

Investigating the Implementation of Process Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Writing Skills: The Case of a University

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of process approach to the teaching and learning of writing skills at one of Ethiopian University. The research employed descriptive survey research design with mixed approach to data gathering and analysis. While qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, the quantitative data were analyzed using a descriptive statistic. The subjects of the study were both 1st year 5 male and 15 female and 2nd year 5 male and 8 female totally 33 undergraduate English as a foreign language students and their 2 writing skills instructors. This was because 1st year undergraduate English as foreign language students take the writing course i.e. Basic Writing Skills and 2nd year undergraduate English as foreign language students take the writing course i.e. Advanced Writing Skills. Because there number is manageable these subjects were selected using comprehensive sampling technique. The researcher used classroom observation, questionnaires and semi-structured interview as instruments to collect the relevant data. The results of the analysis showed that, instructors did not always focus on the process approach while they delivered the writing lessons and activities; instead they mainly used the product approach in conducting the lessons. There were also factors like, lack of additional material sources, the correction limitation of students' written works and students' inability to express themselves' in the target language that hindered the implementation of the process approach of teaching writing skills.

KEYWORDS:

process approach;
implementation;
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Introduction

English is one of the widely spoken languages of the world which is having its impact on every field of work. Undoubtedly, English plays a much greater role in the world that it is impossible for people to ignore it fully. In Ethiopia, the teaching of English has become increasingly important as a foreign language. It is taught in schools from lower grade to University level (Geremew, 1999). Writing skills is an integral as well as one of the most important language skills for those who want to learn English language. According to Manchón (2012), learning

and teaching this skill requires special attention as it is the process of transforming thoughts and ideas into written communication. So, writing proficiency plays a great role in conveying a written message accurately and effectively.

English as a foreign language writing did not attract much attention until the 1960s; however, there has been a surge in interest recently, given the ever-increasing pressure to publish internationally among graduate students and academics as well as the universal desire to participate in commerce in the globalized world (Hyland, 2015). In response to this growing demand on writing in English, both academically and professionally, English as a Foreign language writing instructors have embarked on a search for the most efficient and effective approach to enhancing student writing. Teacher fronted approaches like product approach to the teaching of writing, focus on the production of neat, grammatically correct pieces of writing (Griffiths, 2008). On the other hand, the process approach to writing, stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models. Similarly, it also places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product. It is interpretational, learner-centered and not specifically related to examinations (Gaber, 2003). Despite numerous approaches to the teaching of writing (such as the product-based approach, and the genre-based approach) having evolved from different teaching methods, tackling English as a foreign language writing inefficiency is still one of the most challenging areas for teachers and students (Leo, 2007).

University English department students have to pass many academic courses in English. Nevertheless, these students still experience many difficulties in their writing as indicated by the informal interviews with students and researchers' own experience. Considering these problems, the instructors of writing skills should be creative in choosing an appropriate approach in order to improve students' writing ability. Ethiopian higher institutions follow communicative language teaching methodology to teach English as a foreign language. This teaching methodology advocates process approach of teaching writing skills and this is why it is currently preferred to be employed by the policy makers. Even though a lot has been done to improve students writing skill there is no concrete improvement on students' performance of writing skills (Yonas, 1996). Given these realities, it seems clear that there is a need to find ways that may take our university students' writing skills to a better future. Therefore, the above mentioned conditions initiated the researcher to conduct a study on investigating the implementation of process approach and examining practical challenges if any.

The general objective of this study was to investigate the implementation of the process approach in the teaching/learning of writing skills in a University. The study is aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the extent to which writing skills instructors at a university implement the process approach.
2. To identify the most pressing factors, if any.

To achieve the intended objectives of the study, the study answered the following research questions.

1. To what extent did writing skills instructors at a university implement the process approach?
2. What were the most pressing factors, if any, which were attributed to not fully implement the process approach of teaching writing skills at a university?

Method

In order to achieve the general and specific objectives of the study, a descriptive survey research design with mixed approach to data gathering and analysis was employed. This is because this research design enables the researcher to collect information about people's opinion, attitude or any of the variety of education or social issues that affect them. In addition, in order to deal with the research problems in this study holistically, the researcher applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches in complementary and combined ways. The basic assumption to use this approaches was that using both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides better understanding of the research problem and answer the research questions than any other approach.

