

Process Oriented Writing approached by UTM Iranian students : Difficulties and features

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents general perspectives of teaching writing skills in English language. It provides the major ideas of teaching writing which will be elaborated in detail in mini project. It also aims to verify the importance of teaching writing, needs of teaching writing, the role of the teacher in teaching writing, improving of teaching writing, describing the differences between process and product oriented briefly and finally the advantages of using process oriented are presented in this paper.

KEYWORDS: Process oriented, product oriented, writing approach

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is the most complex skill among four language skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing. It involves activities like thinking, organizing, using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. It is one the basic skills that should be taught in schools. According to Rnyne (1979), writing can be defined as the act of forming symbols on a flat surface. On the other hand Lindomann (1944) defined it “as a process of communication which uses graphic system to convey messages to reader”. The definition of writing may vary from one to another, but one thing in common is that the process of writing involves the steps such as pre writing, writing, drafting and revising. Writing plays an important role to help students to understand other ideas and conceptions (Chow Voon Foo, 2007: 25). Writing proficiency always can be improved. Writing process begins from an idea, expanding it to practice that contains prewriting, drafting, editing and rewriting. Writing is all of the experience of the writer who transfers his or her experience into knowledge (Shafie, et al, 2010:2).

II. IMPROVING OF WRITING SKILLS

Writing is one of the forms which provides writer to communicate with reader and send his or her messages to reader. Therefore, the writer should pass certain skills to convey his or her messages. The skills are fluency and accuracy. Thus students should be guided their respective teachers so that they will be equipped with the necessary skills in writing which can be helpful for them when they write. The purpose of writing is to record information to ask, advise, request to recommend and warn. It can be revised until the writer feels that he or she has achieved his or her purposes in mind. Unlike spoken word writer’s words remain permanent and are useful for further reference. However, writing skill takes a long time to be developed for it requires mastery of other sub skills like thinking, planning, organizing vocabulary, grammar and system. A writer must have a clear purpose for writing. He or she has to decide on the type of writing-persuasive, informative, descriptive and narrative and argumentive etc. to achieve his purpose or her. Wallace and et al (2004:16) discusses that if students want to be a good writer, they must read great literatures and make them as model for themselves. They may read about the biography of best men and women writers that how they improved their talents. It can persuade students to become better writers. On the other hand, Shafie and et al, (2010:6) claims that beginner writers have poor language skill. So because of this factor, they cannot direct their writing in the target language.

In fact writing in English is difficult for most of the foreigners; therefore it should conduct a way to help them to improve their writing especially in English. In fact with increasing demands of learning English language as an international language so the more people want to articulate their ideas within academic and scientific by writing in English. There are two ways that teachers teach in these methods to help students to be good writers in the school. These two approaches are product-oriented and process-oriented these. Today most students get information from internet so they do not wait for teachers' help. As a result of developing of technology all around the world, teaching and learning especially in the developed countries especially Malaysia in this circumstance changed from teacher-centered to students-centered (Shafie, et al, 2010:2).

III. NEEDS OF TEACHING WRITING

Chitravelu (2006) states there some needs of teaching writing in English language as bellow:

- ✚ Writing activities are important because of consolidating language.
- ✚ Writing activities provide variety and maintaining motivation.
- ✚ Writing activities serves as a record of what has been learnt orally and they also help retention of vocabulary and sentences structures.
- ✚ Integrating writing with other skills make the learning ever more realistic.
- ✚ Writing provides useful and convenient means for testing large number of students on their exercises.

Besides that, Escribano () mentioned that students desire to finish their studying and write research in English to abroad which are related to their jobs and cause to have improvement in the job. One type of teaching writing as traditional approach focus on the writer's product and pay attention to the aspects of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, topic sentences and various methods of developing paragraphs. In traditional approach, the teacher focuses on the written product. According to Pringles (1979), traditional believes that writing is the process of teaching grammar. In other words, the emphases had been given to the product. Because in the teaching of writing, teachers assume that writing process is a process of acquiring language skills. In relation, Nair (1992) mentioned that generally teachers are of the opinion that since ESL students may still lack in the process of acquiring language skills, grammar based approaches to teach writing is the best. According to Nunan (1991), this so called product-oriented approach to the development of writing classroom activities in which the learners are engaged in imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language. From the brief review of the traditional procedure of teaching writing, one can notice that the major impact of the teacher is at the beginning and at the end of the writing of the writing assignment. The teacher who uses the traditional approach tends to ignore the process that the teacher does not expect students writing to have any communicate function. From the teacher's point of view, the main purpose of the writing task is to give practice and to train students to master the surface features of the language i.e. vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar.

