

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ENGLISH WRITING PROBLEMS: DIAGNOSIS AND REMEDY

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to recognize university students writing difficulty in English language and to advise ways of solving those difficulties. The study was conducted in the Indraraj Arts Comm. & Science College, Sillod, Dr. BAMU Aurangabad in 2016. The research method was used the explanatory and a sample of 20. English language students were selected using an easy random sampling procedure. They were instructed to write a composition of about 200 -250 words on “A depiction of my own home town”. The aim was to identify the mistakes made by the students. The findings expose that those university students have different writing problems: as problems of morphology, syntax and Graphology.

Keywords: *Problems of Writing, Grammar Errors, Usage Errors Mechanical Errors.*

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Introduction

English writing is one of the cardinal language skills. It portrays main function in expressing ones thoughts, views, and attitudes. Through writing, people are skilled of sharing thoughts, feelings, persuading and convincing others. People may write for own enjoyment or for some other idea. They may address a spectator of one person or extra persons. The spectators may be identified or unidentified. Taking notes for study purposes is an example of writing for one's self. There are several special styles of writing, from formal to informal. There are various reasons to contain writing in a foreign language syllabus. One essential reason is that: writing helps learners to learn. It assists to have an opportunity to adventure with the language, to go beyond what they have studied. This study is an effort to examine the writing problems that face university students in Dr. BAMU Aurangabad. The idea is to recognize these problems and to advise ways of assisting students overcome the problems.

Statement of the Problem

It has been an ordinary grievance often heard in Dr. BAMU Aurangabad that university students are unable of expressing themselves in a plain, accurate and comprehensible manner in writing. Student's problems in writing may happen because of many aspects. One of the reasons for the challenge might be the difficult nature of the writing ability itself. The certain psychological, linguistic and cognitive issues make writing a complex and difficult discussion medium for most people in both native and second language. Raimes remarks that:

When students complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of finding the right words and using the correct grammar but also about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language (1983:13).

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Therefore, this study is an endeavor to recognize the kind of problems that university students face when they write in English, and advise ways of removing these problems.

Approaches:

Product Approach

The product approach focuses on the completed products of the writing work rather than the process. The teacher who utilizes the product approach will be concerned to see the product is readable, grammatically accurate and confirms discourse conventions concerning to major points, supporting details and so on. Hedge (1988:8) suggests some points, which students should include in the product approach of writing. These include:

Getting the grammar right, having a range of vocabulary, Punctuating meaningfully, using the conventions of layout correctly, spelling accuracy, and using a range of sentence structures.

The Process Approach

The process approach focuses on the composing procedure of writing instead of on the written last produces. Encouraging students to have an intellect of purpose and spectators, while writing about a definite subject, is the main assignment of teachers who instruct in line with the process approach.

Students Writing Problems

Hedge (1988: 5) thinks that so as the writer to compensate the absence of the prosodic features in writing, he/ she has to write with high degree of organization, careful choice of vocabulary and using complex grammatical devices. Grammatical problems, mechanical problems, sentence structure problems and problems of diction are linguistic problems that hamper student's effective writing in English.

Grammatical Problems

Learners have a number of problems in their attempts to write in the second language as verbs take different types depending on tense and topics they are used with, they generate difficulty for second language writing students

Problems of Sentence Structure

Sentences reflect different syntactic structures. Those students who have the problem of writing fine sentences structures are incapable to create longer sentences necessitate subordination and coordination.

Problem of Word Choice

A good composition should consist of suitable and different range of vocabularies used along with appropriate grammar and various choices of sentence structures. However, writing in a second language using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students.

Cognitive Problems

The cognitive difficulty that students face contains troubles of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, content and organization. Students have the difficulty of writing united paragraphs because of their failure to use cohesive tools appropriately.

Causes of Students Problems in Writing**The Nature of Writing Process**

Writing system is a multifarious process because it requires the mastery of grammatical tools, conceptual thinking and judgmental constituents. Norish (1993) states the following about the complexity of writing.

In written medium, information has to be transmitted without any aid from sources other than the language itself. It seems to follow from this that more attention is needed to be paid to the language as a code in short to the grammatical and lexical system than is the case with speech (p. 65).

Writing works can be developed quickly when students concerns and curiosity are recognized, when they are given various chances to write and when they are expectant to become participants.

Inadequate Time

Students need time for assembling ideas, organizing their ideas, writing outlines, proof reading and re-writing. In the process approach to teaching writing, the quality of student's written work can be affected by the amount of time that they are allowed. Writing is a significant part of language learning, is fundamentally a reflective activity that requires sufficient time to think about the specific subjects. In addition, many students and teachers experience that writing under time stress is a very unnatural position and maybe cannot guide them to create compositions that are delegate of their abilities.