The population for this study was both 1st year 5 male and 15 female and 2nd year 5 male and 8 female totally 33 undergraduate EFL students and their 2 writing skills instructors. This was because 1st year undergraduate EFL students take the writing course i.e. Basic Writing Skills and 2nd year undergraduate EFL students take the writing course i.e. Advanced Writing Skills. To get proper understanding of the issue at the university, and due to manageability of participants' number; the researcher selected all the participants using comprehensive sampling technique.

In descriptive study primary information was gathered from the respondents using questionnaire, observation and interview tools (Kothari, 2004). Hence, quantitative data were collected using questionnaires from 33 students and analyzed thematically. However, the qualitative data were collected using classroom observation and semi-structured interview with instructors. Descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, and means were employed to analyze the collected questionnaire data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 16 was used for this purpose. Moreover, the qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Results and Discussions

The Classroom Implementation of Process Approach in Teaching Writing Skills

During the first week of our observation in basic writing skills instructor class the writing lesson was on writing effective sentences. In conducting the lesson, first the instructor wrote the title "Sentence" on the blackboard and then discussions were conducted in the form of questioning and answering on such topics like what is a sentence? And parts of sentence? After the discussions had been held for ten minutes, the instructor gave students his own definitions orally by supporting them with examples. He then wrote the title, "writing effective sentences" on the blackboard and asked students to discuss in group the most important things in order to write effective sentence.

The lesson in the second observation session was about identifying and correcting faulty sentence errors. Like the earlier class, when conducting the lesson, the instructor first wrote the title "correcting faulty sentences" on the blackboard and asked every student to write one sentence about any topic they want. After 10 minutes he told them to exchange what they had written with their peers and found out whatever they had written was error free sentence or not. After 10 minutes, he once again asked them to forward what errors their fellow friends committed while writing the sentence and the way they had corrected it. Then students mentioned errors like, punctuations, spelling, agreement error and the like. After another 10 minutes discussion, the instructor mentioned as there are different types of sentence errors. Then wrote the title sentence fragment on the blackboard and explained it with definition and examples.

The focus of the lesson on the third observation session was on methods of paragraph development. The instructor wrote the title, "Writing effective paragraph" on the blackboard and asked students to mention what a paragraph was and to list down some of the relevant components of a well written paragraph. In relation to the previous session few students answered the question. Having expressed appreciation for all students' responses, the instructor reinforced the students' answers by giving further explanation and illustrations. He then, started explaining structure of a paragraph like, topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence.

The lesson in the last observation session was about steps in writing an essay. As always the instructor wrote the title on the blackboard and asked students to write the essential steps in writing an essay. Then he encouraged them to generate ideas about those essential steps in writing and forward them to the group members during the discussion sessions. Moving around the classroom and supervising each student's activity, he corrected the students work. Then, he continued presenting the lesson about the steps and what they have to do and take care of in every steps of writing a paragraph.

In examining the above lessons, we can infer that the writing course instructor did not always focus on the process approach while delivering the writing lesson and activities, rather he mainly used the product approach. For instance, the instructor relied mostly on the use of the conventional media and a module during the lesson. The instructor only used a blackboard in explaining the writing materials. It is clear that the students' writing skill should be improved through the use of different media that are effective to arouse the students' motivation and interest according to process approach principle. Smalley et al. (2001) stated that writing in process approach could give a positive impact on students' motivation in both studying English and developing their writing skill. It means that writing in process approach can encourage students to write even in cases where they may initially be afraid of doing so, for example, fear of making errors. Jarvis (2005) also argues that in order to motivate students in foreign language writing, teachers should write positive comments on learners' exercise books and verbally reinforce good language responses as part of their instructions. Sometimes, they can display exemplary students' work on school notice boards. The aim is to help build learners' self-esteem and morale towards English as foreign language writing. Furthermore, to improve motivation instructors can provide rewards for achievement to students.

