

EXPLORING IMPACT ON EFL WRITING PROFICIENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study investigates the comparative effectiveness of teacher-only assessment versus a combined teacher and student self-assessment approach in improving English writing proficiency among university students in southern Thailand. Utilizing a quasi-experimental sequential explanatory design, the research also examines student perspectives on the implementation of each method. Findings highlight the significance of formative, process-based writing instruction and the critical role of timely feedback—both from teachers and through self-assessment—in fostering student autonomy, accuracy, and engagement in academic writing.

Keywords: writing proficiency, teacher feedback, self-assessment

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Janubiy Tailand universitetida tahsil olayotgan talabalar misolida ingliz tili yozma nutqini rivojlantirishda faqat o'qituvchi baholashi va o'qituvchi hamda talaba o'zini baholash uslublarining samaradorligi solishtirildi. Tadqiqot izchil tushuntiruvchi (sequential explanatory) dizaynga asoslangan bo'lib, talabalarining har ikki baholash turiga bo'lgan munosabati ham o'rganildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, jarayonga asoslangan yozma mashqlar, muntazam fikr-mulohaza (feedback) va o'zini baholash orqali yozish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish talabalar mustaqilligi va yozish aniqligini sezilarli oshiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: yozma ko'nikma, o'qituvchi fikr-mulohazasi, o'zini baholash

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается сравнительная эффективность традиционной оценки преподавателем и комбинированной оценки с участием самих студентов в процессе обучения академическому письму на английском языке в одном из университетов южного Таиланда. Исследование основано на последовательном объяснительном дизайне и включает изучение мнений студентов о данных подходах. Результаты подчеркивают важность процессного подхода в обучении письму и своевременной обратной связи как со стороны преподавателя, так и посредством самоконтроля, что способствует развитию автономии и языковой точности студентов.

Ключевые слова: письменная грамотность, обратная связь преподавателя, самооценка

Despite the critical role of academic English writing proficiency in higher education, existing research has inadequately addressed the comparative impact of teacher-led and student-involved assessments on writing outcomes. To address the research gap, this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of 'Teacher-Only Assessment' compared to 'Combined Teacher and Student Self-Assessment' in English writing at a university in southern Thailand. Additionally, the study examined the viewpoints of students regarding the implementation of these

approaches. It utilized a sequential explanatory research design in conjunction with a quasi-experimental design.

In both English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) instructional context, teacher assessment and feedback represent the prevailing paradigm. Differing viewpoints exist regarding the advantages intrinsic to teacher assessment and feedback in the context of students' writing proficiency. Multiple scholarly investigations have delved into the ramifications of teacher-provided feedback on students' educational achievements, consistently confirming its salubrious impact on the caliber of writing and linguistic competence (Patra et al., 2022; Van Beuningen et al., 2012). Encouragingly, students themselves have exhibited a favorable disposition towards the invaluable feedback proffered by their teachers (Al-Wossabi, 2019; Maas, 2017; Waluyo & Rofiah, 2021). Nevertheless, it is essential to note the insightful perspective of Cui et al., (2022), who argue that the process of furnishing feedback on written assignments, while undoubtedly valuable, can also pose a formidable challenge, particularly in the context of large classes or multiple smaller sections. Under such prevalent scenarios, teachers often find it nearly impossible to provide meticulous commentary to every student (Nguyen, 2021). The resultant outcome might be hastily generated feedback, sometimes lacking in explanatory elements, which can inadvertently lead to a passive utilization of such feedback, thereby diminishing its potential educational efficacy (Ho, 2020; Lee, 2007; Zhao, 2010). Similarly, Lee and Coniam (2013) have shed light on the limitations teachers face when assessing EFL writing proficiency, adding another layer of complexity to the issue.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the higher education community has dedicated significant attention to the concept of self-assessment as both an alternative and a complementary strategy to teacher-generated feedback. Research has consistently shown that self-assessment not only enhances students' writing performance but also nurtures their sense of autonomy and proactive engagement in the learning process (Apridayani & Thoch, 2023; Ratminingsih et al., 2018) and increases their self-efficacy in writing (Chung et al., 2021). The utilization of self-assessment as a pedagogical tool offers an avenue for students to take more ownership of their learning journey, fostering a sense of responsibility and self-efficacy that goes beyond the confines of traditional teacher-led assessments. In this way, the ongoing discourse surrounding the role of teacher assessment and feedback in ESL and EFL instruction continues to evolve, with self-assessment emerging as a promising approach to complement the established practices. Learning to write well is a difficult and challenging task for preservice teachers since they need to require more efforts in grammar, contents and vocabulary to develop writing skills. In order to have mastery over the writing skills, they need to have overwhelming competence in fundamental process of writing skills, such as collecting information through brainstorming, planning, writing, revising, editing etc. The writing skills are essential for the tertiary level students to carry out assignment, term papers, and formal examination successfully. Moreover, they have to write resume, memos, memoirs, applications, mini-theses, reports etc. Teaching writing helps the students become effective learners through learning to think, and learning to learn writing skills. With writing skills, the learners can develop cognitive growth, critical and creative thinking skills. Most of the students in tertiary level are from government-aided higher secondary schools who are used to learning through lower order thinking skills, such as memorization, rote learning and by-hearting techniques.