Product oriented approach focuses on mechanical process which is concentrated on correctness and it is finished in form of final product and students get mark without having chance to revise their products. it ignores the writers' ideas. According to Chow Voon Foo (2007:18) the traditional product-oriented approach to writing instruction is still applied in many Malaysian ESL classrooms. It showed the weaknesses and disadvantages of product oriented. It considered that its focus on the product fails to promote an awareness of the writing process and also knowledge that is so important in writing skill. Montague (1995: 3) defines Product-oriented approaches as a writing that most focus on forms. The writing exercises used in this approach specifically consider sentence and paragraph forms. The framework is given to the students that show them how to organize their writing. All these exercises are controlled by teacher. Grammar is main point for doing writing exercise in this approach and students should avoid error. She described some features of product oriented that it focuses on mechanical process which concentrates on correctness. Secondly, it is finished in form of final product and students get their marks without having a chance to revise their products. Thirdly, product oriented approach ignores the writes' ideas. It jus focuses on form and grammar. As final feature of product oriented, Montague pointed out that it is controlled writing which is controlled by teachers who emphasizes to avoid errors in writing.

With regard to the features of product oriented, that the education system is examination base and teaching writing syllabus has to be finished on time to focus on final exam or product. Another weaknesses of product oriented is that the teacher is not active; the final product is used as the criterion for determining the grade. Assessment is based on grammatical accuracy and relevance of content of the topic. According to Kim (2001), due to the emphasis on the final product, the interaction between a teacher and students or among students themselves does not exist. Because of mentioned weakness of traditional approach or product oriented in teaching writing, the process oriented came as useful approach to teach writing. According to Krashen (1984) process of writing involves four steps which are pre writing, writing, revising and drafting. During pre-writing, the writer concentrates exploration of on his or her ideas. The second stage, the write will expand his or her ideas and he or she will start to write. The third stage is revising and diving, in this stage the writer will go through the written text and correct surface errors such as spelling and grammar. The final stage is editing in which the write will draft his written work. He also mentions that the process oriented approach refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process where a writer focuses on the meaning rather than form. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final step in text writing in contrast of the product oriented. The process oriented approach involves determined stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. If once the rough draft has been written by students, it can be edited by other students as member of the group or by the teacher who play a role of guidance

in teaching writing. In following sections, it will proceed to discuss which one of the presented approaches are more effective in teaching writing.

IV. PRODUCT-ORIENTED APPROACH OR PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH

As Dyson (1992:4) states: "Verbal language, drawings, play and verbal interaction are part of the process of literacy development. These are essential and not only precede writing development but continue to contribute to it in significant ways throughout development. Children invent, interact, react, and extend writing activities throughout the process of literacy acquisition"(Montague, 1995). According to Gocsik (2004), process pedagogy empowers students by getting them to talk about their writing at every step of the writing process. It can be one of the advantages of using process oriented approach which provides students to discuss about their writing ideas. Another positive point of process oriented is that writing in this approach causes L2 (second language) learners develop their writing skills unconsciously rather than learn the skills formally. Therefore the role of the teacher would be to facilitate the students' writing and to find out their talents rather than to provide input or stimulus. Students are provided to know their mistakes and have chance to remove or rectify them. In contrast to the traditional approach, the process approach is basically student-centered (Chow Voon Foo, 2007: 31).

Based on Chow Voon Foo (2007:27,28) in spite of the more advantages of process oriented in writing instruction, the traditional product oriented is still being used in many Malaysian writing classes and so process oriented fails in practice. He also discusses that one of the main reasons why traditional product oriented is still used in Malaysian ESL (English as Second Language) classrooms must be because of teachers' attitudes who are trained in that approach. These traditional classes focused on the use of 'good' English that was seen as the key to successful writing and leads students to follow the teacher's rules and formats. Although the process-oriented was more student centered and existed more opportunities to develop students' abilities to address the rhetorical concerns of writing through process strategies, it has its disadvantages that Chow Voon Foo (2007:30) argued that the main disadvantages of process-oriented was that firstly, it assumes all types of writing to be equal and can therefore be produced by engaging the same set of processes every time and secondly, that students are not given adequate linguistic input and guidance to be able to write successfully.

V. PRODUCT-ORIENTED APPROACH AND PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH

As above we mentioned about advantages and disadvantage of product and process oriented, with accordance to Hoogveld and et al (2004:15) combination of these two approaches with focus on cognitive factor can help teachers to develop their cognitive capacity which improve learning of the students. And also based on another study, Montague (1995) concluded with accordance to her experience in learning and teaching writing in process oriented approach that students have more chance to think and use their experiences in writing. It shows learners are center of teaching writing in process oriented and it focuses on learners' abilities and improve to better in writing skill.

Chow Voon Foo (2007:38) concluded that there is a need for teachers of writing to combine both process-oriented and product-oriented knowledge in their instruction. Both are important in writing instruction and practice because it is necessary to create a balance between focus on linguistic form that is in the product-oriented approach and focus on cognitive processing, prescribed by the process-oriented approach. Teaching writing must involve both process and product. Teachers should first focus on the organization of the writing. As the next step, they should deal with grammatical problems seen in writing. When students are not good at organizing their ideas, the teacher should deal with this before moving on to grammatical mistakes. This is reason that causes students to have better organization with less errors and, of course, the clear expression of ideas is the major point of writing (Chow Voon Foo, 2007: 1). As a result, it can be concluded that There is one important point upon which they all agree: good product depends on good process (Gocsik, 2004: 3).