The instructor failed to explore the use of other media and add any material from other sources that could help create effective and fun-learning of writing skills according to process approach principle. As a result, he didn't get enough interesting topics that can be introduced as per students' interests; the students mostly lack enthusiasm, interest and motivation in their writing process. However, he verbally reinforces good language responses as part of his instruction which is the principle of process approach. Yet, the students mostly learn from a module and write based on topics given by the instructor which is the main principle of product approach of teaching writing.

On the processes approach of teaching writing skills, the instructor has to show and help students learn how to write, give instructions, guide students in writing, provide students with knowledge of writing and help the students understand how to write effectively. From the observation it is revealed that the instructor gave a little or no additional help in teaching writing other than giving feedback and he mainly stuck to the module instead of providing students other supplementary resource for the sake of content coverage. When the instructor gave feedback on writing exercises, he mainly focused on grammar, punctuation and spelling forgetting corrections on contents and organizations of ideas. Though he knows that his students have problems on contents and organizations of ideas when writing paragraphs or essays, he failed to address these issues in classroom. However, he created flexible and non-threatening environment to encourage students' participation in the writing process, he asked

his students to do both self-correction and peer-assessments and encouraged them to perform actively in the classroom which is the principle of process writing approach.

Writing in process approach is done through some stages. It consists of planning, drafting, revising, editing and sharing stages. Smalley et al. (2001) stated that writing in process approach can set and increase the students' self-confidence, interest, and self-esteem because they can go through the stages of the process which are not rigid. Students can move back and forth between the stages, perhaps going back to the prewriting stage to add some more materials after revising or rewriting a paragraph they have just drafted. On each stage, students engage in a certain activity to construct their writing. However, we observed that the students are not made to plan for the writing skills they were going to do; the stages of the writing process were not clearly introduced and followed by the writing course instructor in the classroom. Generally, the instructor failed to clearly mention the writing stages and the recursive nature of writing.

While one of the current assumptions is accepting writing as a process (Reid, 1993), based on the data it is possible to conclude that the lessons were conducted through both process and product approach alternatively. In other words, instead of engaging students in regular classroom and extensive practice of writing through the process approach, i.e. generating ideas, drafting their paragraphs/ essays and checking their writing individually or in groups (Hedge, 2005), the instructor mostly expects students to produce a piece of written product for evaluation.

When it comes to advanced writing skills class the first observation session was conducted in the first week of the semester. The lesson was about 'persuasive essay writing.' The instructor started conducting the lesson by writing the title "Persuasive Essay Writing" on the blackboard. He then asked his students to discuss, "what a persuasive essay is and points to be considered in writing persuasive essays." While they were discussing we observed that the instructor was slowly moving around the classroom and checking each group. After 15 minutes he asked the students to forward the points they had raised in their groups to the class. The students mentioned answers like, "...a writer presents against a particular point, arguing in some controversial topic in writing, etc." After expressing his appreciation for all students' responses, he reinforced the students' answers by giving further explanation and illustrations.

In the second observation session the instructor first revised the last period's lesson briefly. In winding up his revision, he stated that in persuasive essay the writer own the opinion and try to convince other people with his reasons and examples. The focus of the class was on 'process of writing a persuasive essay.' The instructor gave explanation accompanied by short notes on the process of writing a persuasive essay and points that are crucial at stage

of writing. For example, in prewriting stage he mentioned “important strategies for generating a topic, importance of considering your audience and purpose.” Finally, he told the students to write one persuasive essay at home individually.

The third observation session class began by giving out the essays that students wrote last time. As the researcher could see few students’ essays, the instructor corrected each error on each essay with a red pen and then based on the number of errors each student committed; he gave value to each essay out of five. After he had distributed the corrected papers, he gave general comments on the major errors that he observed during his correction. Then, continued presenting the lesson entitled ‘Comparison and contrast.’ The lesson was fully on discussing, explaining likeness and difference, and ways of organizing our ideas of comparison and contrast into an essay. First he wrote the title “Explaining likeness and difference” on the blackboard and then asked the whole class the purpose and means of using comparison and contrast in explaining likeness and difference. Having listened to all attempts made by students, finally he himself gave them the oral answer, why writers use comparison and contrast, why people use comparison and contrast in their personal and business life.