They have lack of accuracy and fluency of writing due to depending on conventional mode of teaching and learning writing like product writing approach. The teachers adopt the traditional product writing approach despite the fact that process, genre-based and integrated writing approaches have been introduced over past two decades. Teachers are concerned with the final product writing approach and not much attention is paid to process and genre-based writing approaches. The students are asked to write on a particular topic with a stipulated word limit without paying attention on collecting information, planning out the essays, revising, and editing. The writing of the students is very unsatisfactory and full of erroneous due to various causes, such as lack of adequate training to the faculties and students, late starting of teaching writing skills, mismatch between writing theory and practice, inadequate language materials and input of teachers. The trends of teaching writing skills have been shifted from product writing approach to process writing approach over the last two decades. However, product and process writing approaches cannot be separated to develop the writing skills. The writers should know the purposes of his/her writing and who would be the reader of his/her writing so the level of writing should match according to the proficiency level of readers otherwise the writing cannot be effective. The large number of students depends on the product writing approach without paying attention of the prewriting, collection of information, brainstorming, planning, writing, revising, rewriting, editing etc. before producing a final draft. The skills of rearranging, reshaping, revising, rewriting, and reediting are the essential procedures to produce a final creative and critical writing. All of the writers need to learn what their readers expect and whether their writing is understood by their readers. Writing is a social act. When the students talk, they want someone to listen to them. In the similar vein, when students write, they want someone to read what they have written. Feedback whether written or oral remains an important component of ESL/EFL classroom situation in academic writing. Teachers' comments/feedbacks are very necessary to avoid grammatical, vocabulary and content errors of learners to enhance writing. To avoid grammatical, mechanical and vocabulary errors, relevant feedbacks from the teachers on time is inevitable. Writing is an essential skill among the four skills, viz. listening, speaking, and reading since it is a means of assessing the ability of learners in every walk of life. Writing skill can be developed after developing the listening, speaking, and reading skills. It is developed in the latter part of learners. Learners need conscious level of mind to learn writing skills. They need to develop the cognitive, physical, and psychomotor aspects to develop writing skills. They depend on only product writing approach to develop writing. They have to be provided with critical comments time and again by the tutors in order to develop their writing skills. Moreover, writing skills cannot be developed overnight miraculously. The students of B.Ed. are very poor in writing skills though they are competent in grammar, vocabulary and content knowledge. Their scores in the compulsory and optional English are very low in final examination. They have problems with accuracy and fluency of writing skills. The focus of writing until 1970s was on the features of L2 written text, orthography, sentence-level structure, and discourse level structures. The process-based approach emphasizes on the notion of writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning. The writing process is regarded as a nonlinear, exploratory and generative process. Writers discover and formulate their ideas while rewriting and trying to approximate meaning in revision (Zamel, 1983). Writing can be developed through writing multiple drafts, adding, deleting, modifying and rearranging the ideas and editing final draft by correcting vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics. Process writing is regarded as a complex, recursive and creative set of writing behavior. Learning to write through writing incorporates developing

an efficient and effective writing process. The writer is engaged in discovery and expression of meaning through multiple drafts and formative feedbacks by the teachers. In process writing, writing is considered as creative thinking, but not as linguistic competence. Competence in writing process is more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English (Zamel, 1982). The basic writing skills can be acquired to develop higher order of writing skills which can be enhanced through multiple drafts and teacher comments. The primary role of a language teacher is to provide both error corrections and provide negative and positive feedbacks. The trends of providing feedbacks can be traced back from behavior learning theory. In the cognitive view of learning, the function of feedback is not only to provide reinforcement, but also provides information which helps the learners use actively in modifying their behaviors (Zamel, 1981). Over the last 20 years, there have been changes in writing pedagogy. In education, feedback is widely used as a crucial tool for both encouraging and consolidating learning (Anderson, 1982; Brophy, 1981; as cited in Hyland and Hyland, 2006). The existing practices of types of feedback and comments while producing multiple drafts by the learners are: oral feedback, written feedback, peer feedback, teacher feedback, writing workshops, conferences and computer delivered feedback. Summative feedback was replaced by formative feedback which aims at improving students' writing ability through writing multiple drafts processes. The teacher provides the feedbacks and critical comments during the courses continuingly in formative evaluation system; however, in summative evaluation, feedbacks and comments are delivered to learners at the end of the course. Teacher's feedback on students' writing is a critical and nonnegotiable aspect of writing instruction. Teacher's feedback provides tailored instruction according to the needs of individual students through face to face dialogue in teacher students writing conference. Teacher should provide feedback at various stages of writing process not just at the end and not just grammar; but the teacher should provide the feedback in every aspect of writing of the students. Oral feedback is provided during conversational interaction which helps the learners facilitate the L2 writing acquisition. Long's interactional hypothesis (Long, 1983) proposes the second language learning that is facilitated through interactional processes due to the role of interaction in connecting input internal learner capabilities particularly selective attention and output in productive ways. The teacher follows various techniques to provide feedback to the students such as peer response groups, teacher and students' conferences, audio-taped commentary reformulation and computer-based commentary; however, hand written commentary on students' drafts is the primary method of response (Ferris, 1997). Written feedback has of paramount importance when the focus is on improving the students' composition writing skills. Many researchers have noted that comments on preliminary drafts are more useful in revising the scripts than commenting on final drafts (Krashen, 1984; Freedman, 1987). Students can forget the oral comments and may not remember it for a long time whereas the students can reread and remember the written feedbacks at any time and place (Fathman and Whalley, 1990). In second language context, effectiveness of feedback on error correction is regarded positively.

Conclusion

It is concluded that there is no culture of writing multiple drafts of compulsory subjects as well as optional English in B.Ed. level in most of constituent colleges of Tribhuvan University. However, in affiliated public colleges, the culture of multiple drafts in course of

carrying out assignments and culture of providing oral feedbacks are still in practices in established public colleges so the results of English of those colleges are better than the constituent and private colleges at TU. Feedbacks and comments are the main backbone of developing writing skills. It was concluded that writing cannot be academically sound without being followed the strategies of process writing, such as brainstorming, planning, revising, and editing until publishing a final draft.

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