VI. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN TEACHING WRITING

Teachers play an important role in teaching writing; therefore it is important for teachers to know their part in teaching writing. According to Hillocks (1995), "educationists seem to believe that teaching is generic: once one knows how to teach, one can teach any thing" this statement provides an insight for teachers to find ways in teaching writing effectively. Moreover, teachers should also play their roles by preparing conducive learning environment to learn. Research by MacIntry and Gardner (1991) has found that anxiety is often associated with problems and difficulties in second language learning. Anxiety and fear of failure is one of the problems that will hinder students to write well. As a result, their performances in writing will suffer. Consequently, the more they experience failure the more they will become worried and their anxiety will increase. Therefore, teachers should try to lower the anxiety level of students by a stress free environment by giving encouragement, motivation and

guiding them in their learning. Lightbown (1991) found that learning appeared to be optional in those situations in which the students know that they wanted to say and the teacher's intervention made clear to them there was a particular way to say it. Thus, intervening by teachers through the process of writing will help to aid the learning process. Moreover, teacher's role as a facilitator is to guide the students at every stage of the writing process. For example, teachers help students on the selection of the topic, plan suitable activities so that learners would have further understanding of the topic and the vocabulary needed in writing. Through the process writing approach, the focus is not on the written product, but on the process of writing. Moreover, the National Writing Project and Nagin (2003), states that "for the teachers, the challenge is recognize and then addressing the distinct, instructional needs of diverse students. Thus it is important for teachers to know their rules so that they would be able to cater to the diversity of students with different needs in learning. .

VII. ADVANTAGES OF USING PROCESS ORIENTED

Process writing has great beneficial for helping students learn to write in many ways. One of the major strengths of teaching writing with using process oriented approach is the focus on what the students or writers have to write and how to express their ideas. Studies show that the process of writing helps students increase to recall and understanding of information makes more sense to them. (Fortescue, 1994). Besides, collaboration between students in interviewing with each other's in writing may enable them to receive more feedbacks that will likely increase their chances for improvement and reduce teacher's load. According to Nelson and Murphy (1992) peer reviews help the students or writers to see where the mistakes or areas of confusion are given helpful ideas at level that the writers can understand and make the writers more aware of audiences' needs. With knowing the audiences' needs students are encouraged to investigate events and topics in details. Furthermore, process writing increases the possibility for students to enjoy the writing process. Based on Chiang (1999) at the initial stage of the writing process, students could feel frustrated while organizing their ideas. Pre writing activities can help them overcome mental block. Publishing their writing can excite and encourage them. The emphasis on expressing themselves at the drafting stage also helps them concentrate on the development of their ideas.

VIII. OTHER METHODS OF TEACHING WRITING

There are various methods in the present literature on the methods of writing. One early method in writing was the controlled writing which was popular in the 70s'. Exercises and activities are forced on process of discourses which students had to copy and in which they make discrete changes where instructed (Byrne, 1982). Byrne (1982) described Controlled writing as the above exercise is essential to build up sentence structure and vocabulary practice, especially students from low language proficiency. As mentioned by Reid (1993), these principles in writing may enhance students' grammatical awareness of a target language. She stated that these exercises constantly reflect the behaviorist hypothesis with constant practice of correct structures; students will learn the language and therefore will be able to transfer the repeated skills to original utterances. Since controlled writing did not seem to produce satisfying results in promoting and enhancing students writing ability target language. Teachers in the 70s' and early 80s' moved from controlled to guided writing. It is true that controlled writing improved students' ability in most of the grammar aspects in writing but that is not to ensure that a particular student is capable in writing. Because it makes students to dictate what the teacher ask them to do. In this way, teachers dictate any words, sentences or grammar which students need to know (Wallace and et al, 2004). As Reid (1993) mentioned another type of writing practice is called free writing whereby the students write for a specific period of time in the classroom on a topic of interest topic to them. It could take a variety from such as the quick writes, which are time-limited done individually and not always shared. For example, dialogue journal written to a teachers a classmate or other partner who then responds.

IX. SUMMARY

This paper presents a review of the main views of teaching writing skill and describes methods of teaching writing briefly. Writing is defined as the most complex skill in learning language; therefore teaching writing could be as complex as learning. This paper discusses the methods of teaching and then focuses on process and product oriented in teaching writing and differs them in improving students' writing skill. It discusses the weaknesses of product oriented and presents some advantages of process oriented in teaching writing which is accepted as a tool to develop students' writing skill. In addition it argues the role of the teacher in teaching writing that plays important role in teaching in process oriented. It shall be stated that this study limits to review other studies' findings and views.

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