The last lesson of the observation session was aimed at discussing writing descriptive texts. First he wrote the title “Writing descriptive texts” on the blackboard and asked the whole class what a descriptive writing is. Having listened to all attempts made by students, he forwarded his own definition, the nature of descriptive writing, the basic requirements that help to write a descriptive writing, some useful vocabularies in descriptive writing and the like. The instructor then wrote the following instruction on the blackboard. “Describe one of the places you admire most.” In his further instruction, he informed them to follow the different stages of writing i.e. preparing an outline, writing the first draft, editing the content, coherency of ideas, language use, mechanics, etc.

Accordingly, most students began to think a place that they knew well and went on describing. Having given the above instruction, the instructor was moving through each row of students and observing what each student was doing. After ten minutes, the class time came to end so he ordered the students to think over the activity very well and write a sensible descriptive essay and bring it with them for next class. In examining the above lessons, we can see that the writing course instructor employs both process and product approach while he delivers the writing lessons. As we can observe from most observation sessions, students were given opportunities to discuss in pair and learn from each other through different activities. When students involve in such activities, there is a belief that they can think independently and freely. The instructor also encourages students to generate ideas and forward them to the classmates and group members during the discussion sessions. While doing this, he also created flexible and non-threatening environment to encourage students’

participation. In addition, he is also moving around the classroom and supervising each student and groups during classroom activity. Furthermore, in observation session 4 lesson, we also observed that while doing their homework exercise students were allowed to 'write a descriptive essay about the place they admire most' by selecting their own title as long as they found it convenient for their successful writing. We also observed that students actively and enthusiastically participate in the writing activities and he asked them to do peer-assessments. In the same way he encourages students to write both in the classroom and outside the classroom. These are the roles expected from process oriented writing instructor; so, the instructor was employing process approach of teaching writing.

On the other hand, the writing course instructor also employed product approach while he delivered the writing lesson. For instance, we didn't observe when he clearly mentioned the recursive nature of writing. Students were provided with clear instruction what to do under each step of writing only orally once. He didn't also give them sufficient time to shape their mass of information into a coherent full text. Nevertheless, when we see the instruction the instructor gave to students by the end of the class during observation session 4 lessons, he wanted them to produce their essays by passing through the steps that were frequently being used in developing various paragraphs. However, he didn't correct their work at each stage of writing. As could be seen from the above lessons presentations, we can see that there were writing lessons which were conducted in line with the process approach though the product approach had also its own place. Generally, from both instructors observation class, it is possible to say that both the process and the product approaches had their own room in conducting the lessons on writing skills in a university. During observation sessions we also observed some factors that hinder the implementation of the process approach of teaching writing skills. Firstly, students lack additional material sources to improve their writing skill. In some cases, when teachers do not have time for teaching students ways of writing effectively, students can consult more on advanced books or other essential materials. Since there were no additional material sources it influenced their learning's result.

Instructors' limitation in correcting students' written works is the second factor. Both instructors had approximately five classes to teach and each class might comprise in average more than 16 students. Therefore, they did not have enough time to correct all the students' writing work. They only corrected some typical written works and ask students to follow these works. This is brought not only a bad effect but it also easily led to many typical mistakes in students' written works. Students can make the same mistakes again and again if they have nothing corrected. Generally, the instructors overlook process approach for finishing the syllabus on time. Based on the observation, students' inability to express themselves in the target language was also another problem which led them to frustration and apprehension in

writing which is compounded by the lack of appropriate prewriting activities. In addition, students were not motivated for extra reading as it is an important and supplementary skill to improve writing skills. The loaded class of students also hindered to apply the various activities to improve writing skills by instructors. So, these factors hindered the implementation of process approach in teaching writing skills at a university.

Instructors view on their way of Implementing Process Approach

With regard to their way of implementing this approach in their particular classroom, during interview sessions both instructors mentioned that they did not use this approach all the time. This was due to different reasons like time constraint for them to understand what each student as a writer went through while they were writing in and outside classroom and gives a comment. In addition, because this approach also takes the stance that language teaching should be concerned more with 'what the learner wants to say' and the learner is seen to have a 'role as initiator,' it is difficult for them to always employ this approach in the environment where their students were merely responder or a mimicker of their module and instructor. The teaching material is also prepared in a way that helps the students to mimic the material. In this regard, advanced writing skills instructor explains:

"Even though I totally viewed the WPA as an enabling approach in which the students engage in the creative process of shaping their raw writing into coherent message and work towards an acceptable and appropriate form, the way the syllabus of the course is developed, and students lack of motivation and interaction among themselves hinders me to not fully implement this approach in my classroom."

