university of Hai'l.

Keywords: Traditional writing, Writing process approach, Tertiary level

1. Introduction

Teaching writing is regarded as one of the most concerns of English language teachers in EFL contexts, as (Park & Son, 2011) focused in their study on specifying the importance of investigating the effects of writing skill on students' academic level. Moreover, it is the time to give more attention to our teaching method of writing at all levels, especially tertiary level. Consequently, the researchers evaluate the current status of writing skill in EFL Saudi context.

The researchers found that most of the teachers used traditional method which based on teacher-centered method. That is, the teacher is the only source of information as she gave students instructions and information without any kind of creativity from the students side. Ballock, McQuitty&McNary, (2018) stated that the less interaction happened during the lesson between students, and students take notes from the board. So the researchers investigated the role of writing process approach for students writing skill. They compared the traditional and writing process writing in terms of developing students' writing work. Nordin, (2017)stated that the process writing focuses on prewriting, drafting, and revising of the written text as these items develop students writing in terms of producing less error paragraphs and long paragraphs. The researchers used Hyland's (2003) five-stage writing process model, which includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing and they compared it with the used method in Saudi classes. They found that writing process approach, according to Hyland's model helped students to produce a good piece of writing as students spent more time in drafting, planning and organizing their work.

The researchers conducted a preliminary study in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017 which focused in comparing the students work in two classes, namely, writing process class, and traditional method class.

2. Problem Statement

Teaching in EFL classes represents the traditional method of teaching writing as teachers spend their time in explaining to students the exercises in writing lessons without more details which encourage students to write more and more. According to Albahri&Moustakim, (2018) EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have the main role during the lesson. As the English class is centered-teacher form.

The researchers conducted a preliminary study in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017 and they found that students have many problems at the paragraph level. The results of the preliminary survey indicated that most students wrote their paragraphs with disconnected sentences, short paragraphs and no organization in their writings.

Additionally, the preliminary study revealed that students have a serious problem in writing skill that represented in lack of ideas, organization of the paragraph, and linguistic weakness. The findings of the researchers' preliminary study gave an indication that writing skill should be studied in the Saudi context. Furthermore, itstated that students in two different groups wrote the same topic, but with a big difference between their writing performance which due to the method of teaching that the teachers used during their teaching of writing skill.

3. Literature Review

The researchers used Hyland's Model (2003) which categorized the five-stage writing process as follows:

1. Pre-writing:

This stage relates to thinking and planning steps. Students think, plan, and write ideas in general.

2. Drafting:

This stage gives the writers a chance to review their work and to change their ideas according to the review process time.

3-Revising

This stage concerns in looking into the draft again to discover the mechanical errors, and making changes in students' writing.

4-Editing

This stage is the final stage before submitting the final draft. It concerns of polishing the draft. The writer focuses on mechanics such as punctuation, spelling and grammar.

5- Publishing

This stage focuses on students' ability to share writing with their peers to improve their writing authenticity.

Hourani (2008) analyzed the common grammatical errors in students' paragraphs. 105 students, 20 teachers and 5 supervisors were participated in this study. The results showed that students need more reinforcement and development in their writing and this study focused only on limited linguistic aspects of writing skill.

Furthermore, Ahmed (2010) identified the difficulties in EFL students writing and provide them with a remedial programme to help them in writing weakness. 40 students participated in this study from the first- year university students. This study suggested to improve the writing courses which is in a line with what the pilot study found in the terms of nature of writing course in foundation programme.

In addition, Firkins, Forey, &Sengupta (2007) investigated the effects of using a genre-based and activity-based pedagogical approach. The sample consisted of thirty-two secondary students and examples of the student's work. The findings showed that students have low proficiency in English and recommended to applied a positive learning environment which will help low achiever students in writing skill.

On contrary, Alodwan & Ibnian (2014) studied the effects of the process approach in developing EFL writing. The sample consisted of 90 students non-English majors who studied English course 101 in Islamic University in Jordan. This study used a descriptive

method in collecting data and it followed by a quasi-experimental design. The results showed that the writing process approach had positive effects on students' essays.

Additionally, Mohammedamin & Hussen (2015) assessed students' paragraph writing problems. He used the descriptive research design to define the problems which are unity, organization, grammar, adequacy, capitalization and spelling. This study suggested that students need a chance to practice what they learned to develop their writing plus they have to recognize the main parts of paragraphs, topic sentence, supporting ideas and conclusion which will affect the design of their paragraphs.