Lack of Practice

Writing takes a lot of practice. It does not arrive naturally but rather increased through continuous attempt and much performs. In addition, students must obtain the responsibility for

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their learning if meaningful learning is to take place. He also attach that the finest ways to learn any ability would be to perform it. To become a skillful writer, the best manner is again to writing a lot.

Teachers Feedback

Teachers feedback is efficient for the students writing as authentic and importance readers rather than as judges and evaluators. Student's motivation is closely linked to language acquisition. To motivate students, the writing teacher should include comments of praise and encouragement in their written feedback. If teachers see their student's response as the end of the interaction, then students will stop there. If, however, the response includes specific direction on what to do next, there is a chance for application of principles. On correction errors, Norish writes:

When considering correction of errors as the stage of more or less free writing, it is a useful and stimulating exercise for the students to check their work in groups or pairs. This saves the teachers' time and encourages communication among the students (1983:71).

However, in common and in most cases, the teacher's feedback is vague, erroneous and unequal. As a result, the feedback does not assist students to improve their writing skill. The written replies given by teachers were vague and conceptual which do not help students modify their writing. The corrections EFL teachers created to surface level problems, that is, focal pointing on spelling, tense and punctuation forgetting substance and organization of the writing that influence meaning and statement. The improvement of student's written mistakes is often ineffective in dropping mistakes because teachers correct errors contradictorily.

Subjects

Researcher has selected 20 students from the Indraraj Arts Comm. & Science College, Sillod, Dr. BAMU in Aurangabad for the sample of the study. They are consisted major specialization in English language. They are olds from 18 to 21, and Marathi language as them mother tongue. Ten English language teachers were chosen to examine the students written work.

Procedure

The students were instructed to write a composition of about 200 to 250 words. They were told to describe their own towns. The writing was done within the classroom. It took about

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one hour time. Every students composition was read and scrutinized, two different teachers marked twice time. This is to assess objectivity.

Data Analysis

The data is consisted of the student's composition. Primarily they were asked to write down a description of about 200 to 250 words of their town. Therefore, the data were 20 compositions. The teachers identified the errors, and comments on the overall composition. The writing errors are summarized in the following points.

1. It *had* a beautiful garden so many citizens *come* to visit it. (Tense: has)
2. Ships *sailed* across the pond every day. (Tense: sail)
3. Many people *were live* in my town. (Tense: live)
4. My town *are* full of different kinds of cars *is* used. (Tense: is)
5. My town name *is cold* Ambad. (is called)
6. About *for* thousand people *leave* there. (Spelling)
7. The women in my town watch TV and *red* novels. (Spelling: read)
8. My sister was very clever she begun reading when she was four years old. (tense: began)
9. Everybody brought *there* own water. (Word choice: their)
10. *Although* my friends are poor *but* they are kind. (Grammar: connectives)
11. The student in my school always attempts to improve their education, fitness and food. (Faulty parallelism).
12. When it comes to dressing girl change in their tastes and styles. (Omitted comma).
13. The bad *whether* always has a terrible affect in our activities. (Spelling weather, word choice effect, wrong preposition on not in).
16. Our village is *more cleaner* from other villages. (redundant: more, cleaner than not from).
17. Speakers lacked a sense of audience. (Cognitive problem).
18. Some teachers wrote only very short sentences. (Graphomotor problem).
19. There are cohesion and coherence problems. Their writing lacks a sense of unity. (paragraph unity)
20. Students lack knowledge and ability of how to grow a paragraph using topic sentence and supporting sentences. (paragraph development)

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Conclusion:

This study is an effort to recognize the writing problems of a sample of university students who study English as a foreign language in Sillod. The ultimate aim is to identify these difficulties, and suggest counteractive procedures. The test consists of 20 students. They were instructed to write a composition on the description of their hometown. The teachers of English language are analyzed their writing products. Twice two different teachers analyzed each composition. The results have showed that there are various types of writing problems. These can be summarized as follows: Mechanical problems, Linguistic problems, Cognitive problems and Psychomotor problems.

In the light of these findings, a numeral of suggestions can be made:

1. Students of English language should read a lot. Reading will help them to develop their knowledge of lexis, and grammatical structures.
2. Free writing practice is a fine exercise for improving one's writing skill. Writing is a skill and therefore it is learned by practice just like any other ability.
3. Note taking is also supportive in enhancing the way writers produce ideas.
4. Students should not fright. Everybody experiences author's block sometimes. They should be give confidence to go through writer's block and break it .This will help them be more imaginative and creative authors.

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