Though both respondents said they did not use this approach all the time, but when they use this approach in their classroom their students perform better in their writing skills. So, they think this approach of teaching made them effective. Basic writing skills instructor went into detail about his way of implementing this approach in his classroom saying:

"The important aspect of this approach is that the steps should not be considered as a rigid procedure. One may go back to process two or three as needed. The advantage of this approach is that I can teach my students where to start in their writing. The writing steps are defined so as to give a sense of direction to the writer. My role is to guide and facilitate the students while teaching them different strategies to generate, draft and finally refine ideas. I play a less controlling role than in the product-based approach to teaching writing. I'm non-directive and facilitate the situations for the students to generate and formulate their own ideas, assisting them in expressing their thoughts in a supportive and co-operative atmosphere."

From the above response we can understand that, when the instructors use this approach in their classrooms they did not follow the order of the stages strictly. They rather focused on the recursive nature of writing. As they further explained, presenting writing lessons sequentially lessens the creative and independent thinking of students in the course of

meaning discovery. When the lessons are presented sequentially, there will be less advantage to promote students' writing performance because students pay attention to each discrete item of the writing lessons rather than considering writing as a holistic activity which can be achieved as a result of continuous and meaningful practices. They had the belief that writing, especially at university level, is better taught when students are encouraged how to learn writing rather than teaching them about writing. However, this result contradicted with the findings of observations. Based on the observation result both instructors did not always focus on the process approach while they deliver the writing lessons and activities, but they predominantly used the product approach in conducting the lessons.

Instructors Opinions about the Teaching Materials they are using

Implementation of the process approach of teaching writing skills has strong connection with the teaching materials in use (Haiyan & Rilong, 2016). This is because, in most cases, it is the materials which guide the instructor to implement a given method of teaching. Secondly, students will have access to various practice activities which are developed in harmony with their academic status. Accordingly, to find out instructors' perceptions about these teaching materials, the results from the interview conducted with both instructors are discussed and presented as follows:

When respondents were asked in the interview to explain the criteria that they use to evaluate well developed teaching materials for their writing skills course, both of them perceived that well developed teaching materials need to have strong relationship with the objectives stipulated by the course designers. As Advanced writing skills instructor noted, "Well developed teaching materials should be written with clear language." Basic writing skills instructor also stated; "Well developed teaching materials should be written in context and need to be learner centered."

As we can see from the above responses, both respondents had the perception that well developed teaching materials for the instruction of writing skills need to fulfill the criteria such as contextualization, clarity of language use and variety. This implied that the requirements suggested by both respondents suited the requirements which were proposed by process writing experts.

On the basis of these criteria, advanced writing skills instructor stated his perception about the teaching materials being used in writing skills classes saying:

"Even though, the module clearly stated the course objectives and is written with clear language, the activities on the module did not encourage students' interaction."

In addition, Basic writing skills instructor also stated his perception about the teaching materials being used in writing skills classes saying:

“The content in the module were developed sequentially. That is thinking developing the content from simple to complex were more effective in improving students’ writing skills. So, a student who has good understanding of paragraphs can understand the lesson on essay writing without facing a lot of challenges.”

From the above response, it is possible to understand that respondents had mixed perception about the teaching materials being used in their writing skills classes. Even though they had strong perception about the way the contents were written, organized and arranged in the teaching materials, they also had doubt regarding the effectiveness of the developed exercise in enabling the students to practice and develop their writing skills.

Instructors Knowledge and Perceptions about Process Approach

It is obvious that the instructors’ knowledge about the adopted teaching methods will influence students’ learning and achievement in foreign language writing (Ho, 2006). This section is also sought to find out the instructors’ knowledge about process approach of teaching writing skills and their way of implementation in their writing skills classes. In this section too, results of the interview of the two instructors presented.