Furthermore, Bayat (2014) investigated the effects of the process writing approach on writing success and anxiety. This study showed that the process writing approach had significant effects on students' writing. Moreover, Sun and Feng (2009) studied the process approach effects on teaching writing and how it developed students' writing skill. Experimental study shows that the two groups of students who received a model of teaching writing made a significant progress in their writing skill. Additionally, Diliduzgun (2013) studied the effects of process writing activities on the writing skills. This study results showed that students learned in a planned method rather than unorganized traditional method of teaching writing and they focused on unity, coherence, and a title of their writings.

This literature review of the old and present studies about writing showed how writing has moved from a product to process, and mentioned the stages of process writing. Most recent researches in the field are (Bayat(2014). Diliduzgun(2013), and Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) which recommended to use writing process in improving students' writing performance.

4. Methodology

The researchers used two different groups as control and experimental groups. The first group which consisted of 30 students who asked to write a topic about their future plans based on the information that the teacher provided it to them. For example, the teacher gave student all details about the topic (words, conjunctions, grammar aspect/future tense, pictures and sentences about the topic. Then she asked students to write two paragraphs about their future plans. Whereas the second group studied according to writing process and Hayland's model as the teacher followed all steps with students to make sure that they master the ideas about the topic. Two groups were taught by the same teacher who has master in English Language. The sample was 30 students for each group as purposive samples from students who registered during the first semester 2016-2017. The researchers evaluated and analyzed students writing according to the following rubric which is validated from experts in teaching writing skill.

If the paragraph is completely unrelated to the writing prompt award a zero (0) and do not correct.

Do not award ½ marks.

CATEGORY	5 marks	4 marks	3 marks	2 marks	1 mark	0
Number of	The student has written	Student has written one less	Student has written two less	Three less than the	Four or more less than	No response

Sentences	the required number	than the required number.	than the required number.	the required number.	the required number.	
(NOS)	of sentences.					
Grammar & Spelling	No errors	One or two errors	Three to five errors	Six to nine errors	10 or more errors.	No response
(GAS)						
Mechanics - Punctuation & Capitalization	No errors	One error.	Two errors.	Three errors.	Four or more errors.	No response
(PAC)						
	Student followed instructions/prompt	Student followed instructions/prompt	Student followed instructions however a few	Student partially followed instructions	Sentences are disconnected and	No response
Coherence & Unity	and used all recommended	however some (1) recommended vocabulary	(2 or 3) recommended vocabulary or expected	and/or several (4 or 5) recommended	disorganized. Student did not use	
(CAU)	vocabulary or expected	or expected coherence	coherence devices are	vocabulary or expected coherence	recommended	
	coherence devices.	devices are missing.	missing.	expected coherence devices are missing.	vocabulary or expected coherence devices.	

Please note that only the abbreviations for each category are used in the assessment.

5. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

To investigate the effects of traditional teaching and process approach on the length of written paragraphs.

To examine the effects of traditional teaching and process approach on paragraph organization.

6. Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do traditional teaching and process approach affect the length of written paragraphs by students?
2. How do traditional teaching and process approach affect paragraph organization?

7. Results and Discussion

The researchers used content analysis to evaluate students' writing according to the following equation:

$$Z = \frac{\text{Highest Mark} - \text{Lowest Mark}}{\text{Number of Levels}} \quad \dots\dots \text{Equation (1)}$$

Where H_{min} = Highest Mark

L_{min} = Lowest Mark

Z = The difference between a level and the other.

Then the researchers classified students ' performance according to the equation above.

As the results shown according to the following table:

Group	Classification
Traditional Group	Low: 20 Mid: 7 High: 3
Writing Process Group	Low: 4 Mid: 9 High: 17

The results showed that students in Traditional group achieved lower levels that those who are in writing process approach. As the main concern about how many students achieved higher level than others, that is 17 students got high level in writing process, while 3 students in traditional method. This results specified that students who studied by writing process understood writing lessons and they wrote excellent paragraphs. Clearly, Using Hyland's Model (2003) affects students in terms of writing long paragraphs and organized ones. However, students in traditional group wrote less paragraphs and disorganized one plus their writing is poor due to write without a specific procedure or model.

The study resulted recommended to use writing process and Hyland's Model (2003) during Saudi EFL classes, especially at foundation program which needs students to improve their writing performance. Furthermore, English language department at foundation program should train all teachers in using writing process and Hyland's Model (2003) during their writing classes. The results showed are in line with (Alodwan&Ibnian,2014) Study and with (Bayat, 2014) study.

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