In relation to their knowledge about process approach, both instructors strongly mentioned that process approach to writing is a writer-focused approach that centers on the writer in terms of how he or she composes a piece of writing and the fundamental principles of this approach are the cognitive processes the writer goes through in order to compose a piece of writing. They also noted, in this approach the instructor draws learners’ attention to a series of steps that they need to go through in a non-prescriptive way.

Similarly both of the respondents believed that instead of using the rigid grammatical rules to produce final written product, students necessarily need to focus on how a text is written instead of the final outcome. Advanced writing skills instructor for example, is of the view:

“The process approach has a major influence on understanding the nature of writing and the way writing is taught. Therefore, the process approach emphasizes on the importance of certain procedures such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising. This approach involves introducing techniques that help the students identify and engage in a topic. Students are required to produce multiple drafts of a work. After discussion and feedback from evaluators, the students would revise the drafts. Rewriting, revision and editing are essential parts to writing in this approach.”

From the above response, one can understand that both writing instructors were of the perception that process approach to teaching writing is more important and preferable than other approaches like genre and product approach, and students could learn writing better when process-oriented writing instruction was frequently practiced with meaningful activities in writing classes. In addition, the interview data also proved that, both instructors had strong

belief that they had the necessary knowledge to teach writing skills. In addition, the interview participants also highlighted their ability to use the writing skills for communicative purposes. So, they had enough knowledge and positive attitude towards process approach of teaching writing skills.

Students' Perception on How their Instructors Implement Process Approach of Teaching Writing Skills

They indicated their perception with a statement on 5-point Likert scale. The results of this questionnaire were presented using frequencies, percentages and overall mean.

Table1. Students' Perception of How their Instructors' Implement Process Approach

No	Items	Responses												mean
		SA		A		UD		DA		SD		Total		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	My instructor plays the role of creating an interesting writing class	15	45.5	12	36.4	4	12.1	1	3.0	1	3.0	33	100	4.18
2	My instructor helps me to generate ideas for writing	16	48.5	14	42.4	2	6.1	-	-	1	3.0	33	100	4.33
3	My instructor helps me to plan the structure and shape of my text	3	9.1	1	3	11	33.3	17	51.5	1	3.0	33	100	2.64
4	My instructor helps me to revise and improve my first draft	1	3	3	9.1	1	3.0	19	57.6	9	27.3	33	100	2.3
5	My instructor make the writing I do relevant to my own life and writing experience	2	6.1	7	21.2	11	33.3	13	39.4	-	-	33	100	2.94

Keys : (SA)(5)=Strongly agree, (A)(4)= Agree, (UD)(3)= (UD)Undecided, (DA)(2)=Disagree, (SD)(1)=Strongly disagree, (F)=Frequency,(%)=Percent

As it can be seen from Table 1, the majority of the respondents (45.5%) strongly agreed that instructor played the role of creating an interesting writing class. The rest (36.4%) also reported their agreement on the issue. Whereas, (12.1%), (3%) and (3%) of the respondents reported 'undecided,' 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed', respectively. Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) strongly agreed and (42.5%) agreed that their instructor helped them to generate ideas for writing. Only (6.1%) and (3%) of the respondents reported they were undecided and strongly disagreed consecutively. Similarly, (51.5%) and half (33.3%) of the respondents respectively reported their disagreement and undecided to the point that their instructor helped them to plan the structure and shape of their text. On the other hand only, (9.1%), (3%) and (3%) of the respondents reported 'strongly agreed', 'agreed', and 'strongly disagreed', respectively. This finding is in once with the findings of the observation.

As to item 4, of the same table, (27.7%) of students strongly disagreed while (57.6%) of them disagree to the statement that their instructor helped them to revise and improve their first draft. The results of this section were a flip side of the results of the observation to a great extent. Whereas, (3%), (9.1%), and (3%) of the students 'strongly agreed, 'agreed' and 'undecided', respectively to this point. On the same fashion, about (39.4%) of the respondents revealed their disagreement that the instructor made the writing they do relevant to their own life and writing experience. However, the rest (21.2%), (6.1%), and (33.3%) respondents reported agreement, strong agreement and undecided respectively.

In general, a large portion of the respondents revealed their misconception or weak perception about how their instructors' implemented the process approach. More than half of the respondents (with mean value of 2.64) testified that their instructor didn't help them to revise and improve their first draft. Similarly, the finding is also supported by low mean values (2.3) allocated to the item that elicited their perception regarding how their teacher helped them to revise and improve their first draft. To conclude, even though the students have strong perception and high level of understanding about their instructors' role in writing class, their perception about the actual classroom situation is low.

In Table 2, item 6 shows that (33.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and (30.3%) agreed that it is easy to get ideas to write. Whereas, the rest (21.3%) were undecided and (15.2%) disagreed. The majority (36.4%) strongly agreed and (24.2%) agreed that they often plan before writing. Applying prewriting stage was essential for students because it encourages them to write by stimulating their thoughts for getting started (Richards & Renandya, 2002). On the other hand, (36.4%) of the respondents followed by (3%) of the respondents indicated 'undecided' and 'disagreed', respectively. Thus, a good number of respondents believed that they often plan before writing. Similarly, (36.4%) and (39.4%) of the

respondents 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' that they often write and edit drafts. On the other hand, (12.1%) and (12.1%) of the respondents 'undecided' and 'disagreed', respectively. Concerning their knowledge of how to organize ideas, large number of the respondents (27.3%) reported their strong agreement that they know how to organize ideas. The data in the same item also showed that (36.4 %) of the respondents agreed. However, (27.3%) and (9.1%) of respondents reported undecided and disagree on the issue raised. From this, it can be seen that majority of the students had no difficulty of applying some writing techniques such as planning and editing. To conclude, majority of them also implemented the stages of process approach and focused more on the process than the product approach.

From Table 2, it is also possible to see that a large number of the respondents (24.2%) and (48.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they knew the strategies to write a complete piece of writing by themselves. The rest (18.2%), (6.1%) and (3%) of the respondents reported that they were undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. Almost quarter of them did not know about common strategies of writing skills.

Table2. Students' Perception of their Writing Habits

No	Items	Responses												Mean
		SA		A		UD		DA		SD		Total		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
6	It is easy to get ideas.	11	33.3	10	30.3	7	21.3	5	15.2	-	-	33	100	3.82
7	I often plan before writing.	12	36.4	8	24.2	12	36.4	1	3	-	-	33	100	3.94
8	I often write and edit drafts.	12	36.4	13	39.4	4	12.1	4	12.1	-	-	33	100	4.00
9	I know how to organize ideas.	9	27.3	12	36.4	9	27.3	3	9.1	-	-	33	100	3.82
10	I know the strategies to write a complete piece of writing by myself.	8	24.2	16	48.5	6	18.2	2	6.1	1	3	33	100	3.85

Keys : (SA)(5)=Strongly agree, (A)(4)= Agree, (UD)(3)= (UD)Undecided, (DA)(2)=Disagree, (SD)(1)=Strongly disagree, (F)=Frequency,(%)=Percent

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Process Approach in Writing Skills Classes

Nunan (1999) considers it an enormous challenge to produce a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing in FL. He points out that this is magnified by the fact that rhetorical conventions of English language, that is, structure, style and organization often differ from those in other languages. For students to write appropriately in foreign language, Darus and Subramaniam (2009) suggested that the students need to understand the differences

between first language and foreign language, if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different. They noted that it is important for instructors to make the students aware of the differences in the structure of these languages. They further suggest that instructors should highlight certain rules in first language that are not appropriate to be used when students write in foreign language. They argue that this is to ensure that the students apply correct strategies while writing in foreign language and hence, decrease the occurrence of errors.

When asked whether their students have problems in writing skills in English, Basic writing skills instructor noted, students always face difficulties while writing in English due to a number of factors which involved in the learning process. He further said that:

“The English language itself has a lot of irregularities and idiosyncrasies which create a numerous difficulties in writing. Especially the way its spelled is not only deviation from the standard but adversely affects the intended meaning.”

He went into detail mentioning that:

“They face several problems in phoneme clusters, spellings, grammar, mistakes due to first language interference, structure, doubling of subjects, doubling of preposition, tenses, articles, appropriate vocabulary, wrong use of prefixes and suffixes.”

Similarly Advanced writing skills instructor mentioned saying:

“Writing is considered as a difficult skill to learn because it includes several components, for instance grasp on spellings and punctuation, a comprehensive command of grammar, use of appropriate vocabulary and, suitable style to meet the expected readers expectations and organizational skills. Like other English as a foreign language context the situation in our university has also been pathetic and the students seriously lack in all English skills in general and writing skills in particular.”

From the above response, it is evident that A University English as a foreign language undergraduate students often faced various difficulties in learning English as a foreign language writing skills. When asked their valuable insights into the reasons of students' weaknesses in English in general and writing skills in particular advanced writing skills instructor raised;

“Problems are caused by different reasons like, deficiency in the English language curricula offered by our schools and universities, our dreadful teaching methodology, problems with proper language environments, and lack of personal motivation on the part of the students. For example, many students have a limitation of vocabulary because they do not know any effective ways to study vocabulary. Moreover, there are no activities outside classroom to enhance students' grammar knowledge. Many schools do not have time to organize English learning activities as well as English clubs.”

In addition, Basic writing skills instructor also said:

“In most of the schools, teachers teaching English language either has no relevant degrees in the field or lack modern means and methods of teaching language, especially

writing skills. Those who show English language deficiency with poor diction and expression are only more concerned with writing length rather than the content, this, showing lack of academic writing skills. In addition, the topics and exercises of writing lesson in textbook are inappropriately designed to many students' level. Many topics have a lot of new words and its grammar points which make students feel complicated and bored. Also, some exercises are difficult and complicated for most of students; they only do it thanks to the help from their teachers"

So, the difficulties were partly attributed to teaching methods used, learning strategies, first language interference, limited vocabulary and inadequate mastery of grammatical structures of foreign language etc. In line with the above findings, in the observation also, it has been found out that English as foreign language students did not get any support in terms of practicing the target language in the real world context because of limited use of English in Ethiopia.

Measures to be taken to Tackle this Difficulties

In response to what measures to be taken to tackle these difficulties, Basic writing skills instructor, responded saying:

"The most essential component for improving students' writing skills is for teachers to provide regular and quick feedback for the learners work. The feedback which may be either formative or summative is very important for further learning as well as it will contribute a lot to written fluency."

Similarly, advanced writing skills instructor mentioned:

"Teaching and learning resources always facilitate and motivate students to learning. Therefore, teachers should make teaching and learning resources an integral part of their instructional practices. He further noted that, good writing materials should be learner centered rather than teacher centered. They should also focus on helping students to develop their own strategies for learning. Resources should allow students to be creative and provide stimulating activities that focus students' attention on the writing skill to be learnt."

From the above responses the most important factor that should be considered for better results is, preparing and using ideal teaching material, and to identify students' specific errors and to develop ideal activities in the form of on-campus and home assignments, to address to their common mistakes. This will not only help them with their problematic areas but also enhance their practice time ensuring better results.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researchers managed to draw the following conclusions. The observation result revealed that both instructors did not always focus on the process approach while they deliver the writing lessons and activities; instead they principally used the product approach in conducting the lessons. Both interviewees admitted that teaching writing

skills was challenging. They also stated that their practice of teaching writing was also not always fruitful. They mainly followed eclectic approach and did not also give much attention for teaching the skill only by effectively applying the principles suggested through process approach of teaching writing skills. Students often face various difficulties in learning EFL writing skills. The difficulties are partly attributed to teaching methods used, learning strategies employed, first language interference, limited vocabulary and inadequate mastery of grammatical structures of FL, etc. Factors like deficiency in English language curricula offered by schools and universities, our dreadful teaching methodology, and the lack of modern means and methods of teaching writing skills are some of the factors that hinders the implementation of process approach in teaching writing skills. When students were given the choice to work either in pairs or individually, a number of them chose to work in pairs.

Recommendation

Based on the results the following recommendations were forwarded. In order to bring about substantial progress in students' writing abilities, instructors should consistently employ the process approach. The instructors seem to incline towards the traditional ways of teaching writing skills. Therefore, seminars, workshops and in-service trainings should be organized so as to introduce instructors with process approaches of teaching writing skills.

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